A Brief Exploration of the Visual Representation and Communication of Urban Image through Film and Television

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Abstract: The urban image serves as both an external manifestation of a city's comprehensive strength and a symbol of its soft power. With the continuous prosperity and development of the cultural industry, it is imperative to utilize the power of the cultural sector and audiovisual media in shaping and disseminating the urban image. Leveraging the accessibility and immersive qualities of film and television culture, we can forge a new urban identity, propagate a fresh urban culture, and stimulate urban advancement. As the film and television industry continues to evolve, it is crucial to embrace innovative practices, emerging trends, and novel theories to enhance the application of audiovisual culture. Through an exploration of how film and television culture contribute to the shaping and dissemination of the urban image, this paper aims to provide insights for theoretical research in the realm of film and television culture and contribute to the development of urban construction.

Keywords: Urban Image; Audiovisual Representation; Shaping and Dissemination; Urban Development; Cultural Industry

1. Expression of Urban Image Elements in Audiovisual Communication

In today's society, the perception of an urban image is to a certain extent derived from the integration of various natural, historical, and cultural factors of the city into the medium of film and television. Through long-term and comprehensive influences, the urban image is effectively disseminated.

1.1 Audiovisual Expression of Urban Extrinsic Elements

The extrinsic elements of a city refer to its physical space, which possesses sensory-symbolic characteristics. These include the overall appearance of a city, its landmark buildings, distinctive landscapes, and scenic features. In the realm of film and television culture, the portrayal of a city's physical space provides a more tangible experience, enhancing people's understanding of the city in a more realistic manner [1]. For example, in the movie *Crazy Stone*, not only are the architecture, streets, and wharves of Chongqing depicted, but also the unique local dialect, hotpot cuisine, and cable cars, showcasing the grassroots culture within this modern city. By deeply embedding the cultural connotations of the city, the film allows the audience to gain a better appreciation of Chongqing [2].

1.2 Audiovisual Expression of Urban Intrinsic Elements

The intrinsic elements of a city pertain to its cultural image, encompassing the distinctive language style, behavioral characteristics, modes of production and lifestyle, and local customs. The historical background of each city determines the variations in its urban image. To effectively disseminate the regional characteristics of a city and evoke a sense of recognition and emotional connection in the audience, it is crucial to pay special attention to these aspects during the creation of audiovisual works.

The portrayal of a city's spiritual temperament in film and television culture represents the highest form of expression and serves as a concentrated showcase of the city's cultural essence. In film and television works, the representation of a city's spiritual temperament is primarily achieved through storytelling, meticulous attention to details, and other artistic techniques. By immersing the audience in the appreciation of the work, it subtly influences them and ultimately fosters a sense of identification and belonging towards the city [3]. For instance, in the television drama *Feathers Fly to the Sky*, the plot revolves around the contrasting characters of Chen

Jianghe, a simple and honest individual, and Luo Yuzhu, a clever and spirited person. Despite their differences, they share inherent goodness and a diligent work ethic. Their love story develops from a foundation of sympathy and mutual assistance, and the subsequent commercial miracle that arises from exchanging chicken feathers for candy showcases the fundamental behavioral patterns and spirit of the people in Yiwu.

In conclusion, the external physical elements and internal cultural and spiritual elements of a city can be vividly and authentically portrayed in film and television culture. The comprehensive dissemination of a city's inner and outer image can only be achieved through the combined application of these two elements. In doing so, it effectively stimulates the audience to comprehend the deeper implications of the film and television works and enhances their perception and identification with the city on a psychological level [4].

2. Reflection on Utilizing Film and Television Culture to Promote City Image Building

In the process of city image building, it is essential to make full use of the communicative power of film and television culture to genuinely discover cultural symbols and effectively disseminate the city's image.

