Exploring the Narrative Strategies of Intangible Cultural Heritage Documentary Films in the Context of the Internet

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Abstract: Intangible cultural heritage is an important symbol of the historical and cultural achievements of Chinese civilisation."Documentaries on intangible cultural heritage have made remarkable contributions to the preservation and development of Chinese culture by facilitating the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage through their "true-to-life" visual expression, showcasing China's image to the outside world, and making China's voice heard.The purpose of this paper is to analyse the qualities and communication disadvantages of intangible cultural heritage documentaries in terms of communication subjects, value information, and communication channels in the context of the Internet, and to explore their innovative narrative strategies in the Internet era.

Keywords: Internet context; Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH); Narrative strategy; Mode innovation

1. Introduction

Economic globalisation and network informatisation have brought challenges while bringing opportunities for the development of traditional Chinese culture. Some traditional cultures are gradually fading from public view, especially as represented by intangible cultural heritage.According to statistics, a theatre magazine published in 1999 collected 374 types of theatre from all regions at that time, and only 286 types were left by the time of development in 2013, with 88 types disappearing in 15 years.Now in the age of platforms, documentaries are gradually becoming the mainstay of writing about intangible cultural heritage.The huge number of Internet users makes the development of digital economy have a strong user support, but also for the Internet context of intangible cultural heritage cultural communication to provide a steady stream of "subject" and "audience". In addition, only by coordinating the relationship between the emerging technology industry in the age of interconnection and the creation of non-heritage documentary narratives and other levels, can traditional culture be given new life.

2. Narrative qualities of intangible cultural heritage documentaries in the context of the Internet

2.1. Patterned creative concepts

Documentary is an independent form of film and television creation, and it is precisely because of this attribute that the current intangible cultural heritage oriented documentaries have a solidified mode of expression, but seldom have a unique way of understanding and creation, and lack of personalised thinking and transmission of deeper cultural connotations.Nowadays, the creation of documentary film has basically tended to "past history + traditional process + intangible cultural heritage inheritance of the spirit of" the curing mode, the creative thinking tends to be old-fashioned, and the images presented with the modern people's aesthetics is far away [1].Although some of the documentaries created and filmed in recent years are refreshing, they have still failed to drive the prosperity of the entire industry.Later creators, due to the creative norms of their predecessors, are less able to break out of this solidified mode of thinking, leading to a patterned creative concept.In the context of the Internet, although this concept can reduce the difficulty of creating documentaries on intangible cultural heritage and further enrich the number of works in this genre in the market, it ultimately treats the symptoms but not the root cause, and the acceptance of the audience is on a downward trend.

2.2. Complexity of value information

Meaning is the basic component of human communication (communication). "Communicator-mediator-receiver" is a social process of creating meaning [2].In the traditional mass media era, media organisations played a more "dominant-hegemonic" role in their interactions with audiences, making it difficult for audiences to provide effective feedback;Nowadays, in the platform media in the context of the Internet, the audience's active role has been enhanced as never before, and they not only receive meanings, but also create meanings and carry out "participatory communication".For example, in traditional media, people tend to play a single listener - watching TV, listening to the radio, reading newspapers; nowadays, people can express their opinions and comments in platform media at any time, any place and at their own will with just the touch of a finger, breaking down the barriers of space.

Similarly, in such an Internet context, although the dissemination effectiveness of ICH documentaries has increased dramatically, the messages, values, and cultural connotations they convey have become mixed and diverse.The basic cultural concept of "Peking Opera" alone has given rise to dozens of documentary films with similar content and serious homogenisation.It is difficult for the user audience to extract content information that meets aesthetic, value and other factors in the colourful communication styles, which puts forward a greater test for the content screening mechanism in the connected era.In addition, the audience's evaluation of the same information is also due to individual differences, showing greater heterogeneity, different voices to form a pluralistic pattern, breaking the "centre" pattern constructed by the traditional media.

