

The Essence of Cultural Trajectories: A Re-exploration of the Academic Research on the Continuation and Transformation of Socio-cultural Practices

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Abstract: *Starting from the connection between cultural content, systems, and ideology, this paper carries out a progressive theoretical analysis and framework construction on the elements and system relationships of cultural continuation and transformation. It provides detailed arguments and interpretations on how culture, as a comprehensive whole of its inherent content, concepts, and characteristics, intuitively reflects its corresponding existence forms and dynamic processes of transformation. Consequently, it offers targeted fundamental academic suggestions and guidance for solving related issues in cultural research, inheritance, development, and creativity.*

Keywords: *culture, continuation, transformation*

1. Introduction

In the current research on cultural continuation and transformation, academic studies generally focus on applied fields, such as specific traditional techniques, customs, crafts, and products that can be directly felt in daily life, or those that have a significant promoting effect on the cultural promotion of social moral behavior norms, commodity economy, and tourism market. However, there is less pure academic research on the essence of cultural memory and carriers in socio-cultural transformation related to social activities, creation, and aesthetics. Consequently, there is a lack of fundamental theoretical support at the systematic cultural level to solve the essential problems of social cultural needs involved in customs, arts, creation, rituals, and daily life.

Based on this, it is particularly important to systematically interpret and analyze the essence of cultural continuation, transformation, and connotation expression. Culture injects lasting vitality into the spiritual world^[1]. Only by deconstructing, analyzing, judging, and summarizing the essence of culture at the academic level, as well as the associated elements and structural relationships, can we further clarify their relationships, meanings, structures, influences, roles, and corresponding content and forms. Thus, we can depict and construct a highly possible principle and theoretical framework for cultural continuation and transformation. It is hoped that this can provide fundamental academic solutions and practical guidance for the development and inheritance, promotion, and innovation of good cultural traditions.

2. Interpretation of the Connection between Cultural Content, Systems, and Ideology

2.1. The Role of Diversified Perspectives and Cultural Momentum in Cultural Continuity and Change: The Interplay of Time, Space, and Ideology

Due to the diversification of cultural perspectives during the process of cultural continuation and transformation, the states of behavior and perception gradually form several independent but comparable and interrelated "unique existences." Each "unique existence" is the breadth that the selected perspective in the field of view can reach and the depth it may operate in some form. At the same time, these "unique existences" further form the cognitive and practical experience of culture in the time dimension, which are both limited and open. The cultural momentum generated during the process of cultural continuation and transformation creates the process of the "future" acting on the "present" and pushing the "present" towards the "past" from the time dimension. This is because the

"future" contains several possibilities for cultural continuation and transformation. These possibilities can only result in definitive, verifiable changes and influences on the formation of the "present" through changes in cultural structure and a series of cultural momentum. Therefore, this seemingly causal relationship is not directedly migrated through the factors experienced by the audience's behavior and perception over time. It is not moving from the "present" to the "future," but rather the "future" of cultural continuation and transformation chooses and determines the "present."

In this regard, in any field of view where certain cultural content can be perceived and interpreted, there is no "uniqueness," no "time," and no "space." Cultural "events" in social existence become random triggers in the cultural field structure, affecting various specific behaviors and perceptions of the audience (cultural momentum).

However, the cultural transformation characteristics reflected by the diversification of perspectives are not chaotic. This is because there is a structural correspondence between the structural characteristics of cultural content (relatively fixed, primordial, ultra-stable) and the state attributes of cultural systems (field structure, self-consistency, change perception) in social existence. In this connection, ideology acts as a special inclusive structure, distinguishing the time dimension perceived by the cultural system; and tightly linking the present, past, and future in this dimension.

The linear correspondence and change relationship between these three, and the cultural connotation involved in ideology, exist as mutual reference systems. Because the cultural connotation needs to be clearly presented in the time dimension in its essence and form, showing the differences and specifics of the changes, and vice versa. Only then can it be perceived and interpreted intentionally or unintentionally by the audience in social existence as a complete correspondence system. In other words, the inclusive structure of ideology, cultural connotation, and the corresponding cultural content and system changes in social life can be endowed with "real meaning." Thus, the formation, inheritance, development, integration of regional cultural systems, and the construction, carrier innovation, communication, and integration of cultural forms can have a certain possibility.

2.2. The role of motivation within cultural context and its influence on the expression of cultural meaning

In the cultural connotation, the underlying motivation expressed by cultural contexts (the systemic fundamental structure of a culture) plays a crucial role and has a significant impact on the complete construction and establishment of the overall expression of its connotation. Compared to the interpretation, operational methods, logical processes, and principles of cultural systems, ideologies, content elements, and the self-consistent relationship of consciousness and existences within cultural contexts, it possesses more characteristics of contingency and randomness at the level of conscious subjects (For example "Cultural memory"^[2]). These two ultimately manifest and gradually form in the imagination of desire.

