Innovative Practices of Narrative Expression in Graphic Design Empowered by Traditional Cultural IPs

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of the in-depth advancement of the cultural confidence strategy and the vigorous development of the IP economy, traditional cultural IPs, with their profound cultural heritage and strong dissemination power, have become an important source of inspiration for graphic design innovation. Narrative expression in graphic design, as a core means of conveying information and evoking resonance, has a natural logical convergence point with the integration of traditional cultural IPs. This article, based on the intrinsic connection between traditional cultural IPs and graphic design narratives, analyzes the innovative directions from three dimensions: narrative content, form, and emotion. It explores the practical paths of IP screening and deconstruction, symbolic translation, and cross-media scene expansion, and proposes optimization strategies and evaluation systems in response to the current practical predicaments. The research aims to provide theoretical references and practical lessons for graphic design to break through the expression bottleneck and achieve a win-win situation of cultural and communication values, promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional culture in the modern design context.

Keywords: Traditional culture IP; Graphic design; Narrative expression; Innovative practice; Empowerment mechanism

1. Introduction

With the intensification of competition in the modern design industry and the upgrading of the audience's aesthetic demands, graphic design has gradually shifted from simple visual decoration to narrative creation that focuses on emotional transmission and cultural expression [1]. As a spiritual treasure of the Chinese nation, traditional culture is rich in symbolic resources, story cores and value concepts. The development of IP has injected stronger dissemination vitality and commercial potential into it. Combining traditional cultural IPs with narrative expression in graphic design can not only enrich the cultural connotation of the design but also strengthen the emotional connection and cultural identity of the audience through narrative logic [2]. At present, some design works have problems such as superficial cultural expression, chaotic narrative logic and insufficient

innovation, and have failed to fully leverage the enabling value of traditional cultural IPs. Based on this, this paper conducts a systematic study on the intrinsic connection, innovative dimensions, practical paths, and guarantee optimization between traditional cultural IPs and graphic design narratives, with the aim of providing practical and feasible ideas for cultural innovation and narrative upgrading in graphic design, and facilitating the inheritance and development of traditional culture in the contemporary design field.

2. The intrinsic connection between traditional cultural IPs and narrative in graphic design

2.1. The narrative core and value transformation of traditional cultural IPs

The core competitiveness of traditional cultural IPs stems from the narrative core they carry, which is composed of historical stories, cultural symbols and spiritual concepts. From myths and legends, historical allusions to folk customs and traditional skills, traditional cultural IPs convey the values and aesthetic tastes of the Chinese nation through concrete narrative carriers [3]. The "Dunhuang Cultural IP" takes the images of flying apsaras, caisson ceilings, and donors in murals as narrative elements, carrying the memories of cultural integration along the Silk Road and the aesthetic pursuit of Buddhist art. The "Forbidden City IP" unfolds its narrative around royal architecture, cultural relics and collections, and court etiquette, embodying imperial power culture, craftsmanship spirit and traditional aesthetic thoughts [4]. The value transformation of traditional cultural IPs is reflected in the leap from cultural resources to design capital. In the context of modern communication, it refines core symbols and reconstructs narrative logic, converting abstract cultural connotations into visual elements and emotional carriers that can be utilized by design. This not only retains the core genes of culture but also, through expression methods that conform to contemporary aesthetics, enables traditional culture to gain recognition from young audiences and achieve the unity of cultural value, aesthetic value and commercial value.

2.2. Core elements of narrative expression in graphic design

The narrative expression of graphic design uses visual language as a medium, and through the orderly organization of design elements, it constructs a complete narrative logic to achieve information transmission and emotional communication. Its core elements include narrative symbols, narrative structure and narrative context. Narrative symbols form the foundation of narrative in graphic design, encompassing visual elements such as graphics, colors, text, and layout. Each symbol carries specific cultural significance and emotional orientation. In the traditional cultural context, red symbolizes auspiciousness and joy, while ink-wash graphics convey the ethereal and elegant Oriental aesthetics. Narrative structure serves as the framework of narrative in graphic design. It forms a logical and hierarchical narrative thread through the arrangement and combination of symbolic elements. Common types include linear narrative, non-linear narrative, and thematic narrative. The narrative context provides the background for the generation of meaning in designing narratives, including cultural context, era context and audience context. Only narrative expressions that fit the context can evoke the resonance and understanding of the audience [5].

