

Classics Reconstruction and Value Communication in Cultural Turn - Exemplified by China in the Classics, a Cultural Program

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Abstract: *The Chinese nation has created a splendid culture for thousands of years, among which the classic books have long been the symbol of Chinese traditional culture, which carries the inheritances of culture, beliefs of family & nation, and humanistic spirit, and reflects the far-reaching cultural heritage of China. China in the Classics, a contemporary program that carries on the classics of Chinese culture and promotes the excellent traditional Chinese culture, plays a pivotal role in the construction of the classics and communication of cultural values. This paper attempts to contribute to the cause of cultural revival and transmission by analyzing the reconstruction of the classics and communication of values in China in the Classics.*

Keywords: *China in the Classics; Classics Reconstruction; Value Communication; Cultural Identity*

1. Introduction

“As for culture, there has been a global and fundamental shift in our ideological and political pattern, a remarkable stepping up in cultural confidence of all members of the Party and the people of all ethnic groups in China, and a tremendous increase in the unity and centripetal force of society as a whole, thereby providing a strong ideological guarantee and a powerful spiritual force to create a new situation for the Party and China in the new era,” introduced by the 19th CPC Central Committee at its 6th Plenary Session.

China in the Classics received a great deal of attention and praise immediately upon its launch. The *Classics* is a novel cultural creative program, which is unique and original, different from the traditional didactic propaganda. Via the cultural exchange across time and space, *China in the Classics* integrates the ancients and modern civilization in a romantic form, with a focus on the classical works of Chinese cultural classics, thus enabling a value leadership for the contemporary audience to establish cultural self-confidence, strengthen cultural identity and consciously cultural heritage. It is hoped that this paper can be a reference for other cultural and creative projects.

2. Classic Reconstruction in the Cultural Turn

The Classics, with the excellent Chinese traditional culture as the motif and “classics” as the research direction, explores the essence of the excellent Chinese classics, tells classical stories, and communicates with the predecessors, so that the classics, which are “on the shelf”, will come into the life of the public. “A book is a torch that shines on the past and the future.” Moreover, via the narrative logic in time and space, and by the interpretation of history through characters, allusions and performances, the program nurtures an immersive, empathetic and exhilarating viewing atmosphere for the audience, which enables traditional culture to be transformed from the macroscopic imagination of abstract texts to the microscopic perception of figurative audiovisuals, thus breaking the spatial and temporal communication framework of traditional culture, presenting the realistic meaning of history and freeing traditional culture from the shackle of being “on the shelf”. It is a huge transcendence in terms of communication effect.[1].

(1) Upgrade of classics channels: a shift of communication from by books to by new media

1) Story Transformation in Television Interpretation and Multiple Narratives

The cultural interpretation by TV programs is both the discovery of classic culture and the “expansion” & “revelation” of the “hypertextual value” of the classics against the background of the integration of

vision, to surpass the original meaning in the text and thus structure new changes of meaning. Classics is the main theme of the program *China in the Classics*, which is a typical cultural symbol. It enables popular expression and deconstruction of elegant culture through the cultural interpretation practices by experts, creators and movie guests, as well as multi-level and multi-field narratives such as classics interpretation, program interpretation and character interpretation, so that the “decoder” readers can properly accept the transmission intention of the coder when interpreting classics, and realize the value extension of traditional culture in the contemporary communication context^[2].

China in the Classics is arranged sequentially, with guidance from the host and explanations from guests, as well as a situational approach to the classics, led by performers and recited by readers. An in-depth interpretation of the classics is presented by three cultural scholars in a point-by-point manner. For example, The Book of History is The Book of History -Songs of the Five Sons, which takes “people-based” as the starting point, which in turn leads to the historical status of The Book of History as “the ancestor of political books, the source of historical books; a story about Fu Sheng’s teaching of the scriptures to pave the way for the development of the story, highlighting the inheritance and communication of “The Book of History”, which also illustrates that The Book of History is a keynote of *China in the Classics*, as well as a profound reflection with Fu Sheng as a clue. The *Classics* reading session by creators, as the highlight and key part of the program, enables actors and characters to be one and the substitution of the scene drives the audience’s participation, by self-explanation and magnificent reading of the opening lines performed by characters and audience, which not only livens up the classics on the bookshelf but also enables the characters in the book to become more vivid.

