

Discussion on Narrative Reconstruction Ideas in the Cross-media Communication of Chinese Literature

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ABSTRACT

Digital technology continues to evolve, reshaping the dissemination patterns and industry landscape of contemporary literature, breaking away from the long-standing dominance of print media. As new media formats constantly advance, diverse forms of communication-such as films and TV dramas, audiobooks, and short videos-transcend spatial and temporal constraints, aligning well with today's audiences' fragmented information consumption habits. The industrialization of Chinese literary IP has been steadily progressing; however, adaptation quality remains uneven, and superficial content creation is widespread. Most cross-media adaptations of Chinese literature merely involve basic text transfer without leveraging the transmission dynamics of new media or upgrading content according to contemporary public aesthetics. The unique cultural connotations of original works gradually erode, constraining the popularization and long-term preservation of classic literature. Drawing on Jenkins' theory of transmedia storytelling, this study explores a scientifically optimized pathway for cross-media dissemination of Chinese literature through three dimensions: narrative structure refinement, cultural symbol translation, and communicative tone innovation. By integrating current developments in the cultural and creative industries, the research identifies key industry challenges-including homogenized adaptations, weakened cultural essence, and inadequate medium compatibility-and establishes a practical framework centered on scenario-based adaptation, localized innovation, and preservation of cultural core values. The findings offer actionable theoretical insights and practical guidance for the digital transformation of Chinese literature, cross-cultural exchange between China and the West, and the contemporary inheritance of traditional culture.

KEYWORDS

Chinese Literature; Cross-media communication; Narrative Reconstruction; Media Adaptation; Cultural transmission.

1. INTRODUCTION

To ensure the rigor of the research logic and the standardization of the discussion, and to align with modern academic research standards, this paper, based on the current development status of the digital communication industry, clearly defines the core research concepts. Cross-media communication refers to the fact that Chinese literature breaks away from the limitations of paper-based texts and completes secondary diffusion and full coverage through digital platforms such as films, audio, and short videos. This communication model enables static literary content to adapt to various communication scenarios and effectively expand the social dissemination coverage of Chinese literature. Narrative reconstruction is different from mechanical text replication and is a content optimization method with both professionalism and innovation. The creative subject, in combination with the communication characteristics of different media, adjusts the narrative structure, cultural

symbols, and language system of the work specifically, while retaining the core theme and artistic characteristics of the original work, and adapting to the audio-visual and reading habits of contemporary audiences. Media adaptation is the core criterion for evaluating the quality of literary adaptations, focusing on the matching degree between literary content and media communication rhythm, presentation form, and popular aesthetic preferences, directly determining the final dissemination efficacy of the adapted works [1].

The existing domestic related research has the problems of limited perspective and scattered systems. Academic achievements mostly focus on a single text or individual adaptation cases, conducting fragmented and targeted analyses. Few studies are based on the macro perspective of multi-media integration, systematically analyzing the internal logic and implementation path of narrative reconstruction. The existing theoretical system is difficult to adapt to the development needs of the all-media era. Jenkins' cross-media narrative theory effectively fills this research gap. This theory clearly distinguishes the essential differences between mechanical text replication and professional media adaptation, clarifies the core connotation of cross-media communication, and lays a theoretical foundation for the cross-border innovative dissemination of Chinese literature.

The practical implementation of the cultural and creative industry proves that the core of high-quality literary adaptation is innovative reconstruction, rather than mechanical replication of the original content. The traditional literary narrative mode is adapted to the deep reading scenarios of paper, emphasizing detailed description and humanistic reflection, and can provide readers with an immersive reading experience. This static and detail-oriented narrative form conflicts significantly with the fragmented and audio-visual consumption characteristics of contemporary audiences. The inherent differences in media attributes have long hindered the process of popular dissemination of Chinese literature. This paper takes narrative reconstruction as the core entry point, taking into account the artistic aesthetics and mass communication value of literary works, promoting the adaptation of classic literature to the contemporary aesthetic system, and helping with the long-term continuation and continuous dissemination of culture.

