

Digital Narrative and Scene Reconstruction: Cultural Memory Reconstruction and International Communication of Rural Sports Event IP

-- Taking Jiangmen Qiaoxiang as an Example

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ABSTRACT

In the dual context of a mediatized society and global mobility, rural sports events are no longer confined to localized physical competition but have evolved into trans-border cultural symbols and carriers of collective memory. As a renowned "Qiaoxiang" (hometown of overseas Chinese) in China, Jiangmen hosts rural sports events that carry the unique ethnic identity and local attachment of overseas Chinese at home and abroad. However, under the traditional communication model, due to spatiotemporal obstruction and contextual disembedding, these events face the dilemma of memory rupture and diminishing communication efficacy. Based on the theory of cultural memory and media scene theory, this paper adopts a qualitative research paradigm to deeply explore how digital technology promotes the generation and international communication of Jiangmen rural sports event IP through the dual mechanisms of "narrative reconstruction" and "scene recreation." The study finds that digital narrative transforms grand clan history into micro-individual life experiences, realizing the shift of cultural memory from "solid storage" to "liquid flow"; meanwhile, scene recreation utilizes virtual reality and instant interaction technologies to eliminate physical distance, constructing a "digital homeland" with intersubjectivity. The synergy of the two dissolves the "cultural discount" in cross-cultural communication and triggers emotional resonance and value recognition among global overseas Chinese. Based on this, the paper proposes paths such as constructing an omni-media narrative matrix, creating immersive ritual spaces, and cultivating "Glocal" (Global-Local) communication communities, aiming to provide theoretical insights and practical solutions with Qiaoxiang characteristics for the international communication of Chinese rural cultural IP.

KEYWORDS

Digital Narrative; Scene Reconstruction; Rural Sports Event IP; Cultural Memory; International Communication; Jiangmen Qiaoxiang

1. INTRODUCTION: THE "CULTURAL TURN" OF RURAL SPORTS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

1.1. Origin of the Problem: The Tension between Diaspora and Aggregation

In the flux of modernity, transnational migration has become a norm. For Chinese Qiaoxiang, which possesses a massive overseas population, how to maintain the emotional bond between the "Diaspora"

community and the local "Homeland" has always been a core proposition. The Wuyi region of Jiangmen, known as the "First Hometown of Overseas Chinese in China," features a unique dual social structure of "one Jiangmen at home, one Jiangmen abroad." This structure makes local rural sports events—whether it is the spirited Taishan Nine-man Volleyball, the solemn Xinhui Dragon Boat Racing, or the vigorous Heshan Lion Dance—more than just recreational activities for physical fitness; they are solemn rituals for confirming ethnic identity and inheriting clan memory.

However, with the gradual passing of the older generation of overseas Chinese and the localized integration of the new generation (second and third generations), this traditional cultural memory based on kinship and geography is facing the risk of rupture. Traditional physical delivery (such as genealogy books, letters) or unidirectional television broadcasting can hardly penetrate the barriers of heterogeneous cultures, failing to evoke deep emotional resonance among the new generation. Meanwhile, the rapid development of digital technology has triggered revolutionary changes in the communication ecology. Digital media, with its interactivity, immersion, and multi-media characteristics, provides a new ontological foundation for the cultural reconstruction and international communication of rural sports events.

1.2. Research Significance and Perspective

Against this backdrop, the IP (Intellectual Property) process of rural sports events is essentially a process of digital encoding and global decoding of cultural symbols. Existing studies mostly focus on the economic value development or organizational management models of event IP, rarely analyzing deeply how digital technology reshapes the cultural core of events from the intersectional perspective of "cultural memory" and "scene communication."

Taking Jiangmen Qiaoxiang as a sample, this paper attempts to respond to the following key questions: How does digital technology repair and activate the fading collective memory of Qiaoxiang through the innovation of narrative modes? How does the construction of virtual scenes break through physical spatiotemporal limitations to create a sense of ritual "presence" for overseas audiences? In international communication, how can digital IP be used to dissolve cultural misunderstandings and achieve value resonance? This is not only related to the high-quality development of Jiangmen's sports culture but also has important theoretical and practical significance for telling the story of rural China well and enhancing the international communication power of Chinese culture.

2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: THE TRIANGULAR INTER-CONSTRUCTION OF MEMORY, SCENE, AND COMMUNICATION

2.1. The Digital Existence of Cultural Memory

German scholar Jan Assmann distinguishes collective memory into "communicative memory" and "cultural memory." The former is based on daily communication and is valid for only 80-100 years; the latter relies on carriers such as myths, rituals, and texts, possessing stability across time and space. In the digital age, academia has further proposed the concept of "Digital Memory." Andrew Hoskins argues that digital media is not only a storage device for memory but also a generator of memory.