2) Soundscape design triggers inner self-reflection and collective resonance

As for the overall design of the soundscape of Classics, traditional folk instruments are used as background music. The audience gets an inner impression on the performance of the play through such sound media. Music is a way to not only inspire introspection but also to connect the masses to the outside^[3]. As Fu Sheng talked about his wife and children dying to protect The Book of History, the background music switches from soft and soothing to mournful, reminding the audience that his wife and child sacrificed their lives protecting him, and Fu Sheng regrets his own unfortunate fate. The majestic background music at the swearing-in ceremony of *Speech at Muye* made the audience’s blood boil with applause and praise.

“Soundscape” is not “neutral”, its emergence is related to a certain cultural and technological background, which inevitably carries a certain value judgment. The soundscape in Classics is closely related to the subject matter of the program, i. e. the national spirit and culture it carries, so the soundscape has a ritualistic meaning of passing down the classics. In a reading session for creators, Dean Tian Qinxin will invite the corresponding actors to read aloud ancient texts, while others will follow along to experience the profundity of Chinese culture^[4]. Here, there is a unique mood in which readers will blend in with others during recitation. In this way, a sense of closeness will be formed in the “sound field”, which enables a deeper emotional bond of person vs person and person vs the book.

(2) Formal transformation: dialogue across time and space

1) Scenario recurrence shown in the interplay of space and time

China in the Classics creates spatially realistic meanings through inter-temporal dialogue, which breaks with traditional historical narratives, thus realizing the social, cultural and historical nature of space. The first is a silent dialogue between figures of different eras in “meeting via a mirror”, as a saying goes, what a mirror shows is the expression of emotions between people of different eras. It is the reverence of moderns for the ancients and the hope of the latter for the former through a mirror. Secondly, it is a dialogue of modern scholars crossing over to ancient times: Sa Beining, the host, comes from the point of view of a modern scholar, standing in the space and time of history, as a “spectator” and “participant”, and together with readers, experiences hardships by witnessing to the value of ancient books and the feelings of the ancients to family and nation. By the same token, the ancient masters enter the contemporary realm: host Sa Beining takes a posthumous reading of ancient documents, showing the continuation and inheritance of the classics from the perspective of the ancients in dialogue with the present, while the spatial dialogue between the ancient and modern is based on a cultural consensus and expressed through visualized language.

2) Scenario restoration by using modern technology

The innovation of China in the Classics is the “Dialogue between the Ancient and Modern Times”, where Sa Beining, as a “contemporary scholar”, can communicate not only with the ancients through

“time travel”, but also “travel” them back to the modern world and “witness” the prosperity of present-day^[5]. Such communication across time and space enables the expression of the work to become more “alive”. The magic of media is that with all the different technologies, such as projection screens, AR, real-time tracking, etc., they enable the creation of different times and spaces in a confined room, creating a real audience.

3. A Study on the Value Communication of Classics - Exemplified by TV Media

(1) Contribution of various eras

Ancient books and classics are the core of Chinese traditional culture, the accumulation of knowledge value of the vast sea of books is not accomplished in a short time, its essence lies in the historical epitome of “China” and the continuation of culture, it contains rich cultural implication, is a part of the Chinese culture, its essence and spirit will shine in the long history. China in Ancient Books, as an excellent program to spread the values of ancient people, can let us see the ancient spirit and thought, and guide us to carry on the cultural inheritance.

The books in China, which is based on abundant historical materials, using new technology, such as the update of annulus screen will become perceptible, ancient books can produce real scene of empathy, to point with the historical and feelings into young heart, let they can really sense of history, familiar with the classic, leading the direction of value pursuit and values of the new era^[6].

China in the Classics gives vitality to Classics from different value orientations, and the Classics, which unites the collective wisdom of the times, also embodies the profound connotation of Chinese traditional culture; the program and Classics accomplish each other, conveying the value of times of “reviewing the past enables us to learn about the law governing the evolution of history”.

(2) Community value of the familial and national feelings of Chinese people

Socialism with Chinese characteristics has stepped to a new high, historically. The “new era” is a full and deep revolution in Chinese society, but it never means a break in thinking and spirit, and the “familial and national feeling” of Chinese people is still functioning greatly, with new connotations and unique values. In TV media, the remolding of the typical characters and historical events in “Classics” enables audiences to better understand themselves and their national identity, thus fulfilling cultural confidence and identity.