2. THE CORE NARRATIVE RECONSTRUCTION PATH FOR CROSS-MEDIA DISSEMINATION OF CHINESE-LANGUAGE LITERATURE

The narrative structure, cultural symbols, and communication mode jointly constitute a complete literary narrative system. These three elements interact with each other and jointly empower, supporting the literary text to complete cross-media transformation and global dissemination. Adaptation and creation do not need to adhere to a fixed optimization sequence. They can be flexibly adjusted according to the characteristics of the work's theme and the characteristics of media communication [2]. By examining high-quality adaptation cases in the industry, it can be seen that through structural optimization, symbol translation, and language style innovation, the content is gradually improved. This is currently the most adaptable, practical, and effective narrative reconstruction method.

2.1 Reconstruction of Narrative Structure: Adapt to the Rhythm of the Medium, Optimize the Narrative Logic

The narrative structure is the core foundation that determines the audio-visual effect and market reputation of literary adaptations. Most long Chinese-language literary works in China adopt a multi-line parallel and time-space interlaced narrative technique. The complex subplots and detailed scene descriptions can meet the in-depth reading needs of paper readers. However, the loose and complex narrative structure is difficult to adapt to the fast-paced and intense conflict characteristics of new media such as films, short videos, etc. The differences in communication logic among different media

are the main reason for the awkward perception and polarized reputation of most literary adaptations nowadays.

To meet the differentiated communication needs of different media, it is necessary to simplify, integrate and innovate the narrative structure of the original work. This is also the pre-requisite work for cross-media adaptation. Long-term industry practice has shown that media adaptation does not need to fully replicate all the content of the original work. The creation only needs to closely adhere to the core theme, stabilize the main line, delete redundant subplots and ineffective pre-settings, combine the narrative logic with the communication rhythm of the medium, and achieve a high degree of adaptation between the text and the communication carrier, while also taking into account the integrity of the content and the adaptability to the medium [3].

The achievements of many classic literary adaptations in film and television have confirmed the decisive role of narrative structure optimization in the quality of the works. Mo Yan's "Red Sorghum Family" has a complex narrative structure and frequent time-space jumps, with a high reading threshold and cannot directly adapt to the audio-visual logic. The film version combines the linear communication characteristics of films and TV, scientifically selects the content of the original work, simplifies the fragmented subplots and the roles of secondary characters. The work integrates fragmented multi-line narratives into a coherent linear narrative, focusing on the growth of characters and regional folk customs, allowing the niche literary classic to break through the circle and achieve popular dissemination. Lu Yao's "Ordinary World" has a slow narrative rhythm and focuses on life details and psychological depictions, which is more suitable for paper reading scenarios. During the adaptation of the TV series, the creative team deleted tedious pre-settings, strengthened plot connections, and maintained the work's core essence and humanistic value while adhering to the broadcast rhythm of the TV series. Some poorly made online short dramas ignore narrative organization and blindly pile up plots, eventually resulting in logical confusion and audience loss, which fully demonstrates the necessity of narrative reconstruction in the adaptation process.

2.2 Narrative Symbol Reconstruction: Cross-border Translation of Imagery, Strengthening the Communication Tension

After completing the basic adaptation of the narrative structure, the mediated translation of cultural symbols becomes the key to preserving the core of the work and retaining the artistic characteristics of the original. Compared to foreign literature, the core advantage of Chinese literature lies not in the complex plot structure, but in its unique Eastern aesthetic atmosphere and profound cultural heritage [4]. This artistic connotation is presented through narrative symbols such as natural imagery, regional characteristics, folk culture, and humanistic metaphors, and is the core carrier that distinguishes Chinese literature from other literary systems and showcases its unique artistic value.

The underlying logic of text-based narration and image-based narration is completely different, which is the core reason for the loss of cultural connotations during adaptation. Textual carriers can convey deep thoughts through artistic techniques such as blank spaces and metaphors, leaving the audience ample room for imagination and possessing strong abstraction and inclusiveness. Image-based communication is centered on intuitive visual images, and the expression form is more concrete, making it difficult to carry the obscure and abstract textual connotations [5]. Even if some adapted works fully replicate the plot of the original work, they still lose the literary texture and depth of thought, resulting in the implicit loss of cultural connotations. By reconfiguring narrative symbols through media transformation and converting abstract textual images into vivid audio-visual language, the cognitive threshold for the audience can be lowered, and the cultural heritage and artistic value of the original work can be maximally retained.

