

# Emotional Intention Expression of Nuo Mask in Western Hunan

Ruihan Miao<sup>1</sup>, Chao Zhang<sup>1\*</sup>, Jiabin Luo<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Art College, Guizhou University, Guiyang, China

## Email Address

1532396630@qq.com (Ruihan Miao), 464922741@qq.com (Chao Zhang)

\*Correspondence: 464922741@qq.com

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## Abstract:

In the process of development, Chinese traditional culture fully demonstrates its strong national characteristics, and at the same time reveals the connotation of Chinese culture and art. Western Hunan Nuo mask fully integrates this cultural spirit and connotation, attaches great importance to the display and communication of emotion, and then better highlights the vitality and appeal of folk art. Based on the study of the modeling art, pattern, color collocation and material of Nuo mask, this paper expounds the intention and emotion expressed by analyzing the modeling characteristics of Nuo mask, and also provides a new idea for the inheritance of traditional culture and the development of modern Nuo mask.

## Keywords:

Nuo Mask of Western Hunan, Modelling, Color, Emotion

## 1. Introduction

China's traditional culture has its unique cultural connotation and artistic characteristics, no matter what kind of artistic expression will convey the rich connotation of our national traditional culture. The Exorcism mask in western Hunan is an ancient national culture which widely exists in the social life field and has formed a unique cultural phenomenon. Nuo culture attaches great importance to the display and communication of emotions. In ancient times, most people did not know enough about natural disasters due to limited conditions. They believed that all kinds of disasters were caused by demons and ghosts. They will put on a mask that looks evil and send out the sound of Nuo to scare away ghosts and spirits and eliminate bad luck to bring good luck to themselves. After a long time of development, gradually the mask people wear also has a new name, namely Nuo mask. However, with the gradual deepening of people's understanding of natural disasters, Nuo mask not only has the role of driving away ghosts and gods, but also has a variety of roles to enrich life. Nuo mask in the production process is meticulous, in the modeling of different roles in the use of exaggerated techniques of expression, highlighting the exorcism of Nuo mask. This article mainly narrates the emotion expressed by The exorcism mask in western Hunan from four aspects of the shape, material, pattern and material of exorcism mask.

## 2. Nuo Mask of Western Hunan

Exorcism mask is a kind of traditional Chinese craft. It exists in folk art, embodies the unique aesthetic taste of generations of people, and is the important spiritual strength and pillar of people in ancient times. Wearing Nuo mask is a common cultural phenomenon, its main function is to wear masks of different roles to drive away ghosts and gods, which also reveals the ancient people's admiration for nature and the feelings of worship to ghosts and gods and ancestors. Every ancient nation wore a mask to show what they thought. A mask is a mask. It is the mirror of every nation and every culture. It is the most precious historical memory of a nation. Nuo mask is an important component of Traditional Chinese national culture with various types and styles, exaggerated and distinctive shapes and bright colors and strong contrast. The simple plastic art and mysterious and broad cultural heritage it shows are worth our study, and the emotions it expresses are also worth our study and exploration.

Most of the country's Nuo culture has similar cultural characteristics and connotation, but as a Nuo mask in western Hunan, living in the Jingchu region, its cultural characteristics are unique. The exorcism mask in western Hunan is mainly influenced by Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, local folk stories, myths and legends. The exorcism culture in western Hunan originates from the worship of nature, totem and other elements, and is a kind of worship for ghost and god culture. It is influenced by politics, culture and religion of Jingchu. What he reflected was a true reflection of the society at that time, and its main connotation was dispelling disasters, receiving blessings and warding off evil spirits. Even though Nuo mask was endowed with religious color and witchcraft folk custom, it was still a kind of beautiful plastic art, which illustrated the worship of Western Hunan Nuo mask in various forms. By collecting the relevant information and materials of Exorcism masks in western Hunan, systematically sorting out the different emotions expressed in the shape, color, material and other aesthetic characteristics of Exorcism masks in Hunan, so that modern people can better understand and inherit our unique traditional culture and keep the enduring vitality of exorcism masks. Western Hunan Nuo mask fully into the cultural spirit and connotation, it attaches great importance to the show and communication of emotion, and then better highlight the vitality and appeal. Exorcism mask artists use exorcism mask works to express their understanding of ghosts and demons and their inner emotional ups and downs.

