

Mediated Ritual Construction and Cultural Identity Mobilization in “The Beauty of Shared Arts”

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Abstract: *In the context of international communication, cultural programs employ a variety of narrative techniques to garner audience consensus and facilitate the sharing of meaning, thereby constructing "media rituals" with cultural appeal. "The Beauty of Shared Arts", a large-scale international cultural exchange program, is actively practicing the concept of a shared future for mankind on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative, refining the cultural symbols that highlight the common values, and integrating the common cultural kernel into the program's narrative. The communication practice of "on-site filming + guest interviews + Chinese-foreign cooperation in creating and performing works" promotes the exchange and mutual understanding of civilizations, and provides reference and thinking for the innovation of TV program forms and the enhancement of the influence of the communication power of Chinese civilization.*

Keywords: *"The Beauty of Shared Arts"; Belt and Road Initiative; Media Rituals; Cultural Identity*

1. Introduction

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China stresses that "civilizational exchanges should transcend the gap between civilizations, mutual understanding should transcend the clash of civilizations, and coexistence should transcend the superiority of civilizations". Art transmits civilization and traverses civilization, and art often precedes exchanges and mutual understanding between human civilizations. As a "world language", literature and art are the best way for different countries and peoples to understand and communicate with each other. At present, China continues to implement the Global Civilization Initiative, promoting global civilization exchanges and mutual understanding with the image of a great civilization, and promoting human civilization's "beauty and harmony" with the beauty of civilization. Together with other countries, we will promote the construction of the Belt and Road and build a shared future for mankind.

"The Beauty of Shared Arts" is a large-scale international cultural exchange program jointly created by CCTV and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative, the program is based on the concept of "Taste the Rhythm of Diverse Cultures, Appreciate the Beauty of Exchanges and Mutual Learning", under the theme of Cultural Silk Road, the program will showcase the deep integration of multiple cultures, the continuous improvement of people's well-being, and the fruitful achievements of multi-party construction under the Belt and Road Initiative through touching stories of co-construction and cultural feasts created by Chinese and foreign artists.

Media ritual is the process by which a large audience participates in a common activity or matter with the help of the mass media, which culminates in a symbolic activity or symbol. Cultural programs construct the collective memory and cultural identity of the audience to Chinese culture through ritual content and ritual communication. The program itself has also become a cultural "collective celebration", forming an emotional interaction with the audience and playing the role of inspiration and mobilization. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the methods and paths of media ritual construction in "The Beauty of Shared Arts", to provide new perspectives for the innovation of communication modes of cultural programs and strategies of cultural identity construction.

2. The Subject of Ritual Construction - Panoramic Presentation

In the transmission of rituals, both parties to the transmission have subjectivity. Characters who participate together in the construction of a mediated ritual establish an emotional connection and confirm

their identification with the ritual's theme in the course of the interactive experience. The Beauty of Shared Arts" presents a panoramic view of ceremonial content through a multi-perspective narrative in the form of "Host + Cultural Expert + Guest + Artist + Audience". These subjects play different roles and perspectives in the process of constructing media rituals, while the interactive relationship formed by the interactive behaviors among the subjects not only enriches the content of the rituals but also enhances the attractiveness of the rituals themselves.

2.1 Presenter: Teller of China's Story, Listener of Civilization's Story

With the continuous development of cultural variety show formats, the role of the show presenter has further deepened from the basic linking of the show's flow and guiding the audience to the center of the stage where he or she participates in the show's narrative, elucidates the show's intent, and reveals the core theme. In the international cultural exchange program "The Beauty of Shared Arts", the presenters, Sa Beining and Long Yang, based on the stance of telling the Chinese story and showing the connotation of Chinese culture, first built a discourse platform for the unfolding of the topic after the guests' appearances by interacting with cultural experts. Then cultural symbols such as country names, cultural products, and cultural phenomena are chosen to introduce the theme of the program's narrative.

For example, at the beginning of the first installment of the program, Sa Beining sang the familiar melody and lyrics "Goodbye my friend" to introduce the "main character" Serbia. Then the words "this is a melody of the times echoing between China and Serbia - a symphony of steel" lead to the story of the Chinese team's assistance in the construction of the Serbian steel plant to form a friendship between China and Serbia; In the guest interviews, the presenter, in addition to leading the guests to explore the touching stories and participate in the interaction, is still more as a listener of the story of civilization exchange and undertakes the final sublimation of the theme of the mission. In the guest interview, the presenter not only leads the guests to discuss the touching stories and participate in the interaction but also acts as the listener of the civilization exchange stories and undertakes the mission of sublimating the theme at the end to explain the cultural concept of "harmony in diversity, beauty in common" shown in the stories and the image of China as a "civilized country" is presented in the spoken language.

