



Inheritance and Innovation of Traditional Chinese Culture in Humanities and History Documentaries under New Media Contexts

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Abstract. With the development of Internet and digital technology, documentary has changed a lot in narrative perspective, language expression and work form. Its contents and forms are more and more popular among young people, and documentaries have gradually become an important bridge connecting traditional culture and young people. This paper takes the humanities and history documentaries as the research object, and explores the new features of the humanities and history documentaries in the new media context, and their important functions in the cultural inheritance and innovation. It provides a reference for the better dissemination of Chinese traditional culture through documentary films.

Keywords: Humanities and History Documentary; New Media Contexts; Traditional Chinese Culture; Inheritance and Innovation

1 Introduction

The concept of "documentary" comes from British director Gleeson, it is an imported form of artistic expression for China, and it is generally agreed in the academic circle that "real reproduction" should be the core of documentary. For a long time, limited by production technology and market recognition, documentary content production is mainly concentrated on TV platforms, and the overall tone of creation is inclined to be serious and rigorous, so the threshold of audience acceptance is relatively high, and the user presents characteristics of elitism, small mass and maturity, etc. The Documentary Research Centre of Beijing Normal University has been working on the development of documentary content production. According to the "Survey on the Public Image of Chinese Documentary Films" released by the Documentary Research Centre of Beijing Normal University in 2014, 48% of urban residents did not know about documentaries, 28.3% of the public had not watched any documentary films in the past six months, and the higher the education level, the higher the recognition of documentaries, with the most prominent proportion of the group of people aged be-

tween 30-39 years old ^[1]. At one time, documentaries were considered to be far away from young people.

With the continuous development of the mobile Internet, video platforms are gradually replacing TV platforms as the largest broadcasting carrier for documentaries. According to the annual statistics released by the video platform Iqiyi in 2017, from the perspective of the composition of users watching domestic documentaries, only 12% of users over 35 years old, while users aged 19-30 years old accounted for more than 50% of the total, becoming the main audience, and users under 18 years old accounted for 14% of the total. And in the "2022 Documentary Young User Insight Report" jointly released by CCTV and Yien, it shows that diversified and high-quality documentary content is sought after by young users mainly born in the 1990s and 2000s, and in the survey, more than 80% of the young viewers said they love to watch documentaries ^[2]. Documentaries have also gradually become an important bridge connecting traditional culture and young people.

This article refers to the classification of Chinese documentary columns by scholar Zhang TD in his "2009 Research Report on the Development of Chinese Documentaries" ^[3], and focuses on humanities and history documentaries as the object of study, exploring the new characteristics of humanities and history documentaries and their functional role in cultural inheritance at a time when documentaries have regained their vitality. Humanities and history documentaries usually show the historical events of a certain period, trace the history with a certain historical relic, or tell the great deeds of a certain historical figure and a certain historical group, and contain humanistic colors while showing the history, and incorporate more humanistic feelings and cultural spirit elements while excavating the traditional Chinese culture and showing the historical style, which can well express the cultural value and convey the cultural spirit.

2 Characteristics of Humanities and history Documentary Films in New Media Context

The strong aesthetic demand and exuberant curiosity of young people in the new era are the important reasons for the revitalization of documentaries, and along with the changes in the communication ecology and the increasing youthfulness of the documentary audience, documentary creators holding on to the view that "young people will win the world" have made innovative practices in terms of narrative perspectives, language expressions and work forms in response to the new communication environment and audience preferences.

2.1 A narrative perspective that seeing the big from the small

Narrative perspective is the angle and entry point of a work to tell a story. In the process of creating a documentary film, the different perspectives of storytelling by creators can bring different emotional and cognitive orientations to the audience. In previous documentaries on humanities and history, the narrative perspective of docu-

mentaries often leans towards grand themes, it gradually widens the distance between the cultural significance of the work and the audience, and audiences cannot seek inspiration and guidance for individual life from documentaries. Contemporary young people are in pursuit of "a sense of presence" and "a sense of participation", this puts forward higher requirements for humanities and history documentaries. It is not difficult to find that in recent years, humanities and history documentaries have also overcome the "inherent difficulties" brought by historical elements, changed their narrative perspective, cut in from a micro perspective, and used specific characters, cultural relics and stories as entrances to see the big picture from a small perspective. For example, the documentary "a brief reading of China from letter" collects 30 letters of the ancients, through the important form of letters, which were commonly used in ancient China for conveying feelings and communicating emotions, tells the history and stories behind them at six levels, such as love, friendship, wisdom and family customs, etc. At the same time, the documentary focuses on the social reality issues that young audiences have generally concerned about, exploring their significance in history and modernity, and finding specific footholds for the grand and profound cultural and civilization propositions, in order to generate strong emotional resonance among young audiences.