In the context of Qiaoxiang sports events, digital technology is not merely a recording of traditional events but an active process of "re-memorization." Through algorithmic recommendation, database indexing, and multimedia presentation, it transforms static cultural memories originally sealed in ancestral halls and genealogies (such as the evolution of volleyball rules, the rituals of dragon boat sacrifices) into dynamic digital texts that are searchable, shareable, and interactive on the Internet, thereby giving cultural memory new vitality in intergenerational transmission and transnational flow.

2.2. Media Scene Theory and "New Locality"

Joshua Meyrowitz pointed out in *No Sense of Place* that electronic media broke the traditional association between physical places and social situations. In the mobile Internet era, the "Age of Context" theory proposed by Robert Scoble and others further emphasizes that the "five forces"—mobile devices, big data, sensors, social media, and positioning systems—have not made geography disappear. Instead, through technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR), they have reshaped people's perception of specific spaces, creating a "Digital Locality" or "New Locality."

For overseas Chinese far away, digital scene reconstruction means they can obtain a psychological experience of "being here" through the immersive space constructed by digital IP without returning physically. This scene is not just a replica of the physical environment but a restoration of social relations and emotional atmosphere, serving as a "digital spiritual home" connecting global overseas Chinese [1].

2.3. Encoding and Decoding in International Communication

Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding theory reveals the non-linear flow of meaning in the communication process. The international communication of rural sports event IP faces decoding challenges in cross-cultural contexts. If traditional "grand narratives" and "propaganda discourse" are still used, it is easy to generate "oppositional decoding" among overseas audiences.

Digital narrative emphasizes "micro-perspectives," "emotional logic," and "interactive experience," which helps reduce "Cultural Discount" and encourages overseas audiences to turn to "negotiated decoding" or even "dominant-hegemonic decoding" (i.e., complete agreement). By combining the sports spirit, a universal value symbol of humanity, with the unique cultural symbols of Qiaoxiang, digital IP can become a universal language bridging ideologies and cultural prejudices.

3. HISTORY AND REALITY: THE CULTURAL MEMORY MAP OF JIANGMEN RURAL SPORTS EVENTS

Before exploring digital reconstruction, it is necessary to clarify the cultural memory map of Jiangmen rural sports events in the "pre-digital era." This memory has significant "duality" and "ritual nature."

3.1. Bodily Discipline and Clan Identity

In Jiangmen villages, sports events have never existed independently of the clan social structure. Taking Taishan Nine-man Volleyball as an example, this Western-origin sport has been completely integrated into the daily life of Qiaoxiang over a century of localization. Every village has a court, every village has a team, and competitions are often held by natural villages or surnames.

Such events are not only competitions of physical skills but also performances of clan identity. The court is the square, and the event is the ritual. Through competition, the cohesion of the clan is strengthened, and the order of seniority is confirmed. For villagers, memories about volleyball (such as a comeback victory in an inter-village league, or the legend of a "Barefoot Ball King") constitute their common identity markers. This memory is Embodied, deeply engraved in the muscles and emotions of every participant.

3.2. Diaspora Narrative and Spiritual Homeland

For overseas Chinese, hometown sports events are important coordinates for confirming where their "roots" lie. Historically, overseas Chinese funded the construction of courts and the hosting of dragon

boat races in their hometowns by sending back "Qiaopi" (silver letters). Although this participation was remote, it endowed them with legitimacy to participate in hometown public affairs.

Therefore, the memory map of Qiaoxiang sports events naturally contains a "Diaspora" dimension. It records the hardships of ancestors going out to sea, their struggles in foreign lands, and their watch over the homeland. For example, the Dragon Boat Race in Xinhui is not only a prayer for good weather but also implies "being in the same boat," serving as a spiritual bond connecting clansmen at home and abroad. However, over time, this memory based on physical objects and oral narration is fading and urgently needs rescue excavation and reconstruction through digital means.

4. MECHANISM I: DIGITAL NARRATIVE — MICRO-ENCODING AND EMOTIONAL CONNECTION OF CULTURAL MEMORY

Digital Storytelling is the core engine of rural sports event IP development. By changing the subject, perspective, and medium of narration, it transforms traditional rural memories into digital texts adapted to Internet communication logic.

4.1. Perspective Shift from "Grand History" to "Micro Life"

Traditional event publicity often focuses on grand historical narratives, such as "the century-old glory of the Hometown of Volleyball" or "the long history of Dragon Boat culture." While solemn, such narratives often fall into abstraction and dryness, failing to move the current young audience.

Digital narrative tends to cut in from a micro perspective. In the construction of Jiangmen rural sports IP, we observe a significant shift: creators begin to focus on specific individuals in the events—an "Uncle Volleyball" who is still active on the court despite being over seventy, a "second-generation Chinese" who returns to seek roots and joins the dragon boat team, or an old craftsman silently guarding the lion head in the ancestral hall.