This is because within the scope of cultural contexts, content is the necessary carrier and starting point of the cultural system ontology, while the underlying motivation expressed by the cultural context is the necessary attribution of the carrier's properties and starting point. It is both the main component of subjectivity and the fundamental cause of feedback effects on the activities of perceived objects. It also explains the origin of directness and indirectness contained in the transmission modes of related features.

"Motivation" can be understood literally as the tracing attribution of all behaviors and their results, where this "cause" is a class of perpetual dynamics, and its carrier can almost be equated to a certain absolute existence. This subject only has meaning when it continuously coordinates its own and external relationships within cultural self-consciousness and is encompassed under relevant social contexts^[3]. It is precisely because of this continuous existence and absolute irreconcilability that the distinction, interpretation, positioning, and even migration of contexts and carriers of cultural connotation expressions become possible.

The essence of the existence of "motivation" can also be understood as the process of interaction between pure thinking subjects and thinking objects within the realm of consciousness. Namely, the individual (the non-original self, i.e., the objectified self that is thought of, and here the "individual" and "self" do not refer to specific "persons" but rather an abstract description of the absolute consciousness existence of culture) encompasses the content, context, and experienced images and experiences within the perceived and affected representation of the original self (referring not only to subjective active perception but also to objectively influenced perception), and its current experience of

the representation of reality and its construction and interpretation of things. This forms an ideological process that can be freely perceived within the range of intuition (Figure 1).

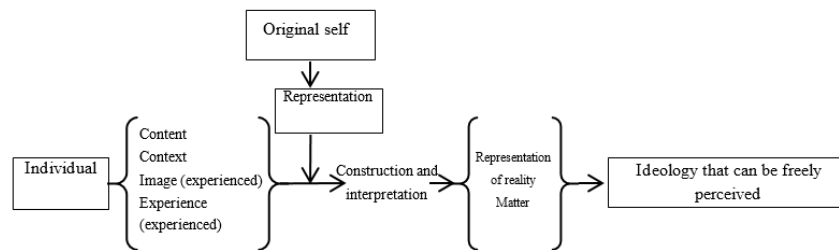


Figure 1: Schematic Diagram of the Ideological Process That Can Be Freely Perceived

To understand the relationships within, it is necessary to clarify the contingency and randomness of motivation. If we want to sort out the relationship between the contingency and randomness of motivation, we must correspondingly analyze the origin of motivation. The carrier of motivation, the thinking subject, has two important characteristics: the wholeness of its own structure and the structurality of its overall self. The former is a necessary prerequisite for the existence of the carrier, while the latter, as a non-deconstructive existence interpreting the relationship between the two, mainly reflects the oppositional unity between various aggregate elements perceived within the thinking subject's coordination of internal and external relationships. This is manifested as the carrier form of the perception structure exhibited in the process of freely perceived ideology formation. Under the diversification of cultural perspectives, this carrier characteristic presents a loose, decentralized feature, which is also a prerequisite for motivation formation. Due to the uncertainty of the carrier form, the functions of motivation reflected in this structure can only derive possible conclusions through the expression forms and content presentations of corresponding cultural connotations. Although these conclusions vary greatly and may even be completely opposite, as mentioned earlier, they are unified within the connotation scope of a specific culture. That is to say, consciousness can only forcibly assign various structures regulating itself to specific thinking subjects based on certain facts within its domain, and play corresponding roles through motivation, centering on certain cultural connotations, assimilating the levels to which concepts belong in the construction of perceptual relationships and structures, and finally producing universal patterns applicable to the derivation of certain connotations and the reconstruction of systems, i.e., one or several systems within the same cultural connotation. This process does not present unique or designated conclusions under absolute subjective control.

Therefore, the contingency of the underlying motivation expressed by the cultural context is established under these conditions, while randomness is an inevitable mode of its contingency existence. Additionally, from the audience's perspective, these different final conclusions about motivation have a structural attribute under certain a priori conditions and exist as consciousness with transcendental self as the premise. This existence is connected through various reciprocal effects in the various construction processes of the integration, assimilation, and alienation of new and old cultural objects. Therefore, this is also an important characteristic of the fundamental nature of motivation.

2.3. The Pluralistic Evolution and Structural Transformation of Cultural Connotation: The Dynamic Transition from Cultural Concepts to Cultural Systems

In its specific forms of expression, cultural connotation has the characteristics of being integrated into the scope of social contexts, with obvious features of diversification and continuous incremental creation. This reflects the structural association between cultural characteristics, cultural concepts, and cultural connotation expressions (Figure 2).

Cultural connotation has certain structural conservation and closure within the scope of social contexts. Any interpretation and extension based on this connotation will not surpass the boundaries of its social context, whether in terms of time or space. This provides necessary principles for the preservation, structure, regularity, stability, and change of various forms of expression (Figure 3).