2.2 Cultural experts: interpreters of civilizational exchange perspectives

Cultural experts act as "peers" of the presenter in the program, participating with the presenter in the whole process of the program's narrative. But unlike the presenters, as experts and scholars with a background in the exchange of world civilizations and the study of international issues. For example, two cultural experts in the program: Shi Zhan, Professor of the Institute for the Global History of Civilizations at Shanghai International Studies University, and Xiang Haoyu, Distinguished Researcher at the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the China Institute of International Studies. Their narrative perspective is more from the East-West civilization exchanges and human civilization view, and they assume the authoritative and professional considerations of the program, adding the cultural background and so on for the viewers, presenters, and guests at the right time. As the guests tell their stories, cultural experts will also interpret the cultural phenomena from the theoretical perspective of civilization exchange, making the concept of "beauty and harmony" more credible.

For example, in the twelfth program, expert Xiang Hao Yu adds the historical origin of the friendship between China and Cambodia and introduces the achievements of the joint construction of the Belt and Road, such as the Golden Harbor Expressway and the Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone.

2.3 Guests: three-dimensional tellers of the story of co-construction

The guest interview, as the main part of the program's narrative, is a symbol of friendly dialogue between China and foreign countries. The guests in the program are selected from the participants, builders, beneficiaries, and disseminators of the joint construction of the Belt and Road, which makes the program's narrative perspective more comprehensive, rich, and three-dimensional, and the story of the joint construction more credible and touching. Through the sincere emotions of Chinese and foreign guests in the interviews and interactions, the consensus of "harmony in diversity, beauty in common" is consolidated, which creates a deep emotional resonance between the program and the audience, and increases the attractiveness of the ritual, while also constructing a cultural identity.

For example, in the process of introducing the world's tea culture, the program invited the ambassadors and representatives of China, Mongolia, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and Sri Lanka to taste

and experience the tea varieties of the four countries, and told the touching stories derived from the exchanges between the countries and China due to the tea culture respectively.

2.4 The Artist: Celebrator of the Story of Harmony

"The Beauty of Shared Arts" innovatively incorporates songs, situational poetic dramas, acrobatics, and other art forms featuring different countries and nationalities. In the middle and at the end of the storytelling, artists and art troupes from the respective countries bring performances that represent their cultural backgrounds and sing the "Song of Harmony and Beauty" together with Chinese artists. In the wonderful audio-visual feast, the story of the two countries' "Belt and Road" co-construction will be recapitulated, and the friendship between the two countries and the concept of "beauty and harmony" will be celebrated.

For example, the Chinese and Serbian performers cooperated in the creative dance drama "Steel Symphony", combining percussion and modern dance, showing the "steel friendship" between China and Serbia in building the steel plant together; The African song "Celebrate" demonstrates the warmth and tolerance of the African people and their ability to sing and dance.

2.5 Audience: Witnesses and identifiers of beauty and harmony

No ritual can take place without the participation of the participants, and the audience plays a crucial role in the ritual activities carried out by the medium of television. Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz state that "the success of a television event relies on three core elements: firstly, the organizers of the event, who are responsible for gathering the various elements and giving them historical significance; Next is the television station, which reproduces the event by rearranging and integrating these elements; Finally, there is the audience, which shows a keen interest in the events, both in the field and at home. To ensure that an event can be successfully transformed into a television event, all three parties must be actively identified with and devote sufficient time and other resources."

The interactive behavior of the audience in response to the storytelling and performance is an important component of the ritual. The audience on stage responds positively to the interactions of the presenters and guests, working together to promote the flow of the program. For example, when the presenter Sa Beining threw out the keyword "the second largest continent in the world", the audience answered "Africa" in unison, which led to the next part of the narrative on China-Africa friendship. There were also many faces from different countries in the audience. The audience followed the guests on the stage to learn the movements and pronunciation and applauded the achievements of Sino-foreign civilization exchanges and the wonderful cultural performances, which created a diversified and tolerant cultural field. In addition, the program is also disseminated through the new media, netizens are also involved in online communication and interaction, through likes, comments, retweets, recreational videos, etc., and the audience becomes a witness of the "beauty and harmony" story, emotional resonance at the same time, but also strengthen the cultural identity.