The ancient costume drama "Dream of Huayu" is a benchmark for the modern adaptation of classical literature, fully demonstrating the practical value of narrative symbol translation. The work is adapted from the Yuan dynasty opera "Zhao Pan'er Feng Yue Jiu Xin", and the original work was created

based on the traditional opera format, with an outdated form and obscure language, making it difficult to adapt to contemporary film and television aesthetics and mass communication scenarios. The creative team abandoned the loose and mechanical replication of the rough adaptation mode and broke through the narrative framework of traditional opera. The team transformed the abstract humanistic spirit, moral concepts, and value pursuits of the original work into concrete and perceptible fengmian (urban life) styles, rituals, clothing, and character behavior patterns, while adhering to the main idea of the original work, achieving an organic integration of classical and modern aesthetics. This creative logic is also applicable to the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature [6]. The cultural cognition systems of China and the West are significantly different, and overseas audiences find it difficult to interpret abstract Eastern cultural symbols. Through the transformation of symbols through concrete narration and emotional conflicts, it can break through cross-cultural communication barriers and enhance the international communication effectiveness of Chinese literature.

2.3 Narrative Tense Reconstruction: Adapted to the Contemporary Context, Expanding the Audience Base

Optimizing the narrative structure and translating cultural symbols have addressed the fundamental issues of media adaptation and cultural preservation. The modernization of narrative tone can further shorten the distance between the work and the public, continuously expanding the audience boundaries of Chinese literature. The language reform of narrative tone can further bridge the gap between the traditional Chinese literature and the contemporary mass consumption habits of content that is more life-oriented and popular. These expressions have a significant mismatch with the contemporary language of mass consumption, which is characterized by a more life-oriented and popular style. Young audiences have a low acceptance of classic adaptations, and the main reason is the lack of a sense of originality in the traditional tone, making it difficult to evoke emotional resonance among contemporary audiences.

The innovation of tone does not mean the degradation of language into vulgarity. Instead, it aims to achieve modern adaptation of the language system while preserving the ideological content and literary texture of the original work. Adaptation and creation can abandon rigid and outdated written expressions and incorporate contemporary social context-appropriate wording and positive value concepts to bridge the language gap between ancient and modern times. New media has a prominent interactive attribute, completely breaking the traditional one-way output communication model of literature [7]. New forms such as audio books and interactive scripts have transformed the audience from passive recipients to creative participants, forming a new communication pattern of two-way interaction and co-creation and sharing. In international communication scenarios, optimizing the narrative tone based on local language habits can avoid cultural perception biases and enhance the overseas recognition and dissemination influence of Chinese literature.

3. THE CURRENT CHALLENGES IN THE CROSS-MEDIA NARRATIVE RECONSTRUCTION OF CHINESE LITERATURE

The three narrative reconstruction paths discussed in the previous text can effectively solve most of the media adaptation problems at the theoretical level. However, when compared with the actual operation status of the entertainment market, there is a significant gap between theoretical research and industry practice. The literary adaptation industry still has many practical problems that need to be solved urgently. Currently, literary adaptation has formed a large-scale industrial system, and commercial works are produced in batches. Most creative entities focus on traffic data and economic benefits as their core orientation, neglecting the cultural value and humanistic attributes of literary works. The utilitarian creative orientation has given rise to many industry, restricting the high-quality dissemination and long-term development of Chinese literature.

Template-based and copycat adaptations are the most prominent common problems in the cultural and creative industry, significantly lowering the overall creative level. Most creators lack the awareness of text deepening and narrative innovation thinking. To reduce costs and avoid innovation risks, they directly copy the mature narrative framework of market hit works, ignoring the unique artistic characteristics and cultural core of the original works. The extensive mass production model leads to serious homogeneity in adapted works and the lack of cultural recognition. Long-term development is prone to cause audience aesthetic fatigue. To meet the demands of mass entertainment, some works deliberately delete the humanistic reflection and spiritual core of the original works, and ly strengthen the dramatic conflict and entertainment attributes. The cultural quality of the works continues to decline, and eventually becomes a fast-food-style entertainment product lacking in ideological depth [8].

The lack of media adaptation refinement is a common problem throughout the industry's development, directly affecting the dissemination effect of adapted works. Most literary adaptations only make superficial text adjustments. The creative teams do not customize exclusive narrative plans based on the characteristics of different media, and adapt to all scenarios with a single, fixed narrative mode, unable to leverage the communication advantages of various media, significantly weakening the dissemination coverage and industry influence of the works. This problem is particularly prominent in the international communication field. Domestic creators have difficulty balancing local cultural characteristics and global universal aesthetic standards. Eastern cultural symbols often have interpretation deviations and communication distortions, limiting the overseas dissemination power and international influence of Chinese literature [9].