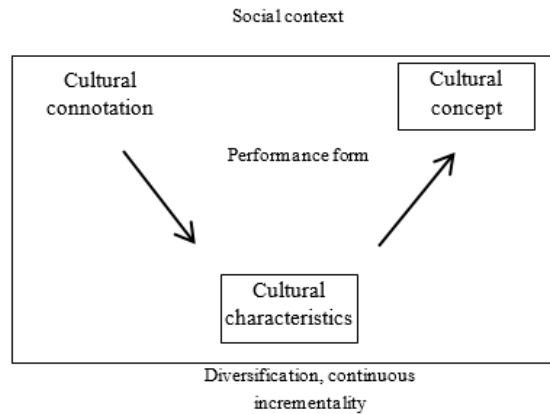


Figure 2: Structural Association of Cultural Characteristics, Concepts, and Connotations within the Scope of Social Contexts

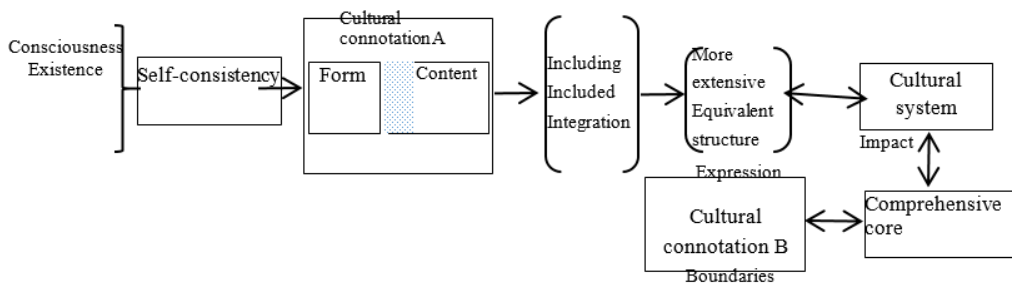


Figure 3: Indications of the Changes in Cultural Connotation

However, this conservation and closure do not imply that it is a fixed conversion limited to its own internal cycle and interaction. In the self-consistent relationship between consciousness and existence, the form and content of a cultural connotation, as an integral structure, can coexist in a more extensive or equally structured cultural system in an inclusive or integrated manner. This influences the comprehensive core of the cultural system in its original state, thereby changing the nature of the original cultural connotation (Figure 3). It should be noted that this only changes the expression structure and boundaries of the original cultural connotation, while the corresponding rules remain stable and preserved. Therefore, it is merely about enriching cultural content and cultural systems (Figure 4).

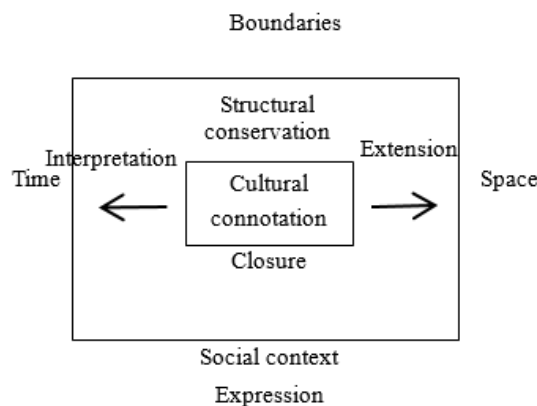


Figure 4: Expression Structure and Boundary Change of Cultural Connotation

In this process of change, there are obvious characteristics of diversification and continuous incremental creation (enrichment). This is because there is a fundamental structural correspondence

between the structural characteristics of cultural content (relatively fixed, primordial, ultra-stable) and the state attributes of cultural systems (field structure, self-consistency, change perception). This fundamental structure exhibits a trans-temporal characteristic. First, the expression of connotation is a social form^[4], and secondly, the specific expression of connotation must be actively or passively received by its carriers. The content and systems of culture evolve in different forms, and each new connotation expression arises from one or several earlier expressions. The inheritance and change of content and systems have never ceased, and through cultural momentum, they revolve around the field structure of change, advocating and formulating the rules of the "present" chosen and decided by the perception of the "future." Note that the "future" and "present" here are described from the perspective of the audience for ease of understanding. In short, culture is a form of communication not determined by time; it is perceived by the audience through the passage of time and interferes with and influences people's lives in an all-encompassing, multi-level, and multi-form manner as a social collective existence. From the perspective of cultural characteristics, its universality and function make it a structural source of art, industries, religion, institutions, customs, and other social existences^[5] of special importance.

