The Construction and Communication Strategy of Chinese City Animation IP in the New Media Era--Taking "Qin Feng" as an Example

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Abstract: *With the advent of the new media era, the public puts higher requirements on the sensory experience of the city image. Animation IP uses anthropomorphic design methods to vividly, accurately, and intuitively show the development process and unique regional cultural symbols of a city, consolidating the core competitiveness of the city. On the one hand, it further promotes the innovation and inheritance of local culture in the new era; on the other hand, it establishes a recyclable cultural industry ecosystem to promote the transformation, upgrading, and scientific development of the urban cultural tourism industry. This paper focuses on Shaanxi animation IP resources "Qin Feng" and discusses it from three aspects: culture, cross-border operation, and new media communication, in order to provide a reference innovation path for animation development and urban empowerment.*

Keywords: *New Media; City Image; Animation IP; Communication Strategy; Qin Feng*

1. Introduction

China's traditional culture is profound and timeless. Each city is influenced by culture and contains unique and profound humanistic values and spiritual connotations. In recent years, with the continuous development of the Internet, digital technology, and intelligent technology, the public is increasingly inclined to pursue uniqueness and novelty in the audiovisual presentation of city images. The combination of unique city culture and animation, using the new media platform's advantages, can create widespread and time-sensitive communication that will promote the city's image and drive the cultural tourism industry. This way of combination can construct urban IP and maximize the extension of the city's lifeline. City animation IP incubation is meant to meet the law of animation design and extract the essence from the city itself. Shaanxi local IP "Qin Feng" opens up a new stage of animation city image with multiple performance fields and derives the corresponding cultural and creative industry chain. Moreover, it promotes the integration of tradition and modernity. So that the public can shuttle ancient and modern, understand the art and culture in history and modern, cultivate cultural literacy, and finally strengthen cultural self-confidence.

2. The connotation and development status of urban animation IP

IP means intellectual property. As a product of the Internet era, it refers to cultural and creative resources that have exploitable social and commercial value and a certain fan base. It can be a story, an image, an artwork, or a popular culture. [1]The concept of IP is gradually gaining popularity as a "cultural chip" for cities, giving them a new reference sample for urban development and providing an effective way to enhance their image and the needs of the market economy. Ultimately, it makes the stereotypical city lively and dynamic and is a powerful measure to bring together the spiritual forces of the city. After China set the vision of becoming a cultural powerhouse by 2035, a wave of innovation centered on urban animation IP has been set in motion. Many cities have given full play to their creative strengths in animation, tapping into local traditional cultural resources and launching a wealth of creative artworks in animation. For example, representative creations include Shaanxi's local animation work "The Legend of the Five Elements of Qin", Qiao Qiao's "Tang Niu" *(See Figure 1)* and Yan He's "Qin Feng"; Zhejiang's Dajingshan "Lu Yu and the Little Monk of Tea" characteristic cultural tourism IP, etc. Through such excellent artworks, the Chinese story is told, and cultural genes are passed on, allowing people to experience culture and enlighten their minds through the art of

animation.

Figure 1: Qiao Qiao's "Tang Niu"

2.1. IP generation in the urban context

The creative core of city IP comes from culture, which has strong attraction and appeal. It has significant value as one of the foundations of urban, comprehensive competitiveness. Nowadays, the creation of city IP is not only limited to the excavation, protection, packaging, and publicity of historical sites and natural landscapes but is also traced back to the city's development. After sorting out resources, the city IP ecology is constructed through cultural and creative matters, and the cultural tourism industry is fully integrated to realize commercial value. The industrial chain of a city includes multiple industries, such as brand marketing, cultural tourism empowerment, rural revitalization, process manufacturing, and clothing design. The shaping of urban IP can comprehensively promote the systematic development of various industries in the city and realize the transformation and upgrading. In the meantime, the effective collection of information, capital, and talent flow thus help the urban economy to enhance vitality and creativity.

With the influence of secondary culture, urban IP has been subdivided and re-integrated, given the attributes of a fan economy.[2] "Generation Z" is the main group of material consumption on the Internet and the main force of cultural communication and consumption. With the rise of the IP boom, creating a city image in animation design has broadened the consumer market. On the other hand, it has gained attention and traffic in a short period. It builds topicality and attracts investment in projects in related industries, including commercial innovation in the cultural and creative industries, the synergistic development of the three major industries, and the improvement of the city's IP industry chain, honestly promoting the prosperous development of all areas of local culture, society and economy.