## 3. Artistic Characteristics of Nuo Mask in Western Hunan

In ancient times, it was people's yearning and pursuit for a better life and good luck that led to the deterioration of exorcism mask, which was also a true reflection of people's living situation. Nuo mask has its own unique aesthetic and artistic characteristics, there are many kinds of Nuo mask, the shape is rich and changeable, rough and wild, the color is exaggerated and warm. The western Hunan Nuo culture is vivid, and the decoration techniques have strong craftsman spirit, which not only shows colorful expressions, but also contains the social status quo at that time, people's aesthetic taste, folk customs and religious belief. Traditional culture is the general term of the national civilization, custom and spirit formed by a nation, which reflects the national characteristics and style of Our country. It is the fundamental creativity of the achievements of Chinese civilization and the overall moral inheritance, cultural spirit and spiritual ideology in the history of a nation. [2]

However, the exorcism mask has significant artistic characteristics, especially in the carving technique, which is worth our exploration and research. The characteristics of characters reflected in different modeling forms are different, which makes people think of the characters' characteristics at the first reaction. The decorative patterns of Exorcism mask in Western Hunan come from people's totem consciousness and hunting consciousness. So they use the things they touch the most and have the closest relationships with in their lives. Because of their living environment at that time, Nuo masks were mostly ugly and ferocious. In the use of color is to reflect love and hate, fear and perception of life, most of them are strong contrast color, or relatively high brightness color, most of them are red, bold and exaggerated color, with distinct national style and regional characteristics, indicating its strong national psychology and national spirit.

## **4. Emotional Expression of Nuo Mask in Western Hunan**

### ***4.1. Western Hunan Nuo Mask in the Form of Emotional Expression***

Exorcism mask has obvious symbolic significance in shape, with witchcraft significance, primitive religious color, and has the function of exorcism. Use exaggeration more so in modelling form, through the five senses to create different roles, in the adornment of the differences between the change of the facial feature modelling to express its corresponding characters or different images of ghosts and gods, such as: ferocious, fierce, terrible, serious, stable, simple and honest, heroic spirit, treachery, for more, loyalty, integrity, character, frank, kind, gentle image characteristics, etc. The shape and form of Nuo mask are all based on the natural environment, and the form of Nuo mask as ideation does not exist in real life. [3] The characters in The Exorcism mask in Western Hunan all have obvious symbolic characteristics, and this symbol comes from the evolution of the ancient people's worship of primitive natural life, symbols, totems, witchcraft and other religions. Western Hunan Nuo masks can be divided into three categories: positive god, evil god and secular mask. The feelings conveyed by their different plastic art features are as follows.

#### ***4.1.1. Mask is God***

The positive god masks in Exorcism masks in Western Hunan express the emotion of people's expectation for a smooth life. They hope to have a prosperous family, drive away disaster and avoid evil spirits. Therefore, most of the positive god masks in the shape are kind, smiling, eyebrows slightly bent, mouth slightly bent upward. After this special form of modeling modification, a gentle and approachable image is formed. This kind of smile with a kind of charity, amiable demeanor full of human kindness and affinity, in the context of the expression of life satisfaction and happiness, with positive feelings. In today's modern world, the eerie smile creates tension, based on the psychological "uncanny valley" effect. It is only when the shape of Nuo mask is similar to human beings to a certain extent that it will cause an uneasy psychological reaction, so the audience will suddenly become extremely disgusted or even afraid of their reaction.

#### ***4.1.2. An Evil Mask***

Among the exorcism masks, the evil god masks are serious in appearance, bold and unrestrained in artistic lines, and express fierce and frightening emotions. In fact, this type of mask is not a symbol of evil, they play a role in deterring demons and ghosts,

exorcise epidemics and exorcise evil spirits, convey the elimination of disasters, pray for good weather, peace and auspicious meaning, is the god of friendship. Unique exaggerated shape, the head long two horns, mouth spit two teeth, eyeball bulging, thick eyebrows and face with fierce image, fully conveyed the spirit of awe. Modelling technique is exaggerated, compare with real character expression is very far. The mask of the evil god is divided into “ugly” and “ugly”. This special modeling technique reflects the helplessness of people in the face of the mysterious power of nature. It thinks that ugly and fierce appearance can overthrow everything, showing the infinite worship and awe of the god of nature. can overthrow everything, showing the infinite worship and awe of the god of nature.