2.3. Fragmentation of forms of communication

In the Internet era, the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage documentaries is characterised by fragmentation.Prior to the rise of the emerging media industry, traditional media dominated the market, with high audience appeal and market share.Today, the media are becoming richer and richer, and all-media continues to evolve, driving media convergence.People have entered the era of "fragmentation", where audiences are exposed to an ever-increasing number of new media and the media market is becoming increasingly fragmented.Audiences tend to receive short, concise messages, and this fragmented communication is like a "headline party" that captures the audience's interest and summarises the essence of the content.In this context, the interactivity of ICH documentaries is enhanced with a fragmentary turn.Some ICH documentaries are divided into more than ten episodes and uploaded to platforms for the sake of completeness; in some platforms, it is even possible to see in-depth interaction between creators and viewers in the comments section.People no longer have to be tied to the medium of television; they can watch a documentary anytime, anywhere as long as they have a mobile phone.The fragmented form of communication has enabled ICH documentaries to break through the limitations of time and space to a certain extent.

3. Disadvantages of Intangible Cultural Heritage Documentary Dissemination in the Internet Context

3.1. Lack of depth of content

In Jia Zhangke's humanistic films, regional culture features are obvious, and it can even be said that it is deeply rooted in county seat of Shanxi, which has an important relationship with his own experience. Jia Zhangke believes that "in China, knowledge from such a background may not have special significance for a person from such a background as me only because of personal factors." He believes that "without such a face and attitude, Chinese modern art will lose contact with the land -- just like what some young artists do now, which becomes a very partial and narrow private discourse." He would such an attitude incisively and vividly show in the film, in fact, he doesn't care about the location of the shooting is a big city or small town, because in a sense, the whole of China is in itself a savage growth and dynamic large county, what he did is the region through the lens of the changes in the real.

3.2. A single audience

At present, traditional documentaries on intangible cultural heritage lack attraction to the audience, which makes the audience form a stereotypical impression of these documentaries as "serious", "long" and "boring", resulting in a single audience.Under the fragmented communication model, the alienation of human relationships in the atomised society and the digital existence in the new media era have created

"group loneliness".These audiences are more willing to socialise online and are more likely to opt for short videos that seem to deliver short bursts of pleasure and are shorter and more concise.On the other hand, the dissemination of documentaries on intangible cultural heritage does not fit the communication characteristics of new media platforms, resulting in a lack of support from the platforms, and the scope of the dissemination audience is still limited to the original group of people who already love intangible cultural heritage, which is not able to attract a diversified audience.

Secondly, the imbalance in the development of intangible cultural heritage documentaries between regions is relatively serious. Developed regions have good economic and social conditions and attach great importance to the protection of intangible cultural heritage. While the relatively backward regions are constrained by their own economic conditions and other factors, many intangible cultural heritage projects are unattended.Many of today's ICH documentaries also focus on ICH items that are of high interest, those in remote areas that cannot be maintained by adequate means, ultimately leading to the loss of ICH.

3.3. There are serious barriers and divisions

In the context of the Internet, the effectiveness of ICH documentaries is increasing, showing a prosperous scene, and the "gate-keeping mechanism" for their information content is particularly important.With the intervention of algorithms as the object of information collection and processing, the information gatekeeper, like a watchman, needs to assess the reliability of the information while "controlling the gate" [3].Algorithmic technologies sneak into media platforms and become hidden technical gatekeepers.Traditionally, gatekeepers were mainly professional communicators, who ensured that content was standardised through information gatekeeping based on their professionalism, ethics and values. In today's Internet age, algorithmic technology is incorporated into the information gatekeeping mechanism, which is based on the standards set by professional communicators.On the one hand, the addition of algorithmic technology has accelerated the rate of information dissemination and auditing, but at the same time, it is also easy to lack of adaptability, over-emphasis on information screening, and imprecise gate-keeping and other problems. Especially for ICH documentaries, loose auditing standards will lead to excessive content homogenisation; strict standards will lead to a lack of humanistic care - the audience can't see it, the author can't say it, further aggravating the barriers to the dissemination of ICH documentaries.