3. Objects of Ritual Construction - Cultural Carriers and Emotional Communion

In media rituals, to "summon" the audience's collective memory, the cohesion of emotional consensus, and ultimately to achieve the mobilization purpose of ritual sensitization and call, TV programs often choose the audience's familiar symbols with cultural connotations and historical metaphors to carry and express their meanings. In "The Beauty of Shared Arts", the program visualizes abstract cultural meanings and core themes into sound, light, dance, cultural products, and works of art that the audience can understand and feel. Through the expression, transformation, and identification of these cultural symbols, ritualized communication constructs a common cultural memory of "beauty and harmony".

3.1 Dissemination of Chinese cultural symbols

Telling China's story and spreading China's voice on a global scale is the starting point for the innovation of "The Beauty of Shared Arts" program. The beauty of Chinese culture and its openness, tolerance, and self-confidence can be seen everywhere in the program. In addition to the linguistic symbols used by the presenters, experts, and guests to explain and promote the essence of Chinese culture, cultural symbols such as the panda, the Tiangong space station, celadon porcelain, Dunhuang murals, the guqin, and tea also appeared, depending on the theme of each issue. These Chinese elements are

integrated into the program's narrative of cultural exchange, demonstrating the uniqueness of Chinese civilization and its significant contribution to the progress of human civilization.

The audiovisual symbols in the program also play an important role. The "Silk Road" element, which is always present on stage, symbolizes the concept of "Belt and Road", which includes the "Land Silk Road", "Maritime Silk Road", and "Digital Silk Road", which are exchanges between Eastern and Western civilizations. The "Dunhuang" element symbolizes Chinese civilization's dialogue with the world through "beauty"; the holographic technology used in the scenic dance drama "New Celadon" allows the actors to dance on the "Celadon" stage. These Chinese cultural symbols fit the program's narrative approach of "based on China, looking at the world", which demonstrates our country's global mindset of promoting mutual understanding of civilizations and deepening cultural exchanges, and creates a sample of cultural self-confidence and self-improvement in the integration.

3.2 Intermingling and Resonance of Chinese and Foreign Cultural Symbols in the Narrative

"The Beauty of Shared Arts" uses "small cuts" of personal narrative to support a larger narrative. Focusing on people, events, things, and cultural symbols in the Belt and Road exchanges. Constructing interactions between people and objects and between people around the theme and space, so that the audience can have a strong emotional resonance with the scenes constructed and symbols disseminated by the rituals.^[1] For example, the program takes as its starting point the film "The Musician", which documents the deep friendship between Xian Xinghai and the Kazakh musician Baikadamov. Centered around music and "Xian Xinghai Street", the memories and dialogues between Xian Xinghai's daughter and the Kazakhstani actor who played the role of Baikadamov demonstrated the mutual love between the Chinese and Kazakh people. Taking the Angkor monument in Cambodia as the starting point, the team members recounted the case of the Chinese cultural relics restoration team exploring the "reversible restoration method" for restoring the Angkor monument in Cambodia for many years, and from the perspective of cultural heritage protection, they pointed out that fraternity and cooperation are the core elements in building a community with a shared future for mankind.

3.3 Building cultural bridges through arts and culture

Art is the most interconnected emotion of human beings, and the fusion interpretation of Chinese and foreign artworks is an important way to realize the value output of "The Beauty of Shared Arts" from the story narrative to the value output. The program uses literary performance as a common symbol, and in the creative performances of artists from all over the world, audio-visual symbols are used to solidify the audience's impression, perpetuate the afterglow of the story, and realize cultural sharing. The beauty of culture plucks the strings of emotion, thus making the core theme more intuitive and palpable to the people. For example, Chinese singers and African youths sang the original song "If You Are Traveling in Space", which continues the story and at the same time integrates the aspirations of Chinese and African youths for space into their voices; Original acrobatic drama "52 years meet again" reproduces 52 years ago, more than 50 Sudanese students went to China Wuhan Acrobatic Troupe "acrobatic study abroad" this continuation of more than half a century of moving stories. In the joint performance of the Wuhan Acrobatic Troupe and Sudan Acrobatic Troupe, the acrobatic friendship between the two peoples was condensed.