#### **4.1.3. Secular Mask**

The masks of secular figures in Western Hunan Nuo mask are divided into positive figures and clowns, who are very close to the real identity. The standard facial features of the positive mask give people a plain and honest image; The clown mask, which is an “entertaining-type” mask among Nuo masks, mostly shows distorted facial features and exaggerated expressions, conveying the social function of entertaining gods and people. This kind of mask is similar to the real figures in the shape, almost no exaggerated shape and cumbersome decoration. The expression technique of secular masks is different from the other two types of masks, but the feelings conveyed are also yearning for a better life. [4] The modeling of Nuo mask in western Hunan is also very rich, they all contain people’s desire for harmony and prosperity of the family, full of children, and also express people's prayer for a better life in the future.

#### **4.2. Emotional Expression of Xiangxi Nuo Mask in Pattern Decoration**

There are many kinds of decorative patterns of Exorcism mask in Western Hunan, which contains rich culture. Its diverse forms and rich connotations attract people’s attention and make them feel proud. Different patterns reflect different stories and emotions, but the humanistic spirit of national patterns is indeed the same. The decorative art of Nuo mask in Western Hunan is rich in variety and has a unique artistic form. The whole exorcism is characterized by turbidity and rough, and it is highly skilled in technique. The outline of sinuous lines creates a variety of modeling masks. It is the application of different forms of lines that allows the audience to quickly distinguish between men and women, beauty and ugliness, gods and demons, etc. The feelings expressed by Exorcism mask in western Hunan are all derived from the facial features of different forms on the mask and the shape of the top of the head. There are many kinds of exorcism mask decorative patterns, most of which are Yin and Yang patterns carved by knife. The pattern composition is fine, the organization is rigorous, and it has religious color and mystery. Huang Jinye. Enlightenment of decorative art in Nuo Mask to visual communication design. [5] Xie Qiongmei, Huang Danzhen. A study on the patterns of Pingxiang Nuo mask, [6] Different patterns of patterns mostly show the effect of driving away disasters and evil spirits.

Western Hunan Nuo mask is divided into positive god, evil god, secular mask, in the image of some look dignified, some ferocious murder, some peaceful, amiable. However, these different shapes and styles have clear structure, smooth lines and different expressions in the patterns, which all reflect the exorcism and the yearning for a better life expressed by Nuo mask. The decorative forms of Nuo mask are varied and unique. The bright “pearl” pattern on the forehead expresses the feelings of terror, fear and fierce, which makes people feel mysterious and awestruck. Some patterns

draw lessons from bronze relief patterns, such as the common taotie pattern, sun pattern, auspicious animal pattern, dragon play bead pattern, double phoenix sunrise pattern, animal and plant pattern, cloud pattern, water pattern, ruyi pattern, etc. [7] The good and peaceful patterns in the modeling of dignified elegant, gentle, amiable, the use of such patterns in the modeling of smooth lines, full of beauty. The use of this kind of modeling expresses a relaxed and cheerful, cheerful feelings, so it is often used in the mask of good and peaceful face.

The fierce and ferocious patterns have mysterious power in shape, permeating people with surprise and strong romantic color. In the application of patterns, the fierce, ferocious and glaring patterns reflect strong religious feelings.

Even though the pattern is exaggerated, rough and full of tension, it shows the mystery of Nuo mask and contains a deep historical power.

#### ***4.3. Emotional Expression of Xiangxi Nuo Mask in Color Implication***

The decorative colors of Nuo masks in Western Hunan show strong character characteristics, such as love and hate, fear and perception of life. Color has a strong performance function and plays an important role in the creation process of Nuo mask. With the help of different color expression forms and diversified performance functions, the connotation, style and theme of Nuo mask are perfectly presented, so that each piece of Nuo mask created can have more vitality, appeal and influence.