4. Innovative Strategies for Documentary Films on Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Context of the Internet

4.1. Subjects of communication: from individual soloists to multiple choruses

Today's Internet context highlights the shift from the age of mass media to the age of platform media, which is based on rich space and discourse resources and allows multiple subjects to participate and collaborate in communication.In the traditional media era, the way of content acquisition and experience is mainly based on user browsing, reading, audio-visual, and the user is inclined to be a "negative audience"; in the context of the Internet, the way of content acquisition and dissemination has undergone a fundamental change, so that "everyone has a microphone", and the user is more inclined to be a "positive audience".In recent years, short video platforms have attracted a large number of youthful groups. Therefore, focusing on short videos and other platform media as an emerging vehicle for the dissemination of ICH documentaries is an effective way to attract audiences.

Nowadays, if documentaries want to tell the story of intangible cultural heritage well, they should not just be the "solo" of traditional media; they should also attract young groups, as well as self-media, platform media, and mainstream media to carry out the "chorus" of multi-principal and coordinated dissemination.According to statistics, as of May 2023, there were an average of 19,000 live broadcasts of intangible cultural heritage on a short-video platform every day alone, with an average of 13 intangible cultural heritage content starts every minute, reaping hundreds of millions of likes.The launch of ICH-themed documentaries on short-video platforms, such as Qinqiang, Yangge, Yu Opera, and the Torch Festival, has enabled the main body of dissemination to gain a large number of fans, and has inspired ICH inheritors from various regions to work together on their creations; while the "secondary creation" and "secondary processing" carried out by audience groups have expanded the degree of inclusion of ICH culture to a new height.The original lengthy documentary episode of nearly one hour can be turned into a short video "serial" of a few minutes through editing and splitting in the platform medium; and

supplemented with big data, cloud computing and other means to accurately locate and accurately place the audience, which not only caters to the audience's preferences, but also strengthens the sense of recognition of the culture of intangible cultural heritage, as well as the sense of responsibility for the inheritance of the intangible cultural heritage.With the expanding scope of ICH documentaries and the deepening integration with digital technology, the ICH in remote areas will be better preserved and protected today.

4.2. Narrative patterns: from rational dominance to perceptual cognition

Every art form has its life cycle; every intangible cultural heritage has its moment of glory.Nowadays, people's attitude towards the creation of documentaries on intangible cultural heritage should not only focus on the "protection" and "inheritance" as the main purpose, but should also focus on the "youthful" expression of intangible cultural heritage while adapting to the development of the times and engaging in dialogues with the "world", so as to transform the national spirit and cultural genes embedded in them into an inexhaustible impetus for the future.

The traditional documentary narrative of intangible cultural heritage is monolithic, and it may be worth combining with the psychology of the audience to innovate the narrative mode and form a multi-dimensional immersive narrative dominated by the perceptual narrative mode, so as to satisfy the different types of audience's segmentation, differentiation and personalised expression.In terms of the narrative mode of ICH documentaries, it is possible to shift from the didactic mode of typecasting to the sensibility-led mode of "immersion experience".In the past, documentaries on intangible cultural heritage often presented a single voice-over narration in the style of "I tell you, you listen", without focusing on the emotional resonance with the audience, but in fact, the audience of the story is a real person with flesh and blood, with emotions.Therefore, only by linking the documentary film with the audience's psychology and needs, and changing the didactic mode to "storytelling", can creators create valuable documentaries that can trigger the audience's resonance.

In addition, ICH culture can make use of ICH documentaries to create a brand of ICH in the process of inheritance and development, integrating the immersive narrative features dominated by sensibility and broadening the communication dimension of ICH documentaries.Such as a TV documentary produced by a variety of perspectives recorded in detail the tourists can not see the Shaolin, revealing the Shaolin Temple those who are not known to the process of martial arts, Zen practice, pharmaceuticals and so on.This documentary not only enriches the narrative means with a unique perspective, but also promotes the creation of Shaolin as an industrial IP; its cultural and creative products also allow more and more people to understand this culture, feel the charm of the millennium, and strengthen cultural confidence.Such cross-border interaction creates the "ICH+" model, which not only caters to the psychology of the youth audience, but also attracts the interest of some audiences to learn more about ICH. While telling the story of intangible cultural heritage well, it also highlights the flavor of the times and realises the living communication of intangible cultural heritage documentaries.