Through forms like short videos and micro-films, the life stories of these individuals are vividly presented. Their sweat, tears, laughter, and regrets become hooks connecting the audience's emotions. This "decentralized" narrative strategy concretizes the abstract "Qiaoxiang spirit" into living personalities, making cultural memory no longer a cold museum display but a warm life experience. This micro-narrative is easier to cross cultural barriers and trigger universal emotional resonance (such as persistence in dreams, love for family) [2].

4.2. Structural Reorganization from "Linear Logic" to "Database Logic"

Lev Manovich believes that the core characteristic of the new media age is "Database Logic." Traditional cultural memory often exists in a linear, written way (such as the compilation of genealogy). Digital narrative, however, fragments and tags these memories, storing them in huge databases.

In the creation of Jiangmen rural sports IP, digital technology allows us to structure massive event videos, old photos, oral histories, and technical statistical data. Users no longer passively accept a complete story but can interactively retrieve and collage in the database according to their own interests.

For example, by constructing a "Qiaoxiang Volleyball Figures" multimedia database, users can click to query the volleyball history of any village, watch game footage from decades ago, and even restore old photos through AI technology. This non-linear narrative method gives users (especially overseas Chinese) great autonomy. They can piece together their own "homeland picture" in the digital space based on their own memory clues. This participatory memory reconstruction greatly enhances the stickiness of the IP.

4.3. Discourse Empowerment from "Unidirectional Communication" to "Polyphonic Chorus"

In the pre-digital era, the narrative power of events was often held by officials or elites. Digital media empowers every participant to narrate. On the courts of Jiangmen, we see countless villagers, tourists, and overseas Chinese raising their mobile phones to share what they see and feel through live streaming, Vlogs, and WeChat Moments.

These grass-root, fragmented, and diverse voices converge into a "polyphonic chorus" about Qiaoxiang culture. Some focus on the intensity of the game, some on rural cuisine, and some sigh at the changes in their hometown. This multi-dimensional narrative greatly enriches the connotation of the event IP. In particular, the feedback and interaction (User Generated Content, UGC) of overseas Chinese on social media have become an important part of the IP content ecology. Their comments, likes, and reposts are not only confirmation of memory but also the creation of new collective memory.

5. MECHANISM II: SCENE RECONSTRUCTION — ELIMINATION OF SPATIOTEMPORAL BOUNDARIES AND IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

If digital narrative solves the problem of "what to say," scene reconstruction solves the problem of "where to experience." Through technologies like VR, AR, and MR, digital IP constructs a "Third Space" transcending physical limitations.

5.1. Virtual Presence: "Technological Annihilation" of Physical Distance

For overseas Chinese unable to return home, the biggest pain point lies in "absence." Digital technology achieves the "technological annihilation" of physical distance through high-fidelity scene restoration.

Some pioneering rural events in Jiangmen have begun attempting to introduce VR panoramic live streaming technology. Wearing VR equipment, overseas audiences feel as if they are standing by the village court in Taishan, able to look around at the audience in 360 degrees, hear the on-site shouting, and even see the sweat on the athletes' faces clearly. This immersive audio-visual experience creates a strong sense of "Telepresence."

This "virtual presence" is not only an extension of vision but also psychological comfort. It allows overseas Chinese to regain the right to participate in hometown rituals. In the live broadcast of the dragon boat race, combined with 5G+4K technology, overseas audiences can see the waves stirred up by the dragon boat in real-time. The capture of such details greatly strengthens the memory arousal function. Scene reconstruction makes "hometown" no longer a distant geographical concept but a reachable digital experience space [3].

5.2. Ritual Replication: "Digital Twinning" of Cultural Symbols

Rural sports events contain a large number of ritual elements, such as dotting the eyes of the lion, collecting greens for the dragon boat, and ancestor worship before the game. These rituals are core carriers of cultural memory. Scene reconstruction technology can perform high-precision digital replication of these rituals, building "Digital Twin" scenes.

For example, utilizing 3D modeling and Unreal Engine technology, centuries-old ancestral halls and traditional opera stages in Jiangmen can be restored 1:1. In this virtual space, users can control virtual Avatars to participate in virtual lion dance performances and learn traditional steps and etiquette. This gamified, interactive scene experience is particularly effective in attracting Chinese teenagers. They may not understand the hometown dialect, but through this highly technological and interesting

interaction, they imperceptibly acquire the cultural symbols of Qiaoxiang and complete the intergenerational transmission of cultural memory.

5.3. Emotional Community: Community Space Based on "Connection"

Scenes are not merely simulations of the physical environment but containers for social relations. The ultimate goal of digital scene reconstruction is to build an emotional community that transcends national borders.