4. OPTIMIZATION STRATEGIES FOR CROSS-MEDIA NARRATIVE RECONSTRUCTION IN CHINESE LITERATURE

Based on the theoretical analysis and case studies presented earlier, in order to address the practical challenges faced by the industry, an optimized path that suits the contemporary market can be identified. A systematic and implementable solution framework can be constructed. The core of narrative reconstruction lies in optimizing the narrative form and adapting to the media environment. It is fundamentally different from the poor adaptations that maliciously alter or deconstruct the original work. All adaptation work must adhere to the core spirit and artistic essence of the original work, only optimizing and upgrading the narrative form, and avoiding deviation of the main idea and the loss of humanistic connotations. The creative team should abandon the utilitarian mindset of pursuing popularity and balance the commercial value and artistic value of the work. They should avoid cultural generalization and deviation of the main idea, and comprehensively enhance the overall quality of the adapted work.

The key to solving the problem of insufficient media adaptation lies in establishing a refined, media-specific, and customized adaptation system. Different media have significantly different audience groups, communication rhythms, and content demands [10]. A single narrative model cannot adapt to multiple communication scenarios. Precise optimization based on media characteristics can maximize the release of communication advantages. The film and television medium focuses on immersive audio-visual experiences, and needs to optimize the narrative rhythm, converting abstract cultural symbols into intuitive visual language; the audio medium centers on auditory communication and focuses on strengthening language emotional expression, simplifying redundant scene descriptions; the short video medium is adapted to fragmented consumption scenarios, and needs to extract the core plot conflicts and simplify the complex narrative structure; the interactive medium focuses on user participation, and can add interactive narrative scenarios to activate the creativity of audience participation. Precise scene-based adaptation can fundamentally solve the problem of media mismatch and effectively improve the quality of the adapted work [11].

To break through the homogeneity of adaptations and enhance the effectiveness of overseas dissemination, the creative entity needs to base itself on the cultural foundation of the local area and innovate modern narrative expression paradigms. The logical and reasonable, and profound artistic logic of Eastern narrative is the core artistic advantage that distinguishes Chinese literature from Western literature, and is also an important manifestation of its unique cultural value. Currently, some creators blindly apply Western narrative templates and deliberately abandon local cultural characteristics, resulting in similar styles and insufficient cultural recognition of their works. Creators need to deeply explore the Chinese aesthetic system, Eastern cultural symbols, and traditional humanistic spirit, and construct a highly recognizable local narrative system [12]. By optimizing the narrative content based on the values of the new era, it can not only adapt to the contemporary communication context but also bridge the cultural cognitive gap between China and the West, reduce cross-cultural interpretation deviations, and continuously expand the domestic and international dissemination boundaries of Chinese literature.

5. CONCLUSION

Media convergence is an inevitable trend in the development of literature in the digital age, and it is also the core path for Chinese literature to achieve dynamic inheritance and carry out international dissemination. This article takes narrative reconstruction as the main line, and from the three dimensions of narrative structure, cultural symbols, and communication tone, it has built a complete analytical framework for the cross-media adaptation of Chinese literature. Combined with typical practical cases in the cultural and creative industry, it systematically summarizes the actual problems such as homogenization of adaptation, loss of cultural core, insufficient media adaptation, and weak cross-cultural communication. It proposes targeted optimization strategies with practical implementation capabilities. This research result can provide reliable theoretical support and practical references for the digital dissemination of Chinese literature and cross-cultural communication between China and foreign countries.

This research has certain limitations. The research focus is on the optimization of the narrative level of the text, and it has not conducted multi-dimensional analysis by combining market operation rules, audience research data, and cross-cultural communication models. The exploration of the personalized adaptation rules for different genres is relatively superficial. Future research can refine the adaptation plans for different media and different literary genres, combine empirical data to improve the research system, and continuously explore the Eastern narrative paradigm suitable for the international context. Balancing literary artistry and market dissemination can fully activate the vitality of traditional literature, help the long-term continuation of Chinese cultural heritage, and steadily enhance the international cultural influence of Chinese literature.

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