3. Innovative dimensions of narrative expression in graphic design empowered by traditional cultural IPs

3.1. Narrative content innovation: contemporary translation of traditional cultural IPs

The contemporary translation of traditional cultural IPs is at the core of narrative content innovation, and the

key lies in achieving an organic connection between traditional culture and modern life. On the one hand, through the youth-oriented translation of themes, the core themes in traditional cultural IPs that align with the values of contemporary audiences are explored. The "spirit of exploration" is extracted from "Chang 'e Flying to the Moon", and the "perseverance and struggle" are interpreted from "Yu Gong Moving Mountains", making traditional themes resonate with the spiritual needs of modern society [6]. On the other hand, through the life-oriented translation of content, the elements of traditional cultural IPs are combined with daily life scenarios, and the "24 Solar Terms" are integrated into scenarios such as food packaging, clothing design, and home decoration, allowing traditional culture to enter every aspect of modern life [6]. In addition, it also includes the deconstruction and reconstruction of traditional cultural IPs, breaking the inherent narrative framework, extracting core symbols and elements and recombining them to create new narrative themes and expression forms. For instance, elements such as facial makeup and costumes from the "Peking Opera IP" can be combined with modern workplace and campus life to construct a new narrative where "traditional aesthetics collide with modern life".

3.2. Narrative form innovation: the integration and breakthrough of graphic design language

The innovation of narrative forms is reflected in the cross-border integration and technological breakthroughs of graphic design languages. In the integration of traditional and modern techniques, traditional artistic skills are combined with modern design language. The agility of calligraphy strokes echoes the simplicity of flat design, and the shaping characteristics of traditional crafts such as paper-cutting and shadow puppetry are integrated with the precision of digital design, creating a visual effect that combines Eastern aesthetics with modernity. The graphic design works in the cultural and creative products of the Palace Museum combine traditional meticulous painting techniques with modern layout design, which not only retains the exquisite sense of court aesthetics but also conforms to the aesthetic habits of contemporary audiences [7]. In the exploration of multi-sensory narrative forms, the visual limitations of graphic design are broken through. Through the arrangement of design elements, numerous sensory associations are triggered. In packaging design, the textures of Xuan paper and silk are simulated, combined with the colors and graphics related to the IP theme, allowing the audience to feel the texture of traditional culture through touch. In poster design, text layout is used to simulate the rhythm and cadence of traditional opera, triggering auditory associations and enriching the layering of narrative expression.

4. Innovative practical paths for empowering narrative in graphic design with traditional cultural IPs

4.1. Methods for screening and deconstructing traditional cultural IPs

The screening of traditional cultural IPs should follow the principles of adaptability, uniqueness and sustainability. The adaptability requirement is that the selected IP should be in line with the application scenarios and target audience of the graphic design. For designs targeting children, IPs with childlike fun such as "Nezha's Rebellion in the Sea" and "The Seven Little Clowns," can be chosen. Uniqueness requires that IP has a distinct cultural identity and a differentiated narrative core to avoid homogeneous competition. Sustainability requires that IP possess abundant elemental resources and an expandable narrative space, capable of supporting long-term design innovation [8]. IP deconstruction is a key step in achieving the effective transformation of cultural elements, mainly including three levels: symbol extraction, which involves extracting representative visual symbols from traditional cultural IPs and simplifying, refining and optimizing them to meet the visual expression requirements of graphic design; Sort

out the thread, sort out the core storyline, character relationships and spiritual connotations of the IP, and clarify the core theme and emotional orientation of the designed narrative. Value mining delves deeply into the cultural value, spiritual concepts and contemporary significance behind the IP, providing ideological support for design narratives and ensuring that design works possess both visual appeal and cultural depth [9].

4.2. The symbolic translation path of graphic design narrative

Symbolic translation is the core link connecting traditional cultural IPs with the narrative of graphic design, and it should follow the principle of "retaining the core and innovating the form". Firstly, through the abstract translation of concrete symbols, the concrete elements in traditional cultural IPs are transformed into concise and generalized visual symbols. The Outlines of the palaces in the Forbidden City are simplified into geometric shapes, and the patterns of blue and white porcelain are refined into line symbols, making them more suitable for the application scenarios of modern graphic design [10]. Secondly, through the metaphorical translation of imagery symbols, the abstract concepts in traditional cultural IPs are metaphorically expressed through concrete visual symbols. The "pine and crane" symbol is used to symbolize "longevity", the "peony" symbol to symbolize "wealth and honor", and the "full moon" symbol to symbolize "reunion", allowing the abstract cultural connotations to be conveyed to the audience through intuitive visual forms. At the same time, through the reconstruction and combination of symbols, different IP symbol elements are creatively combined to form new visual symbols and narrative meanings. For instance, the symbols of the "Four Gentlemen" - plum, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum - are combined with a modern and simple layout to construct the narrative theme of "The character of a gentleman".

4.3. Practice of expanding narrative scenarios under cross-media convergence

Cross-media integration provides a broader scene space for traditional cultural IPs to empower the narrative of graphic design. In physical media scenarios, the narrative of graphic design can be extended to areas such as cultural and creative products, brand packaging, and urban public Spaces. The narrative elements of the "Dunhuang cultural IP" can be applied to the graphic design of cultural and creative products such as stationery, clothing, and household items. Through carriers like product packaging and appearance design, the daily dissemination of traditional cultural IPs can be achieved. Integrate the "Traditional folk customs" IP into the design of public Spaces such as city posters, bus stops, and community bulletin boards, making the city a carrier for the dissemination of traditional culture. In the digital media context, graphic design narratives can achieve diversified expressions through new media platforms. Dynamic posters, emoticons, short video covers and other design works based on traditional cultural IPs can be launched on social media platforms, attracting young audiences through interactive and interesting narrative forms. By integrating AR and VR technologies with graphic design and digital experience, AR QR codes can be embedded in poster design. After scanning, the audience can watch animations, story explanations and other content related to IP, achieving an upgrade from static narrative to dynamic narrative and enriching the audience's sense of experience and participation [11].