4. Programs for Ritual Construction - Immersive Experiences of Multiple Integration

In the 1970s, James Carey advocated a "ritual view of communication," asserting that the origin and ultimate pursuit of communication lies in the construction and maintenance of a cultural world that is orderly, rich in meaning, and capable of guiding and accommodating human behavior. Through participation in diverse rituals, the audience realizes meaning construction, identity confirmation, and emotional resonance. At this time, communication transcends the mere transmission of information and is committed to creating a shared space of meaning, building a bridge of communication and meaning-sharing between the communicator and the receiver. The medium of television breaks through the temporal and spatial limitations of traditional rituals and creates a virtual presence for the viewer: there is no need to be physically present at the site of the communication, and there is no limit to the number of people who can be accommodated in the physical space. The "intermediary effect" of the television medium alone allows us to intervene in communication activities, and through "television rituals" we can bring together the consciousness of the audience, promote cultural dissemination, realize the sharing of meanings, and highlight the role of ritual communication activities in maintaining social stability and

promoting the harmonious coexistence of human beings. The ritual view of communication not only lays a theoretical foundation for the study of television programs but also provides a reference to the theoretical framework for the realization of cultural construction and dissemination of television programs through ritual communication.

How to create a sense of ritual through the programmed setting of the ritual, to form an emotional interaction and cultural identity with the audience, is a key factor in the success of media rituals.^[2] In cultural variety shows, viewers are invited to move from the "everyday world" into the "ritual world," watching repetitive ritualized broadcasts and performances. Through the constant reproduction of cultural and media symbols, the program constructs viewers' national cultural identity and cultural identity while reinforcing and consolidating the program's sense of ritual. The ritual aspects of "The Beauty of Shared Arts" are interlocking and layered, using rich and diverse ritual maneuvers and elaborate ritual processes to create a solemn ritual space in which the audience's emotions are aroused and identity is constructed.

The theme song "The Beauty of Shared Arts" was performed by guests and performers from different cultures in different costumes on the circular stage, symbolizing the "concentric circles", announcing the official opening of the media ritual. The presenter's language art illustrates the program's main theme of "Tasting the Rhythm of Diverse Cultures, Appreciating the Beauty of Exchanges and Mutual Appreciation" and the program's background of "The 10th Anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative". Then, together with the cultural experts, the stories of the countries along the Belt and Road will be linked together, and the heroes of the stories will be invited to the scene to go to the appointment of harmony and beauty.

The main part of the program's narrative consists of "on-site filming + guest interviews + Chinese and foreign collaborative productions". The audience watches a short film shot in the field "in a blind box" in the atmosphere created by the stage, which explains clearly the geographic and cultural context in which the story takes place, the needs and demands of the two parties involved in the exchange, the development of the event, and the key players.^[3] Immediately immerses the audience in the stories of China and the countries along the Belt and Road; The stage was also designed for the appearance of the guests in a ritualized process: Chinese and foreign guests boarded the round platforms located at the two ends of the stage to wave to the audience, accompanied by magnificent music, the two sides of the round platforms gradually gathered to the center of the stage. At this time, a symbolic "Belt and Road" bridge-like elevator rises to connect the two sides of the round platform, Chinese and foreign guests meet in the center of the bridge, and the camera panoramic display of the two sides shaking hands and embracing and friendly walking scene. The clever use of stage design, character trajectory, and camera language shows the imagery of upward mobility, moving in the same direction, advancing side by side, and equal dialogue, symbolizing that the Belt and Road Initiative has built a bridge between China and the world for communication and mutual understanding of civilizations.

Guests come to the program and lead the audience back into the scene of the storytelling. The interviews and interactions connect the audience's emotions and concerns, creating a common "emotional structure". The Chinese and foreign collaborative productions use the integrated stage form of "storytelling + performance + visualization" to restore and present the main narrative carriers of cultural communication - stories, scenes, rituals, etc., to lead the audience into a shared scene and realize immersive communication. The audience can feel the story content more intuitively in the shared scene, which not only enhances the sense of cultural communication, but also triggers the audience's thinking, changes or strengthens their mentality and cognition, and achieves the purpose of empathy and cultural leadership for the achievements of "Belt and Road" construction. Audiences have strong emotional resonance with the scenes constructed and symbols transmitted by the ritual, which in turn makes the program itself a ritual of shared value.

5. Conclusions

"The Beauty of Shared Arts", on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the "Belt and Road" initiative, captures the common cultural memories of China and foreign countries, traces the origin of these memories, dialogues with history about the essence of Chinese culture, and talks with the world about the beauty of cultural exchanges. Deeply excavate the touching stories of "people-to-people communication" in civilization exchanges and mutual understanding, and explore the scenarios, spatial narratives, and interactive experiences of different cultural exchanges and integration. There is a vivid interpretation of the broad strokes, as well as a profound depiction of the refined details. The art of

communicating with hearts and minds, and the touching of people with literature, have triggered resonance in "common understanding", "common vision" and "common construction", and enhanced the influence of Chinese civilization's international dissemination power, and at the same time, have become another successful model of Sino-foreign exchanges and mutual understanding.

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