The Application of Digital Image Art in Cross-Cultural Communication

Dongmeng Gao[1]

[1] Ph.D. Student, Department of Film and Image, Cheongju University, South Korea
Correspondence: Dongmeng Gao, Ph.D. Student, Department of Film and Image, Cheongju University, South Korea.

Abstract

Cross-cultural communication holds significant importance for cultural inheritance and economic development. In the current era of information, the role of digital image art in cross-cultural communication is becoming increasingly prominent, with its applications growing steadily. This article primarily analyzes the role of digital imagery in cross-cultural communication and its specific applications, while also proposing some suggestions on how to promote cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: digital image art, cross-cultural communication, new media

1. Introduction

Symbols are the foundation of culture and need to be disseminated in order to be inherited. With the advancement of human civilization consciousness and the formation of a trend towards globalization, cross-cultural communication is increasingly valued. Digital imagery is the product of the development of image art to a certain stage, with digital technology as its core. It can uphold the synchronicity, inheritance, and dynamism of culture, conveying cultural ideologies in cross-cultural communication. In addition, digital imagery also serves functions such as recording, documenting, beautifying, and storing, making it an important component of contemporary mass media culture.

2. The Significance of Digital Image Art in Cross-Cultural Communication

2.1 Direct Visualization of Culture

Culture is a comprehensive concept, encompassing the material and spiritual wealth created by humans throughout social and historical development. Each country and ethnicity has its unique culture. With the formation of a trend towards globalization, cross-cultural communication phenomena are becoming increasingly apparent, facilitating progress in various aspects of economy and culture through cultural exchanges between two or more parties. Therefore, we can understand the purpose of cross-cultural communication as achieving information sharing on a global scale.

During the communication process, language poses a significant barrier, as even within the same country, different ethnicities often speak different languages. Language emphasizes rationality and logic, while imagery is more

intuitive and visual. In comparison, imagery is easier to understand and can even transcend language barriers. For example, common warning signs such as "No Smoking," "No Parking," "Left Turn," etc., require no linguistic explanation and are universally understood. The mascots of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Fuwa, condensed elements of Chinese culture by incorporating animal images such as fish, pandas, and Tibetan antelopes into their appearance. Taking into account foreign cultures, their headpieces are closely associated with the sea, forests, and fire, while also embodying wishes for prosperity, joy, and passion. Their visual characteristics evoke strong perceptions and deepen memory retention.

2.2 Facilitating the Expansion of Communication Scope

In the past, cultural transmission was limited by geographical constraints, resulting in a limited scope of cultural dissemination. However, it is precisely because of this limitation that each region could develop its own distinct culture and language. Cross-cultural communication is conducive to the inheritance and development of culture, as it allows for the borrowing of strengths from other cultures, compensation for one's own deficiencies, and integration of new elements, thereby extending its vitality.

The art of imagery emerged around the 1960s, and after more than 30 years of development, by the mid-1990s, digital technology rapidly emerged and was widely applied. Subsequently, digital image art became mainstream. Its advantage lies in largely breaking through geographical constraints, offering more dissemination channels, faster transmission speeds, and broader reach, thus enabling more people worldwide to understand it. With society now firmly entrenched in the digital age, the diverse means of artistic expression in imagery, such as digital cameras, mobile media, digital television, online platforms, etc., further expand the scope of cross-cultural communication. Moreover, compared to traditional methods, digital image dissemination also features real-time characteristics, enabling the immediate dissemination of authentic information.

3. Manifestation of Digital Image Art in Cross-Cultural Communication

3.1 Manifestation in Television

Television media has a relatively long history, and today digital television, multimedia television, mobile television, etc., all have vast markets. Television is not only an entertainment tool but also bears the responsibility of cultural dissemination. It encompasses various forms such as dramas, documentaries, operas, music, etc., creating favorable conditions for cross-cultural communication.