4.3. Kernel of thought: from traditional creation to integration and symbiosis

Disruptive structural innovations have already taken place, with digital media platforms reshaping the core of thinking in the Internet context and giving new life to the "traditional".Since entering the Internet era, more and more young people are not unsupportive of the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, but rather the ICH documentaries on the market are not "moving" enough. Compared with the mass media, which has a monopoly on communication, online communication has more open discourse resources and cheap technical terminals. Creators should not stick to a single way of constructing images, but should try to integrate multiple genres.For example, in recent years, animated documentaries on intangible cultural heritage have emerged, transcending the barriers of time and space while passing on the culture of intangible cultural heritage and combining it with the spirit of the times to trigger emotional resonance, and are therefore loved by the youth group and have gained a high level of popularity. Some Peking Opera actors share their behind-the-scenes and on-stage performances, costumes and acting techniques on social platforms, making this art fuller, more real and more vivid in the eyes of the public.It is this kind of "participatory communication" that allows ICH documentaries to be recorded and reproduced as realistically as possible on the basis of maintaining the original artistic style and cultural context; the fusion of multiple types of image construction enhances the cultural tension and audience attraction of ICH documentaries, and makes ICH documentaries more vivid and lively in the process of dissemination.

In addition, the use of "intelligent scenes" breaks the boundaries of scene dissemination and provides technical support for the dissemination of ICH documentaries."Scenario theory" believes that the Internet is shifting from a "web era" based on search and links to a "scenario era" based on scenarios and situations [4], and emphasises the acquisition, processing and use of scenario information through various sensors, data analysis and other technological means, in order to achieve more efficient and smarter applications and services.In this context, the "cross-border" dissemination of intangible cultural heritage documentaries can only rely on technical support, combined with big data, artificial intelligence, 8K ultra-high-definition video and other technologies in order to bring audiences an all-round, three-dimensional, immersive experience.For example, in recent years, many television stations will combine science and technology with traditional culture to launch various types of cultural programmes and cultural theme nights quickly out of the circle, the fundamental reason is still because of the adoption of AR technology, immersive perspective and other technological means, and the combination of real historical relics.The performance of the stage characters in a series of museums in different years of cultural relics in the background, and through the form of transitions will be a number of national treasures one by one presented, so that the audience immersed in the "people in the painting in the swim" in the wonderful experience.However, it should be noted that when digital technology empowers innovation for the presentation of ICH documentaries, the platform media in the context of the Internet is also facing difficulties. In the author's opinion, it is not enough to rely on digital technology to screen and process information technology; coordinating the relationship between digital technology and humanistic care, and organically combining the two, is the key strategy to deal with the "gatekeeping crisis" in the digital era.The platform media can adopt an "algorithmic preliminary review + manual review" for the review of ICH documentaries to ensure the quality of information transmission while accelerating the effectiveness of dissemination, adding humanistic care, and realising the fusion of scientific and technological values with humanistic concepts.

5. Conclusions

Science and art, the two break up at the foot of the mountain and converge at the top.Documentary films on intangible cultural heritage are contemporary carriers of guardianship and inheritance of Chinese culture, and contain the crystallisation of the art of generations of working people.Gaining popularity among the audience is not the end of ICH documentaries, but the ultimate goal is to look into people's inner world and inspire them to protect and identify with ICH.

In the context of the Internet, digital technology, media integration, and the platform era all provide strong support for the development of traditional culture. In the future creative narrative, it is necessary to deeply excavate the spiritual kernel of culture, innovate and develop its external form, and replace a single narrative with an empathetic mode, in order to continuously strengthen the core competitiveness of intangible cultural heritage documentaries, and disseminate the voice of China in the "mediatisation of all things" landscape.

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