5. Practical guarantee and optimization of traditional cultural IP empowering narrative innovation in graphic design

5.1. The practical predicament of traditional cultural IPs empowering narrative in graphic design

There are still many predicaments in the current practice of traditional cultural IPs empowering the narrative of

graphic design. The exploration of IP is not deep enough. Some design works merely pile up traditional cultural symbols in a simple way, failing to explore the profound cultural connotations and narrative logic behind the IP, resulting in a lack of ideological depth and cultural recognition in the design works. Due to insufficient translation capabilities, some design works have problems such as stiff symbols, outdated forms, and disconnection from modern aesthetics when transforming traditional cultural IPs into visual symbols, making it difficult to resonate with contemporary audiences [12]. The emotional connection is weak. Some design works ignore the emotional needs of the audience, only focusing on the innovation of visual forms and failing to convey the emotional value of traditional culture through narrative expression, resulting in a lack of emotional resonance between the audience and the design works. The absence of an evaluation system has not yet formed a scientific and complete evaluation standard, making it difficult to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the innovation degree of design narratives, cultural communication effects, and audience feedback, which has affected the continuous optimization of practical innovation.

5.2. Optimization strategies and path improvement for innovative practices

In response to the above-mentioned predicament, optimization strategies need to be formulated from multiple dimensions. In terms of IP mining, we should enhance systematic research on traditional cultural IPs, deeply explore their historical background, cultural connotations, spiritual concepts and narrative threads, establish a resource library of traditional cultural IPs, and provide rich material support for designing narratives. At the same time, we should pay attention to the differentiated mining of IPs and avoid excessive concentration on popular IPs. Unearth niche but culturally valuable traditional cultural IPs to achieve differentiated competition in design narratives [13]. In terms of enhancing translation capabilities, it is necessary to strengthen the cultivation of designers' cultural literacy and innovation ability, encourage them to deeply study traditional cultural knowledge, master the integration skills of traditional art techniques and modern design language, and at the same time pay attention to audience research to understand the aesthetic needs and cultural cognition of different audience groups, so that the visual symbols and narrative forms after translation are more in line with the acceptance habits of the audience. In terms of strengthening emotional connections, we adhere to the narrative concept of "audience-centered", construct narrative logic around the emotional needs of the audience, and enhance the emotional appeal of the design narrative through storytelling expression, scene-based presentation, and other methods.

5.3. Construction of an evaluation system for the innovative effect of narrative expression

A scientific evaluation system is an important guarantee for the continuous optimization of innovative practices and needs to cover multiple evaluation dimensions. In the dimension of cultural dissemination, the effect of design works on the dissemination of traditional cultural IPs is evaluated, including indicators such as the popularization degree of traditional cultural knowledge, the recognition of cultural symbols, and the recognition of cultural values. The dimension of design innovation assesses the degree of innovation of design works in terms of narrative content, form, emotional expression, etc., including indicators such as the innovativeness of the theme, the uniqueness of symbol translation, and the rationality of narrative structure. The audience feedback dimension collects feedback information such as the audience's satisfaction with the design work, emotional resonance, and communication willingness through methods like questionnaires, interviews, and social media data analysis, which serves as an important basis for evaluation [14]. In terms of commercial value dimensions, for commercial graphic design works, their contributions to enhancing brand image, increasing product sales, and

other aspects are evaluated, including indicators such as increased brand awareness and growth in market share. Through a multi-dimensional evaluation system, the effectiveness of innovative practices is comprehensively measured to provide data support for subsequent optimization and improvement.

6. Conclusion

Traditional cultural IPs are important carriers of national cultural genes, providing rich resources and broad space for narrative innovation in graphic design. This paper dissects the intrinsic connection between the two, clarifies the innovation direction from the dimensions of content, form and emotion, explores the practical paths of IP screening and deconstruction, symbolic translation and cross-media scenario expansion, and constructs an optimization framework covering IP mining, translation ability, emotional connection and evaluation system. This empowerment not only enriches the cultural connotation and innovative vitality of graphic design, but also promotes the contemporary dissemination and creative transformation of traditional culture. In the future, as the cultural confidence strategy advances and design technology develops, the integration of the two will become more profound. Designers need to enhance their cultural learning and innovative practice, creating works with multiple values to contribute to the inheritance of traditional culture and the high-quality development of the graphic design industry.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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