2.2 Lively and interesting language expression

Under the new media context, humanities and history documentaries are no longer obsessed with elitist routes, and have gradually "stepped down from the altar", and the traditional documentary's towering propaganda posture has been replaced by the youthful "contrast and closeness". In terms of language expression, more networked and colloquial terms have also appeared in the documentaries. For example, one episode of the third season of the documentary "If a National Treasure Can Speak" titled "Tang Dynasty Terracotta Warriors", there is such a commentary: "As a chubby girl who works hard to lose weight every day, I once dreamed of living in the Tang Dynasty, however, I later learned that in the early Tang Dynasty, she was not fat, while in the late Tang Dynasty, she was bloated. Even in the prosperous Tang Dynasty, her beauty was not always based on her weight, and you also had slim girlfriends around you. At that time, I was confident, at that time, I was at ease, and at that time, I was beautiful with the freedom to be as fat as I wanted to be." The humorous and witty commentary instantly brings the audience closer, while also thought-provoking. By reproducing the historical scene of the contemporary popular topic of "weight loss", it guides the audience to examine the intrinsic value of their pursuit of beauty and expresses the realistic attitude that women do not need to be overly strict with their bodies.

2.3 Short and lightweight work form

Along with the rise of the mobile Internet and the accelerated pace of life, as the younger generation of online people, their patience in obtaining information is generally weakening. To cater to the audience's demand for fragmented information in the

context of the new media, many humanities and history documentaries have gone for a short, concise, and lightweight style, such as the documentary "If National Treasures Could Speak", which uses 5 minutes to narrate the story of a national treasure in each episode, to complete the audience's short dialogue with the history. The documentary "How to Tell This Painting" adopts a personified narrative of the famous painting through live action, using a 5-minute length of each episode to vividly convey the knowledge of the painting. And the documentary "China in Arts" takes the audience through 12 minutes of each episode to explore the representative works of renowned masters, and to gain a first-hand understanding of the paintings and Chinese culture. The fragmented duration setting effectively reduces the viewing time threshold, provides more viewing scenes, expands the audience range, and allows more young people to feel the unique charm of China's excellent traditional culture.

3 The Function and Role of Humanities and History Documentaries in Cultural Heritage in the Context of New Media

The inheritance and innovation of traditional culture is the responsibility and opportunity bestowed by the times on humanistic-historical documentaries, which cannot be separated from the production and dissemination of high-quality content. Humanistic-historical documentaries are based on the traditional Eastern aesthetic conception, utilizing digital technology to reproduce historical scenes and traditional styles, revitalizing traditional culture, providing new opportunities for young people to approach traditional culture, and also building a solid bridge for building identity and cultural identity.

3.1 Reproducing traditional culture through "Aesthetics and technology"

History and documentaries are inherently connected, and the record of today will eventually become the history of tomorrow. The reason why there is a high threshold for people to recognize and understand traditional culture is also since traditional culture has a long history, and many of the new generations find it difficult to understand and reflect on the essence of traditional culture in the current social context.

However, people's perception of beauty comes from their instincts, and more and more cultural and historical documentaries are striving to present a unique aesthetic image of China in terms of image composition and color tones, while fully presenting the theme and content, and conveying an aesthetic atmosphere with Chinese charm. For example, the documentary "China" always adheres to the pursuit of traditional Chinese classical aesthetics in terms of presenting objects and methods. Whether it is the distant landscapes, vegetation, or close-up tables, the selection of each scene and the creation of artistic conception emit a natural spirit of knowing the rise and fall of honor and disgrace, leading the audience into the spiritual world of the characters.