For example, it is said in “The Book of History - Tribute of Yu” that Dayu’s water control is “Yu’s reign being divided into nine provinces,” with a description of which provinces the “nine provinces” are, which reminds the audience of Dayu’s single-minded efforts to control the water, and thus of his hard work and selflessness. Yu holds a “people-based” idea of water control, and the thought that he “passed by his house multiple times and did not go in for the mission” can be turned into endless spiritual power in all matters. For example, Song Yingxing practices classics, the Yellow Emperor gives benevolence to his subjects, Emperor Shun practices loyalty, filial piety and rituals, Lin Xiangru and Sima Qian serve their country and people, etc. The presentation of the “then” spiritual leader image represented by Dayu enables the audience to feel strong emotions in the “now”, while the specific character image enables the audience to resonate more strongly with the emotion and value orientation, thus realizing the ideal of socialism. National identity and emotional awareness of the Chinese people is established in the ancient dialogue of “China has been one since ancient times”.

By restoring and reconstructing characters in the Classics, *China in the Classics* expands the meaning of its connotation and heritage from the perspective of “survival”, portrays the concept of “family and nation” of the group through individual identity performance, and implicitly enlightens the audience with morality and cultural discipline, thus enabling the construction of identity in emotional communication for cultural confidence^[7].

(3) Value of spiritual inheritance

“Refine and display the spiritual identity of fine traditions, and refine and display the essence of fine traditional culture with contemporary and world significance,” said Xi Jinping at the National Journalism Conference. Cultural memory is the spirit and culture based on a specific event in history and expressed by the practice, while the Classics are capable of cultural recording, presentation and transmission.

China in the Classics is rich in the aesthetic meaning of opera, combining the interest of words with history, enabling the characters to be vividly portrayed, giving traditional culture the multiple values of

elegance and vulgarity, and revealing the general law of overall cultural transmission through the special narrative of the individual author: i. e. the mutual observation and achievement of the success of Classics and the author's maturity and success. A spiritual connection is required for the survival and development of a nation. Every advance in culture is the first step toward freedom. China in the Classics is a creative work that stimulates the cultural creativity of future generations of Chinese children in a novel way. Fu Sheng guards "The Book of History", who loves culture deeply and never gives up lightly. Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty cherishes talents, and not only respects Fu Sheng but also especially sends Chao Cuo to Fu Sheng's home in Shandong, to learn The Book of History, which shows Chinese descendants' reverence for historical documents and inheritance. *China in the Classics* is a play in which role-playing, dialogue with sages, and commentary are used to elaborate and interpret allusions to ancient texts, enabling viewers to fully immerse themselves in the atmosphere and ambiance of the play, savor the history, and appreciate this classic work. This excellent program shows the TV media across the audio-visual elements, bringing fresh vitality to the classics, turning the obscure and difficult ancient books into a warm public feeling and continuous intellectual roots, so that the Chinese cultural heritage from generation to generation and shine.

4. Summary and Outlook

China is currently in a period of social transition, with rapid economic development, but it has also given rise to issues such as "moral marginalization", " nihilism-towards of faith", etc., where certain ideas intersect, causing a lack of values and deficiencies among some residents, especially university students, which is contrary to the intention of cultivating qualified builders and successors of socialism in China[8]. Therefore, it is of positive significance that *China in the Classics* organically integrates Chinese traditional culture and moral education to promote excellent traditional culture and national spirit.

Changes in media in the new media era impact viewers' motivations for media use and propensity to engage with content; entertaining, fragmented information splits viewers' attention. Via the narrative logic of time and space, and the interpretation of history through characters, allusions, and exhibition tandem, *China in the Classics* nurtures an immersive, empathetic, and uplifting viewing atmosphere for the audience, enabling traditional culture to move from the macro imagination of abstract texts to the micro perception of figurative audiovisuals, which breaks through the transmission of traditional culture in time and space, revealing its real meaning and freeing it from the shackles of traditional culture, and enabling China's Chinese culture to shine brightly in the collision of traditional cultures. It can bring China's excellent traditional culture to the public and into life, further the promotion of national spirit and build national self-confidence, and will gradually shape the proper values of the people.

All in all, *China in the Classics* captures the trend of integration, replicates in multiple media with TV program format to begin with, which fully reflects the society's spiritual value of excellent traditional culture, meanwhile, it also reflects the important cooperation of Chinese culture integration and fusion, and shows the direction for the revival of Chinese studies and the development of cultural education, showing Chinese wisdom, Chinese spirit and Chinese values. These classics should be both in the text and the guide for contemporary people's thinking and action, which is the creative transformation and innovative development of excellent Chinese culture.

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