In the operation of Jiangmen rural sports IP, the "Cloud Viewing Hall" and "Cloud Clan Association" based on the mobile Internet have become new social scenes. During live broadcasts of matches, overseas Chinese from the United States, Canada, Southeast Asia, and other places communicate in their hometown dialect in the bullet screen area, exchanging greetings and commenting on the game. This digital chat room instantly turns into a virtual "gathering place under the big tree at the village entrance."

In this scene, time differences are ignored, and national borders are blurred. Everyone establishes close emotional connections based on common cultural memories (such as familiarity with a village name, a knowing smile at a colloquialism). This connection not only maintains existing social capital but also promotes the generation of new social capital (such as transnational business cooperation, charitable donations). The digital scene becomes a powerful magnetic field condensing the centripetal force of global Jiangmen merchants and overseas Chinese [4].

6. PATH EXPLORATION: INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FROM "CULTURAL DISCOUNT" TO "VALUE RESONANCE"

Based on the analysis of the above mechanisms, for Jiangmen rural sports event IP to achieve effective international communication, it must break through the traditional mold of external propaganda and build new paths conforming to the laws of digital communication.

6.1. Universal Translation of Symbols: Finding the "Greatest Common Divisor"

The primary obstacle to cross-cultural communication is "Cultural Discount." To reduce the discount, it is necessary to find common human emotional values as the "Greatest Common Divisor" of communication while maintaining national characteristics.

Elements such as "struggle," "unity," "fairness," and "family" contained in Jiangmen sports events are universal value symbols for all mankind. In IP creation, obscure clan regulations should be downplayed, and these universal values amplified. For example, when producing documentaries for overseas dissemination, the story of Taishan volleyball can be packaged as an inspirational narrative of "grassroots counterattack" and "civilian heroes," similar to the logic of Hollywood sports genre films. Through this universal translation, audiences from different cultural backgrounds can understand the emotional logic within, thereby realizing a shift from "curiosity" to "empathy."

6.2. Matrix Layout of Channels: Building a "Glocal" Ecology

International communication cannot rely on a single channel but should build an omni-media matrix. Borrowing Ships to Go to Sea: Fully utilize international mainstream social platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram. Open official accounts and use algorithmic recommendation mechanisms to precisely push exciting short videos to overseas users.

Community Penetration: Establish deep cooperation with Jiangmen Wuyi associations, chambers of commerce, and alumni associations around the world. Use their private traffic (such as WhatsApp groups, WeChat groups) for precise distribution.

KOL Leadership: Excavate and cultivate ethnic Chinese KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) with cross-cultural influence. Let them tell hometown sports stories in the language and mindset of their host countries. Their endorsement can greatly enhance the credibility and affinity of the IP.

6.3. Interactive Participatory Communication: From "Spectators" to "Makers"

Traditional international communication is often unidirectional output, where the audience acts as passive "spectators." Communication in the digital age should emphasize participation and co-creation.

Encourage overseas audiences to participate in the creation of event IP. For example, launch activities like "Global Overseas Chinese Cloud Relay Run" or "My Story with Hometown Volleyball" short video collection. By providing an Open Source material library, encourage overseas netizens to Remix event videos, producing mash-up videos, reaction videos, or commentary videos.

This participatory communication not only greatly reduces communication costs but also stimulates the subjectivity of the audience. When overseas Chinese discover that they are also part of the event IP, their willingness to spread it will increase exponentially. This word-of-mouth communication from the inside out is far more effective than official rigid promotion and can truly achieve "Value Resonance" [5].

7. CONCLUSION

The IP development of rural sports events in Jiangmen Qiaoxiang is a profound transformation regarding memory, technology, and communication. It concerns not only the rise and fall of a sport but also the cultural survival and spiritual settlement of an ethnic group in the era of globalization.

This study shows that digital technology is not merely a cold tool; it possesses the warm power to reconstruct cultural memory and recreate social scenes. Through micro-level and interactive Digital Narrative, traditional rural memories are endowed with modern expressions, realizing a shift from solid storage to liquid flow. Through immersive and virtualized Scene Reconstruction, the obstruction of physical space is eliminated by technology, constructing a "Digital Homeland" shared by people at home and abroad.

In this process, Jiangmen provides a unique model for the international communication of Chinese rural culture: one does not need to deliberately cater to Western aesthetic tastes, nor stick to outdated traditional forms. Instead, one should stand on local deep cultural roots, use cutting-edge digital technology means, and excavate common human emotional values.

Looking forward, with the iteration of new technologies like Metaverse and Web 3.0, the IP forms of rural sports events will become more diverse. We expect to see a more open, inclusive, and three-dimensional "Digital Qiaoxiang" sports landscape, letting the seeds of Chinese culture spread across the world through digital wings, taking root, sprouting, and flourishing. This is not only the cultural mission of rural revitalization but also a vivid practice of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

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