For example, the documentary series "A Bite of China" produced by China Central Television (CCTV) focuses on the theme of culinary delights from various regions across the country. It introduces and disseminates local lifestyles, cultural customs, ethical values, and more. Unlike typical food programs that analyze each dish's ingredients, seasoning proportions, preparation methods, and processes, "A Bite of China" takes a broader approach. It portrays not only the culinary aspect but also related factors such as geography, local customs, and traditions, showcasing the specific environments of various cuisines with a rich humanistic touch. Additionally, CCTV's cultural documentary series aims to summarize traditional culture, with titles like "Chinese Costume Culture," "Ancient Weapons Unveiled," "My Work at the Forbidden City Restoring Cultural Relics," employing modern digital imaging technology to faithfully recreate traditional culture. This has significant practical implications for cross-cultural communication.

3.2 Manifestation in Films

Films represent another important form of expression. Compared to television, films are more concise in content and duration. However, like television media, they play a significant role in cross-cultural communication. Traditional films were shot on celluloid, but with technological advancements, digital filming has gradually replaced celluloid, leading to noticeable improvements in efficiency and quality, resulting in better overall outcomes. There are many film genres, and cultural dissemination-themed films are not uncommon. For example, "Seagull," produced by the Beijing Film Academy Youth Film Studio in 1981, tells the story of the Chinese women's volleyball team, represented by seagulls, undergoing rigorous training before participating in international championships. Despite injuries, they persist, reflecting athletes' contemplation of the meaning of life. "Shaolin Temple," produced by Zhongyuan Film Studio in 1982, created a frenzy in China, with crowds flocking to theaters. It sparked global interest in Shaolin

culture and Kung Fu. Although primarily an action film, it laid a solid foundation for the subsequent dissemination of Shaolin culture, Kung Fu culture, and Zen culture. In 2016, "Mr. Zhang's Believe It or Not" depicts the inheritance of Suona music on the surface, while delving into profound reflections on how to inherit traditional culture and the attitude towards it.

3.3 Manifestation in New Media Forms

New media primarily refers to modern information technology based on the Internet, encompassing diverse platforms such as blogs, videos, forums, and live streaming, providing more avenues for cross-cultural communication. Taking sports culture as an example, sports events have garnered significant attention in recent years, with China's four major web portals (Sina, NetEase, Sohu, Tencent) all having dedicated sports sections. For instance, Sina Sports' homepage features sections such as sports news, sports videos, and live events, allowing audiences to quickly access the latest developments and watch live matches according to their preferences. Topics such as Chinese football, international football, Chinese basketball, and the NBA dominate the pages, alongside sections for comprehensive sports coverage, popular blogs, and interactive communities. In terms of blogs, in addition to sports columns, there are also sections for exciting recommendations, grassroots influencers, and hot topics, catering to readers' diverse needs through image displays, video playback, and textual analysis.

3.4 Manifestation in Documentaries

Documentaries use real-life events and experiences as creative materials, aiming to present reality and provoke people's thoughts. The essence of documentaries lies in authenticity. As many cultures are gradually disappearing, traditional methods of inheritance such as written records and oral traditions are relatively inefficient. Digital image art can solve most of these problems by dynamically recording and permanently preserving cultural expressions through visuals and sound. It can also reconstruct some lost cultures based on existing data and showcase them in high-definition quality. For example, "A Hundred Years of Cinema" is a large-scale documentary produced to commemorate the centenary of Chinese cinema. It brings many

unknown materials to the screen, allowing some long-forgotten historical archives to reappear, narrating the twists and turns of Chinese cinema over the past century. Documentaries such as "Huayin Laoqiang," "Cross-talk Archives," "Quanzhou Nanyin," and "Yangliuqing New Year Paintings" record and preserve specific cultural phenomena, ensuring their continued inheritance. This applies not only to traditional culture but also to modern culture, as seen in the official documentary "Dreaming of Beijing 2008" of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, which documented the entire Olympic process, showcasing the rich and diverse sports culture.