As far as the ACGN community is concerned, the cross-border linkage between urban animation IP images and other industries is like a derivative of animation with extraordinary emotional and cultural significance. Animation content adaptation, extension, and innovation are necessary, it jumps out of the original story content and modern society to communicate. The completion of the sub-element landing through animation means that the city can be young and inherited, leveraging the mass multicultural market and releasing the industrial potential energy.

2.2. The Uniqueness and Plasticity of Animation

As a form of artistic expression that expresses diversity and integrates technology, art, and ideas, animation has become one of the most important cultural forms of the visual age. The uniqueness of animation refers to the full range of sensory stimuli. Through its distinctive creative conception, freely constructed virtual situations, and non-linear interactive narrative logic, it mobilizes the audience's visual and auditory systems, giving them the most direct aesthetic sensation and exuding a lively and fresh atmosphere. Some obscure and boring urban culture has the opportunity to break through the barriers of time and expertise, thus becoming more 'approachable' and popular with the general public.[3]Therefore, the combination of animation and urban culture has multiple values, such as strong pleasure, edification, and cultural demonstration.

The media nature of animation is malleable, and its transmission channels are different from other

industries. Compared to general information dissemination and network communication, this malleable communication method has a stronger interactive nature, prompting information receivers and transmitters to efficiently complete multiple two-way or even multi-way interactive communication while information is disseminated and fed back. The public will participate in the virtual urban cultural environment and participate in animation performances. With the occurrence of interaction, the experience content between the virtual world and the real world is finally created.

2.3. Digital display of the city's development

Through continuous reform, opening up, and modernization, as well as the rapid development of advanced technology, the masses, especially young people, have undergone significant changes in knowledge reserves, spiritual needs, ways of thinking, and information reception channels. These all put forward new requirements for the image of the city. Therefore, how to ' make the city alive ' becomes the most crucial problem to solve. With the continuous development of the current social era, new media has become an indispensable part of people's lives. Its value is not directly in the production of new things but in the use of the potential of cultural industries and the Internet, thinking to generate value. Through one-to-many communication, digitally display the development process of the city, extensively break through the influence of the city, and promote the long-term preservation and development of urban culture.

As an innovative and upgraded form of cultural industry, the research on integrating urban IP and animation relies on the advantages of new media to carry out multi-faceted marketing. From ' cloud ' to ' terminal ', set up mobile phones, computers, and television ' three-screen interactive, synchronous transmission ' of the whole media communication system, in the Internet and urban propaganda between the bridge. The use of new forms of digital technology, with the characteristics of the city's culture, architecture, food, and folk, so that tourists from all over the country can always experience the colorful charm of a city, so as to stimulate public interest in understanding, awaken cultural consciousness, the formation of emotional resonance. For example, Binzhou City in Shandong Province launched the Yellow River Guardians Alliance, which focuses on the local Yellow River farming culture and integrates the Yellow River knife fish, cotton, wheat, and other notable industries. The IP images of Mother Yellow River, Knife Fish Prefecture, Cotton Elf, and Wheat Elf have been created to convey the beautiful vision of ecological protection and high-quality development of the Yellow River basin.

3. Design Conception and Communication Strategy of "Qin Feng"

Shaanxi is one of the birthplaces of the Chinese nation. The capitals of the thirteen dynasties, such as Zhou, Qin, Han, and Tang, were built here. It is also the location of the Terracotta Warriors, one of the world's eight wonders. With a long history and unique geographical location, Shaanxi has become an important representative area of the national cultural heritage, giving birth to much brilliant crystallization of the times. The Qin Dynasty is an essential part of China's splendid civilization and vital for strengthening people's cultural self-confidence. In order to further explore the possibility of the connection between Qin culture and modern society, animation director Yan He prepared for four years to let history shine into reality. Let the Qin Dynasty culture, passed down for thousands of years, write a new brilliant chapter with the ' youthful face '. *(See Figure 2)*

3.1. Develop original IP based on traditional culture

The terracotta warriors are essential participants in the exchange of world civilizations. They not only carry the ancient Chinese civilization but also witness the progress of modern science and technology. To some extent, they have become a representative of Shaanxi and even China. "Qin Feng" builds on the rich heritage of Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum and draws refinements from the shapes of the general terracotta warriors. The garment details, the number of armor pieces, and the proportional distribution of sizes have been adjusted accordingly while strictly following the logic of the armor form. At the same time, regarding many historical materials, the decoration and color-matching characteristics of the pre-Qin period are appropriately simplified and exaggerated. After six modifications, the work finally came out. In the national mind, the Qin dynasty's underpinnings are vast, fervent, and rugged, and Qin Feng's brave character should fit in with them. While retaining the traditional essence, the new era's temperament and style are highlighted. As Yan He says in his company profile, "Chinese civilization is not only deep but also funny; Chinese history is not only thick

but also light and spiritual." [4]

