

# A Study of Mohist Characters in Contemporary Chinese Film and Television Works

Liyuan Guo

School of Media, Xi'an Peihua University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, 710000, China

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**Abstract:** In the long history, Mohism experienced a period of silence after Qin Dynasty. With the development of modern times, people pay more and more attention to it. According to the interpretation of Ge Li's characters in *Mo Attack*, some people position Ge Li with the idea of "loving and not attacking". It seems that all actions of Ge Li revolve around this theme. Mohist representatives come from the lower class, so their thoughts are the most popular. Mohist's view of human rights can best represent the interests of the lower class, paying attention to the basic right to subsistence of civilians and the equal rights between people. It is easier for people to remind each other to maintain universal love in groups, which makes it an atmosphere in this group. Through Ge Li, the hero of the film, who is a practitioner of Mohist culture, the audience has a certain understanding of the values centered on "universal love" and "non-aggression" in Mohist doctrine in the pre-Qin period, which shows the vitality of the popularization of traditional culture.

## 1. Introduction

Mohism is the pride of the Chinese nation. If there are angels in China, then a true Mohist figure should be an angel, although they have no wings and no charming face, and most of them are not beautiful women but only men [1]. Human rights is a modern concept, and it is a right that human beings should have. However, the thought of human rights has existed since ancient times. As early as the Western Zhou Dynasty, the Duke of Zhou put forward the ideas of knowing, enriching, benefiting and protecting the people. Its thoughts are very rich, unique and have great influence. Therefore, Mohism became the only prominent school that could stand side by side with Confucianism in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period [2]. In the past 30 years, the study of Mohism has made great progress, but the special study of Mohist film and television characters has not attracted enough attention. There are many excellent works in some aspects or topics in the existing research results of Mohist film and television characters, but from a systematic and comprehensive point of view, the research of Mohist film and television characters is still very weak. In the script, Mohist thoughts are more specific, paying special attention to specific actions and characters' language. The film reveals these thoughts more simply through conversation and discussion.

## 2. "Universal Love"

Mohists paid equal attention to sensibility and rationality from the beginning. Strive to show their characters from the subtle. Implies the confusion of Mohism's "universal love". Yiyue's showing love to Ge Li did not immediately awaken Ge Li's understanding of self-emotion. To some extent, it may be Mohist's thought of "universal love" that sets Ge Li's humanity [3]. "Universal love" means "to love each other and benefit each other", which means that people should love each other universally and indiscriminately, that is, to love people and love the people so as to achieve mutual love and help, instead of mutual hatred and mutual loss. In China, safeguarding people's right to live and improving people's living conditions is still a top priority. To solve people's basic right to subsistence, a series of Mohist ideas also have very important guiding value for us. Therefore, benevolence is a kind of love from near to far with differences. Universal love, on the other hand, is a universal love with no difference at first. Only by combining them can knowledge

be produced. The combination of experience and theory is the prerequisite for people to acquire knowledge.

Indeed, people live in contradiction. In the film, through the dialogue between Ge Li and the slave of Zhao, we can see that “no attack” is not the only key to peace. Maintaining equality between people and countries and opposing discrimination and oppression has become a topic of great concern in the international community. Confucius can not talk about ghosts and gods, because the foundation of benevolence is children's attachment instinct to their parents, as well as sexual instinct and other instincts, while Mozi's universal love is unknown to most people [4]. Mohist emphasizes that debating, storytelling and engaging are the three important tasks of Mohists, and points out that “those who can debate can debate, those who can tell books can tell books and those who can engage in them”, all of which aim at increasing social material and spiritual wealth. The divergence of traditional culture is strong, which is helpful for researchers to collect and sort out data in various ways. So as to discuss the problem more comprehensively and draw more objective conclusions; People or things can be called “just” as long as they are right, moral or good. In this sense, as long as it is legal, it is just. Since there is “justice” in the general sense, there must be “justice” in the specific sense [5]. The logic theory founded by Mohist school has a profound influence on later generations, and it is one of the three major logic origins in the world that can be compared with western logic and Indian karma.

### **3. “Non-Attack”**

Mohist school called unjust war “attack” and opposed the war of aggression and plunder. Mozi thinks that launching predatory war is an extremely unjust criminal act, which brings great harm to individual workers. In Mohism's view, people must also participate in cognitive activities in order to gain a correct understanding [6]. The film *Mo Attack* and Li Shu's script *Battle of Mozi* both express Mohist thoughts. The core of the film story is Mohism, which is rooted in the understanding of history and humanity in ancient Chinese Mohism. Because, the meaning of every practice of “non-attack” is exchanged at the expense of trampling on “non-killing”, which is very clear in the film. Of course, this kind of love is inherent in human nature, but it is not the biological nature of human nature, but the inherent spirit of human nature. It is worth noting that Mohist School's “upholding the virtuous” is different from Confucian school's “promoting the virtuous”, because the scope of the two “virtuous” is quite different. In the pre-Qin doctrines, the Mohist school was the only one who paid attention to the basic right to subsistence of civilians, which was inseparable from the social status and living conditions of Mohism at that time [7].