In addition to the essence of traditional culture conveyed by oriental aesthetics, many digital technologies, including 5G, cloud computing, 4K, AR/XR, and virtual

reality, have been deeply involved in all aspects of documentary film creation. Digital technology helps documentaries to reproduce ancient traditional architecture, cultural landscapes, and technology. In the documentary "Forbidden City", to showcase the seismic resistance technology of the Forbidden City, the creators used 3D modeling and other techniques to replicate the models of the buildings in the Forbidden City, vividly revealing the secret of the Forbidden City being able to stand tall and not fall in hundreds of earthquakes. The documentary "A thousand ages of great men" is shot in full 4K format, combining various forms such as actor performance, hand drawn animation, and 3D special effects to better integrate the audience into historical contexts. To present the appearance of cultural relics Hezun in the documentary "If National Treasures Could Speak", the new 3D scanning technology and holographic transmission and storage topography technology are used to make an animated image of Hezun by the ratio of 1:1, basically restoring the original appearance of cultural relics. Then filming the internal inscriptions of Hezun, and the 122-word inscriptions are clearly shown through holographic topography, which not only makes the cultural relics more three-dimensional, but also allows viewers to more fully perceive the story behind the cultural relics [4].

3.2 Shaping Cultural Identity through "History and Time"

As a gene carried in the bones of documentaries since their birth, "authenticity" often makes them not avoid any reality pain points and not conceal any prevailing contradictions in life. The generalization of meaning has prevented documentary themes from being favored by commercial capital for a long time, but it is precisely this "self-contained" style that often gains a group of followers while distancing itself from capital. With the prevalence of humanism and speculative spirit, humanities and history documentaries have become a window for contemporary young people to see themselves, heaven and earth, and all living beings, relying on their cultural value, era spirit, and practical significance conveyed. More young audiences are drawing on the nutrients of excellent traditional Chinese culture in documentaries.

In the current era of cultural diversity and integration, humanities and history documentaries also play an important role in constructing a sense of identity and shaping cultural recognition. As a medium of communication, current humanistic-historical documentaries adopt the language expression and topic preferences favored by young people. By telling people's stories, paying attention to their lives, restoring still water running deep of real life, avoiding textbook style explanations, and using character stories as the core of creation, they objectively shape the true and three-dimensional images of historical figures, allowing the audience to actively reflect their own perceptions, thoughts, and emotions and will into the object in front of them during the aesthetic process, resulting in emotional resonance and constructing a sense of identity and group cultural identity. The role of humanities and history documentaries in consolidating national emotions and strengthening historical identity can be realized at this moment [5]. The documentary "How to Speak of This Painting" breaks the inherent elite cultural circle, pulls famous paintings into the life of ordinary people, adopts the customary language more suitable for young groups, and breaks

through the tediousness of reading scripts with vivid and witty network buzzwords, which is in line with the cognitive interest of the audience and meets their "identity"; meanwhile, it combines the psychological needs of young audience groups, and through personalized text, it can explain the history of ancient history into modern life, and provide a real basis for the existence of the originally distant history. At the same time, combining with the psychological needs of young audience groups, through personalized text elements, stereoscopic sound elements and stylized visual elements, it meets the desire of contemporary young audience for traditional historical knowledge and realizes the value identity of the audience for traditional culture. In the fifth chapter of "A Brief Reading of China", "Family Style of Eternal Pillar Talents ", the letters from five historical figures, including the famous emperor Liu Bang and the litterateur in Northern Song Dynasty Fan Zhongyan et al. Their words of advice and exhortation to the younger generations light up the way for the later generations, and also transmit the spirit of culture to the audience. Through the echoing of simple emotions and the thinking and distinguishing of social problems, the audience realizes the double identity of their own identity and culture.

4 Conclusion

China' excellent traditional culture is as vast as the sea, how to inherit rich traditional culture is an important issue faced by the humanistic-historical documentary industry, as well as the entire documentary industry. Humanities and history documentaries not only need to innovate in visual narrative, promote traditional Eastern aesthetics, and achieve a transformation from macro to micro perspectives and narrative methods, but also pay attention to the power of new media communication, create a three-dimensional communication channel with the help of new media platforms, and widely apply digital technology to provide more imaginative space for the Narrative Art, to enhance the communication effectiveness of the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

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