Furthermore, due to the structural characteristics of the underlying motivation carrier of this cultural transformation and the perpetual and continuous oppositional unity relationship among the various aggregated elements perceived within the cultural perspective, this structural characteristic presents a loose, decentralized dynamic feature. This requires that behind any dynamic process, a certain way must be found to form a stable basic logic in the expression forms of cultural connotation and the designations of its content. In the construction of various perceptual relationships and structures, it assimilates the levels to which concepts belong, becoming a transition from one way to another within the scope of cultural characteristics. However, this transition is not a process from nothing to something but is temporarily and relatively advantageous obtained through the interaction between a certain way and the boundaries of communication form and social context. The essence of this advantage is called cultural concepts^[6]. From this point of view, the relationship of "formation" of concepts itself contains a transformative attribute, which can be broadly understood as the structural relationship between the underlying motivation of the context, cultural connotation, and its system.

2.4. The Dynamic Filtering and Reconfiguration of Cultural Concepts and Connotations: From Stability to Order and Freedom in Cultural Transformation

Although, under the definition of social existence, cultural concepts have obvious stable basic logic and conversion rules within the semantic scope of cultural characteristics, it must also be pointed out that the mental structure of consciousness in the process of expressing cultural connotation, as well as the encompassing and experiential construction of perceived objects presented by ideology, have a "filtering" adjustment function that can screen out some defective concepts of "formation."^[7] From this perspective, cultural characteristics can reach the general standards of the structure of social contexts, while also having various universal, holistic rules in people's daily lives. These logic and rules are a series of changes and adjustments of interdependent relationships, rather than fixed, inherent patterns.

There are two main reasons for this: First, the relationship between the ontological and various objects within the scope of consciousness is analyzed and studied within the cultural context (not just the cultural social phenomena itself), and various possibilities of its internal structure and relationships are discussed and analyzed. This mainly stems from research on the creativity of culture, which is most directly reflected in the process of social change. In terms of the creativity required in daily life, it seems to be a scattered social existence with an unknown source, where the expressed meaning is greater than the expressed image (including folk customs, local religions, and folk culture). Meanwhile, new social existences gradually emerge in this process, assimilating the previous objects of existence into new consciousness entities. These entities then, through their state and form of existence, identify and strengthen the cultural system and connotation that created them, offering several possibilities to interpret the expressions of their creations.

The second primary force is that cultural continuation and transformation are often understood as complete replacement rather than partial alteration of its internal deep structure and relationships among elements. This results in the separation of cultural characteristics, concepts, and connotations at different stages, making it difficult to distinguish them from the cognitive origins shared with the cultural subject. Consequently, the structure and levels of related concepts and elements become confused, hindering their own coordination and the establishment of an orderly development relationship. However, this confusion is not continuous. After temporarily showing related tendencies, it becomes encompassed within the cultural perspective. This process itself stabilizes the concepts,

characteristics, and related rules within the connotation, placing various cultural continuations and transformations in a constant process of shaping and reshaping.

Culture, as a comprehensive whole of its inherent content, concepts, and characteristics^[8], intuitively reflects its corresponding forms of existence and dynamic processes of transformation. However, this does not mean it can be immediately described. To systematically reveal the order and better interpret certain carriers that maintain within the audience's emotional range, it is necessary to transform intersecting and unclear factors between different cultures into a stable existence that belongs to the same cultural system, allowing for general, common recognition and logical forms to explain the objects directly experienced or participated in by the audience. However, the key lies in fully analyzing or predicting the dynamic development of cultural existence and development, explaining the intuitive content expressed by culture.

Nevertheless, everything within the cultural system is self-evident through corresponding experience and perception. In fact, from the first time an audience experiences a certain culture, the "impression" of that culture is completely and straightforwardly expressed with no image concealment, where a series of logical and understanding processes triggered by experience come into play.

Therefore, the specific and universal expression of cultural connotation shows no difference. That is to say, in terms of the order properties of cultural perception's randomness and contingency, the audience's situation forming this order is based on unconditional freedom. Only in this way can the expression be endowed with meaning, forming specific concepts, characteristics, and stable underlying motivations of cultural contexts, generating corresponding content and systems, continually transcending and changing existing related experiences, mutually influencing and interacting. Through a series of complex processes, the continual promotion of cultural continuation and transformation is eventually facilitated.

3. Conclusions

In summary, the underlying motivation of various attributes in cultural transformation reflect their contingency and randomness under the social context, guiding the audience in enriching and perfecting the specific interpretations of cultural transitions within attainable imaginations. By constructing the structural associations among cultural characteristics, concepts, and connotation expressions within the social context, it highlights their time-dimensional trajectories from the perspectives of audience influence and perception. The paper proposes several elements' roles, relationships, operational principles, possible outcomes, and constructs several partial and holistic theoretical frameworks for cultural continuation and transformation, aiming to provide corresponding fundamental academic support and social practice inspiration for issues related to cultural research, inheritance, development, and creativity.

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