Since 2013, Yan He has been interested in the Terracotta Warriors and Horses. With the support of Shaanxi's animation industry, in addition to the "Qin Feng", a series of animation characters, including soldiers, civil officials, and war horses, was created in the same period, laying the foundation for subsequent plot strings and film development. *(See Figure 3)* The original IP is carefully launched with a popular perspective and infused with contemporary art and design elements. It retains the seriousness and typicality of traditional culture but also has the entertainment and popularity of fashion and dynamism. The original Chinese character is given an international affinity to achieve the city's goal of creative transformation and innovative development and create an exclusive Chinese label.

Figure 2, Figure 3: Yan He's "Qin Feng" and Other Characters in the Series

3.2. Cross-border operations as the core to promote integration

The cross-border operation of "Qinfeng" IP covers multiple fields, such as cultural tourism guidance, brand joint name, commercial activity endorsement, and product marketing, and has unlimited derivative possibilities. In 2017, he made his debut at the International Silk Rally hosted by Russia, starting in Moscow, passing through Kazakhstan, entering China from Xinjiang, and finishing in Xi 'an. *(See Figure 4)* During the whole process of the competition, the promotional video with "Qin Feng" as the protagonist was rolled out, representing Shaanxi and China to the world, so most Chinese people were excited. In addition, it cooperates with well-known brands such as Jingdong, Pizza Hut, Bingfeng, Xifuxiang, and Xifeng Liquor to open storytelling and narrative marketing, giving the brand a new concept. In terms of event endorsements, it gave voice to the opening of the Xicheng high-speed railway, the Shaanxi theme pavilion for the Beijing Winter Olympics, and the China Radio and Television Awards. Remarkable appearances in global media, using the media effect to enrich the scene operations. Animation IP is no longer a single vertical content but transforms into a cultural symbol, linking with various industries and becoming empowerment. *(See Figure 5)*

Figure 4, Figure 5: The Activities and Brand Endorsements of "Qin Feng"

With the integration and development of various industries, the emotional value of "Qin Feng" has become increasingly prominent. On the one hand, it is based on its content characteristics, grasps the essence of culture, and presents the city's landscape. On the other hand, it integrates the operation matrix, links up with brands and activities across borders, and creates a narrative that considers knowledge, fun, and interactivity to build wide public recognition. It further accelerates the deep integration of animation and the city's industrial chain, achieving a win-win development.

3.3. Building pluralistic communication with new media as a guide

"Qin Feng" also launched the major community media under the original IP scene, characters, and narrative style of the script re-creation, abandoning the original single media and boring advertising.

New media content keeps up with current events, brings new story content, and explores innovation points based on meeting industrial needs. *(See Figure 6, Figure 7)* In 2021, Qinfeng led the launch of the "Shaanxi Pride" live media event, and in 2022, it launched the Traveling Dreams project, an online "cloud cultural tourism" campaign that combines landmarks in Xi'an. The benefits of this experience are mainly reflected in presentation, interactive experience, and data storage. The contribution of new media platforms to the current city image not only introduces new tools but also expands the depth and breadth of IP. More people can approach the city culture through the new media platform, have a close perception of the spirit of traditional culture, and understand the rich connotation of culture. Interpretation of the city is no longer dull with a new way and experience that the city is becoming a new era of urban IP construction trend.

James Carey, the main representative of American cultural studies, put forward that communication, as the construction of meaning, can complete sharing, participation, and communication. When constructed as a symbolic reality, communication can represent, maintain, adapt, and share the common beliefs of a society, thereby enabling and implementing social change. It is necessary to link traditional urban culture with public life. First of all, animation IP is required to appear in a new attitude. Secondly, creators should integrate the online media matrix and build diversified communication. Expand the intensity of communication, contribute to the effect of IP, and make the city culture ' into the homes of ordinary people, ' Chinese culture and wisdom can play a strong voice in the times.