Mohism attaches great importance to the thinking of the universe. Mohist school called the abstraction of the whole universe “things”. “*Ink Attack*” chooses the simplest and realistic style as the keynote of the film. Every protagonist and even the extras are simple and simple, without any special ornaments, with the aim of restoring a true history. However, once we watch the film carefully, we will find that Ge Li has questioned the way to achieve “non-attack” more than once. To some extent, this has transformed Ge Li's thinking. It is pointed out that people have spiritual innate tendency, and people not only have sexual instinct, but also have “instinct-like things” that pursue transcendence and sacred things, that is, Maslow later described it as “instinct-like needs”, which can explain the spirit of Mohism. Mohism believes that music is only a luxury enjoyed by a few people, such as nobles. From the standpoint of opposing the luxury and enjoyment of a few people, such as slave owners and nobles, Mohism put forward the idea of “non-music” [8]. Treat other people's bodies as their own, treat other people's countries as their own, and treat other people's homes as their own homes, thus completely eliminating the boundaries between people and me, and making all love equal and undifferentiated.

### **4. Comparison of Characters and Their Images**

Mohism emphasizes respecting heaven, and its essence is still seeking the benefits of the world and eliminating the harms of the world. However, Mohism gives this kind of content a mysterious

form, or a mysterious cloak. Mohism opposes the tenure system of officials and advocates that officials should be able to go up and down, which is also the focus of China's current personnel system reform. However, the grasp of "little love" has a sense of weightlessness, even being obliterated to some extent, which is inseparable from the strictness and self-discipline of Mohism's principles of life. Although Mohist's idea of peace was too idealistic in the Warring States Period, Mohist's anti-war pursuit of peace did not stay at the theoretical level, but had his concrete actions. Words and deeds that can't be carried out in practice, which can only stay in oral and theoretical terms, are not credible. It is emphasized that with correct understanding and theory, it must be used to guide practical actions. Only the knowledge of conscious practice is the highest type of knowledge. Therefore, Mozi's mention of ghosts and gods and heaven is not only a religious issue, but a psychological mechanism of human instinct and "like instinct".

Thirdly, the "benefit of the world" mentioned by Mohism is a kind of social justice, and all Mohist social thoughts are based on this kind of social justice. Since universal love transcends secular life and general human nature, in order to ensure that everyone can experience it, some ritual activities are needed to constantly stimulate people's instinct. From the supreme ruler to the officials at all levels, they are hereditary and monopolized by the nobility, and the broad masses of civilians do not have any opportunity and right to participate in politics. Mohism strongly opposes this unequal social phenomenon. Ge Li refuses to accept straw boots because Mohists can't accept other people's things. Even if their shoes are broken, they won't accept other people's things. It can be seen that Mohist principles of life are very strict. Whether a proposition is true or false needs to be judged according to the existence or nonexistence of the actual situation. Mohism's method of judging the truth and falsehood of propositions is consistent with Aristotle's. There is a kind of social system that pursues natural simplicity, natural freedom and unreasonable criticism, as well as the characteristics and spirit of film and television character image norms. Even if no one in the world knows there is Mozi, Mozi's thought still exists. Because Mozi is not a person, but the embodiment of great love in every one of us.

Mohism's human rights thought has not disappeared in China's long feudal society. As Mr. Li Zehou said, Mohism has gradually disappeared as an ideological system and school since Qin and Han Dynasties. However, the return of "little love", as a hidden line, also appeared in the film, intersecting with "universal love" as the main line. With the development of the film, it gradually transited from the hidden line to the open line. Although all costumes must conform to the war-torn environment and be visually worn-out, the director is very particular about the unity of color tone as a whole. For example, the subjects of Liangcheng take khaki as the keynote, while Zhao Jun, who attacked the city, takes black as the keynote. Some people, in words and on the surface, are right-headed, but in actions, they do bad things and harm the world. Taoism's thinking on human nature does not go beyond the thinking mode of right and wrong of good and evil, but the judgment standard it agrees with is different from the Confucian view of good and evil which takes the morality of social film and television characters as the standard. In addition, the way of life of Mohism is quite special, and they live a group life, which is also the need for them to maintain "universal love". Mohism gave its own answer. In answering this question, Mohists introduced a relatively intuitive concept of interest, which is easier to grasp and understand than meaning.

## 5. Conclusion

"Universal love" advocated by Mohists is a kind of universal love that is selfless and beneficial to the whole world. We can regard this kind of fraternity as a kind of "great love". Similarly, we can also call the love that reflects our true feelings "little love". In all kinds of contradictions and conflicts, the process of Ge Li's thought transformation and psychological transfer is complicated. There are relief after his pain and burden after his happiness. Mohist social thought is an organic whole. Seen from the bottom up, there is a close synergy between the ten theories of Mohism, which jointly support the two principles of "benefiting the world" and "eliminating the harm of the world". In the character setting, except the reserved characters, Yiyue in the movie is obviously a combination of Sun, Moon and Xiaoyu in the script. In the movie, it is obviously against common

sense to change the man who digs the tunnel from the death row ape rat in the script to a black slave. We believe that Mohist thoughts will be carried forward in the future rejuvenation of China, bringing human dignity and greatness to the Chinese nation.

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