4. Measures to Promote Cross-Cultural Communication Through Digital Image Art

4.1 Establishing Brand Awareness and Integrating Cultural Resources

In a country with a long history and profound cultural heritage like China, despite the highly developed digital imaging technology, many cultures are still at risk of disappearing. Besides recording tools and methods, other factors need to be considered. Firstly, there is a need to transform outdated and conservative mindsets in some regions. Some regions hold onto the belief that their local culture is unique and are reluctant to engage with the outside world. However, this behavior not only fails to protect the culture but also leads to cultural dispersion and isolation, which in the long run, is detrimental to the dissemination and inheritance of local culture. Therefore, local government departments should change their mindset, actively engage with the outside world, promote local culture, and showcase its economic and cultural value.

Every region has its unique culture, to increase its visibility and influence, it's necessary to select representative cultural elements and cultivate them into branded culture. Local governments should not only prioritize cultural dissemination and establish relevant systems but also lead by example, actively participating in shaping the local brand. For example, the Shaolin Temple could promote its culture through documentaries, martial arts performances, Buddhist activities, essay competitions, etc., attracting more audiences and laying the groundwork for cross-cultural communication.

4.2 Utilizing Modern Technology to Update Communication Channels

Efficient communication channels are crucial for

cross cultural communication. While mainstream media and film have been major platforms in the past, currently, the internet seems to be the strongest trend, offering more diverse forms of communication such as live streaming, lectures, humorous commentary, and animation production to meet the needs of different audiences. In the future, there is a need to expand communication channels, seize cultural territory, and fully utilize the advantages of modern technologies like digital imaging. For example, Disney's animated film "Mulan" drew inspiration from Chinese history but integrated a significant amount of American culture into its creation, vividly showcasing the characters' inner emotions through song and dance, and employing extensive animation techniques to create a more dimensional portrayal, thus making significant contributions to promoting cultural exchange between China and the United States.

Animation and film, as forms of cross-cultural communication, are becoming increasingly prominent in today's society. When producing animated works, China should retain its local characteristics, reflect its Chineseness, while also considering the sentiments of audiences worldwide and integrating with external cultures. Additionally, the selection of themes should cater to the spiritual needs of modern people, choosing topics that are timely, universal, and resonate with foreign audiences.

4.3 Cultivating Excellent Talent and Ensuring Continuity

Cross-cultural communication is a long-term endeavor that requires a continuous supply of talent. The gradual disappearance of many traditional cultures domestically is closely related to the lack of successors. Particularly in remote areas, local cultures are often passed down through generations within families and remain unknown to the outside world, thereby limiting cultural dissemination. Alternatively, in fields with numerous schools of thought, there may be insufficient mutual exchange and learning.

Therefore, cross-cultural communication requires the cultivation of a large number of outstanding talents. To address the waning interest of young people in traditional arts like opera, it's necessary to keep up with the times. While preserving the essence of traditional culture, innovation in content and themes is

essential to disseminate culture through modern means. This necessitates digital image creators to emphasize the promotion of traditional culture and skillfully integrate modern elements into their creations, exploring new paths for cultural dissemination.

4.4 Considering Market Factors and Gradually Aligning with the International Market

In the current market environment, cultural dissemination cannot escape the influence of market forces. To better achieve cross-cultural communication, it's essential to consider global perspectives and gradually align with the international market. Taking the creation of ecological documentaries as an example, cultures worldwide share many commonalities, and creators should leverage this universality to tell Chinese ecological stories using an international visual and auditory language. For instance, the documentary "Drinking from the Same River" focuses on the Lancang-Mekong River within China and extends to countries like Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar, encompassing their natural environments, social life, history, culture, and religious beliefs. It serves as an excellent example of communication and cooperation between nations. Many domestic digital image artists reject the commercial aspect of cultural dissemination. However, the reality is that cross-cultural communication cannot be separated from the market. Attention should be paid to the aesthetic expectations of international audiences and their psychological acceptance of films and television. Researching the international market for ecological documentaries, exploring multimedia marketing strategies, and cultivating the brand of Chinese ecological documentaries are essential steps forward.

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