Figure 6, Figure 7: Interesting Presentation of "Qin Feng" on New Media Platform

4. Innovation Inspiration and Optimization Path of "Qin Feng"

4.1. Homophily: people-oriented, awakening collective cultural memory

Accumulation of thousands of years of urban civilization handed down from generation to generation is the entire Chinese nation and every Chinese common cultural memory and collective memory. French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs initiated the theory of ' collective memory ', emphasizing that ' collective memory ' is the result of people sharing and inheriting the past things in a particular social group. Thus, individuals can find the corresponding identity in the ' collective memory ' and obtain cultural identity. As a symbol of cultural memory, city IP contains a deep cultural tone. Each city has its unique connotation. It should be based on the public, establish the emotional tone of the IP content narrative for the first time, construct group values, and control the shaping and development of the city image stably and effectively.[5] Kumamoto prefecture in Japan is the best example. Based on its unique geographical location and architectural features, the city uses red and black as the leading color tone to create a simple and lovely image of Kumamoto, which has gained significant attention at home and abroad.

The long river of history running urban civilization through the dynasties spread so far and became the heritage of civilization's wealth. Throughout the animation IP construction of various cities, urban culture is not as obscure as stereotypes, and it is closely related to modern public life. In the face of the multi-layered and diverse demands of the people for cultural life, the significance of IP is to meet the growing spiritual needs of the people, build an emotional connection with them, and give new life and vitality to urban culture.

4.2. High frequency: creating an associated memory for IP communication

If excellent IP infrequently appears, producing a memory effect in the audience's hearts is

challenging to improve the frequency of audience view. Social media platforms such as Tiktok, Micro-blog, Bilibili, and Little Red Booklittle have shifted the flow of information from one-way to interactive. Either these media messages are an extension of the story based on the IP story content or the creation of expressions based on the form of activities, such as action adaptations, music clips, etc., and are no longer limited to a single traditional media. It spreads rapidly in the online community, reaching all kinds of groups, expanding its influence, and creating awareness of the IP in a short time. In addition, the fragmented information dissemination in the community platform allows the audience to understand the city's highlights more accurately and quickly. Hence, it meets the media contact habits of most audiences. IP's various forms of cross-screen information dissemination go deep into various groups. It not only realizes the excellent interaction between the audience and the media but also builds a bridge of communication between different groups, showing the multiple charms of cross-media platform communication.

In order to make up for the shortcomings of online ' station, network and screen ' communication, the continuous expansion of offline activities has become a powerful carrier to create a visual communication environment. The creator should hold corresponding ground activities on time and release relevant information in real-time, such as carrying out a ' flash garden party, 'leading the audience to find ' gifts ' from the city, and experiencing the city style in an immersive and close way. Online social media platforms can increase the topic and heat during offline activities, provide editable elements, extend the program scene, and expand the scope of online communication. By integrating the media matrix, the IP image is transformed online and offline, transitioning in and out of the field. On the one hand, it expands the audience and extends the scope of communication. On the other hand, it realizes the reproduction and innovation of traditional culture and promotes the re-optimization of urban image communication ecology in the new era.

4.3. Persistence: keeping up with the times and improving feedback mechanisms

Urban animation IP has changed the development status of entertainment resources in the era of traffic. While reshaping the content and form, it should break the traditional single communication channel and shape the communication strategy of integrating new media and traditional media to promote sustainable development. Open the barrage when the major social media platforms appear, create real-time interaction, tap the potential high-stickiness group, get the audience's feedback the first time, and establish a virtuous circle.[6] At the same time, the official mainstream media, Micro-blog, and WeChat public platforms update the relevant content of the program, then let the audience access the information flow to ensure effectiveness.

The spread of IP and the development of the city are inseparable from the operation of the industry. First of all, in the image promotion and government support for the IP industry, to further explore the value of IP content, according to the audience's feedback, timely repair optimization, to choose the appropriate cultural and creative competitions, business endorsements, and brand joint activities. Secondly, the creators need to develop innovative films, games, XR experiences, and other content, continue to try and break through and strive to enhance the attractiveness close to people's lives. Only in this way can we maximize the interaction with the audience and promote the long-term inheritance of urban culture.

5. Conclusion

In short, the development strategy of animation IP has broken the inherent path of urban image design and achieved specific results. It has made full use of digital technology, multiple communication channels, and cultural environment to promote the improvement of the digital content of urban culture. Through visual demonstration, the public can move forward in the historical time machine. As a typical case of Chinese urban animation IP, Qin Feng's innovative practice of this production logic is the vivid expression of content narration, form construction, and communication efficiency. The influence and audience of urban animation IP are expanding. Creators and producers how to carry forward the excellent local culture to improve their creative system to achieve cross-border sub-dimensional linkage that becomes the next key issue.

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