Nuo masks, colour also with the aesthetic habits of the locals, the color of xiangxi nuo masks most traditional from the traditional color principle, use of bold, dense, exaggerated expression, on colour is applied by using contrast and bouncing colour collocation, The characters expressed by Nuo mask can be quickly conveyed to others. Western Hunan nuo mask uses earth red, chu shi and other colors. Coordinate its tonal collocation, colour is more bright beautiful, and has strong comparative, coordination, vision, etc., with lively, bright colors, the adornment result that show the bright, lively, warm atmosphere of festival, expresses the worship of nature, ghosts and gods faith, joy, pray for the best, flooding fierce attack cheung, fortune, risk-averse remove disaster, etc.

After a series of development, western Hunan Nuo mask has diversified types, with characteristics of local, folk, craft and so on. At the same time, Nuo culture has profound cultural deposits, and the cultural significance of its colors is reflected in many aspects. Nuo mask is posted during the event to welcome the gods, with auspicious and beautiful meaning, so the color keynote of Nuo mask in western Hunan often chooses bright and bright colors to show, the most common color form is the use of red, green and yellow, through exaggerated color collocation to give people a special visual experience.

In addition to the bright color matching, there is also a mask with bronze color. Even if this mask adopts a unique production process without coloring, the monochrome Exorcism mask can also convey the cruel, ferocious and horrible emotions to the audience. In short, western Hunan Nuo mask broke the standard of natural law through unique and rich colors, and created a unique color context belonging to nuo mask through unique color matching.

#### ***4.4. Emotional Expression of Xiangxi Nuo Mask in Material and Technology***

In ancient China, the most material of Nuo mask is wood carving mask, in addition to leather mask, copper mask and other masks of various materials. However, the

production method of Nuo masks in western Hunan is simple, and almost all of them are made by actors themselves. The materials are wood, paper and leather, etc. folk nuo masks are basically made of wood. Moreover, the Nuo masks made of different materials will bring different visual effects to the audience. Although they are all made of wood, the masks produced are also very different in form due to the differences of folk customs in different places. In the process of making exorcism mask, the easy-to-cut poplar or lilac wood is generally chosen for exorcism mask, and the carving begins after the exorcism mask is made. In addition, the poplar itself can also ward off evil spirits. Engraving technology using meticulous carving, engraving after the use of painting, coloring is the general advertising color, mostly dissonant direct primary color coating, and then brush transparent paint. All these convey the unique craft of folk craftsmen, and also reflect the unique aesthetic taste of xiangxi people.

Nuo masks in production, the carving skills is essential for the eyes, the eyes are the window to the soul, is an important hub of need to convey emotion, is vivid, the main points of the for the stand or fall of nuo masks sculpture carved all about expression and vivid expression, the eyes are the window to the soul, so in the eyes of craft that would have “male leopard, the female phoenix, good and evil, slanting”, From this we can distinguish the characteristics of male and female masks. Therefore, different carving techniques also convey different feelings, for example, serious and regular characters mostly use good god masks, while skewed and ferocious figures use evil ghost masks.

In addition, the shape of the mouth is also very exquisite, some Nuo masks pursed mouth, some mouth open, some mouth shut, some bared teeth, no matter what form of mouth is consistent with the identity and character of the gods. When a piece of exaggerated and powerful Nuo mask is presented in front of the audience, it is bound to bring a strong artistic enjoyment to the audience.

## 5. Conclusions

Western Hunan Nuo mask is a unique natural ecological culture, is an important part of Chinese traditional national culture, it is simple plastic arts and mysterious cultural deposits attracted the attention of scholars in various fields. As a unique traditional culture, Nuo mask contains rich cultural connotation and unique artistic expression. From the application of plastic art to the presentation of the production technology, every place carries people’s expectation of life and reveals the true portrayal of people’s life. The feelings it conveys not only reflect the wisdom of the working people but also show the unique artistic characteristics of folk art. At present, because the culture of Nuo mask is not taken seriously by people, it has been replaced by modern technology, which brings a lot of inconvenience for us to study Nuo culture today. In order to carry on the Nuo culture better, it is necessary to excavate the national and folk cultural heritage as soon as possible, and to experience the expression and inheritance of emotions on the basis of preserving the labor wisdom and artistic characteristics of people in ancient times.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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