2.1 City Positioning as the Core

Compared to the application of traditional culture, film and television, as a form of new media communication, must revolve around the overall strategic positioning of the city when selecting symbols for dissemination. The concept of city positioning refers to the process of scientifically selecting the fundamental elements of a city's status, determining the city's development direction, characteristics, and strategies based on a comprehensive and profound analysis of significant factors and their mechanisms and compound effects that influence urban development, considering the city's own conditions, competitive environment, and emerging trends. For instance, in the portrayal of ancient cities like Xi'an and Luoyang, it is crucial to focus on their core positioning of historical and cultural significance, with a particular emphasis on showcasing various

historical landmarks [5]. On the other hand, for emerging cities like Shenzhen, highlighting urban vitality becomes the key. As for livable coastal cities, it is important to avoid being perceived solely as retirement destinations and instead emphasize the livability aspects that cater to various age groups and their needs [6].

2.2 Diversification of Presentation Methods and Perspectives

In the process of disseminating city cultural symbols, the communication methods should not be limited to traditional textual symbols. Instead, a combination of modern technologies can be employed to create various impactful means of expression. By utilizing different modes of communication, audiences can develop a profound impression of specific cultural symbols. During the dissemination process, it is important to engage the audience by incorporating subtle cultural symbols. Traditional media tends to focus on a comprehensive coverage of the subject matter. However, by integrating these two approaches within film and television culture, it is possible to achieve more effective communication outcomes. Furthermore, when shaping a city's image, it is essential to choose different perspectives to showcase the diverse cultural symbols of the city, while minimizing the difficulty for non-local audiences to understand the local culture.

3. Application of Film and Television Culture in Shaping and Promoting Urban Image

3.1 Utilizing Urban Spaces as Backdrops for Film and Television Productions

This approach can be realized in two different scenarios. Firstly, in the background treatment of certain film and television works, specific landscapes with historical significance within the city are often chosen to reflect a particular historical context [7]. During this process, city administrators can cleverly utilize these opportunities to promote the city's image. This phenomenon is often observed in the dissemination of classic film and television works. For example, the ancient town of Pingyao in Shanxi gained fame as a shooting location for the film *Raise the Red Lantern*. Secondly, the story of a film or television work is set in a specific city, and the city's name is

prominently displayed. This approach is more direct and commonly used in many film and television productions. For instance, *Tokyo Love Story* depicts a love story between the main characters in Tokyo and their hometown of Ehime Prefecture. It captures the cultural collision between Eastern and Western mindsets during Japan's economic boom, leading to a phenomenon known as the "Ehime Fever". As the film spread to China, it left a fashionable impression of Tokyo in people's minds, showcasing the bustling streets of Tokyo, the then not widely available mobile phones, and even the trendy fashion choices of the main characters. These types of film and television works serve as not only a representation of film and television culture but also an important form of shaping and promoting the city's image.

3.2. Driving Urban Image through the Development of the Film and Television Industry

With the development of the cultural industry, the film and television industry has become an important component, forming a complete industry chain from production to distribution. Cities can leverage their existing resource advantages to vigorously develop the film and television industry. Firstly, cities can derive economic benefits by promoting the film and television industry [8]. For example, the Tianlong Babu Film and Television City in Dali, Yunnan has generated numerous adaptations of Jin Yong's literary work *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*, integrating the historical significance of ancient Dali with the modern tourism development of Dali city. This has attracted countless fans of Jin Yong's novels and martial arts enthusiasts. In the process of filming, cities can stimulate the development of local tourism industries by establishing film and television bases and creating film and tourism products, thereby boosting the local economy and promoting the city's image. Secondly, city government departments and enterprises can enhance the dissemination of the city's image by participating in film and television productions through co-production, cooperation, production, and sponsorship. For instance, in recent years, various reality TV shows have become tourism hotspots, showcasing cities as a form of "soft integration" of the city's image

[9].

3.3. Spreading Urban Image through Film and Television Festivals

Film and television festivals are significant events in the industry, attracting a large number of film and television stars and societal elites. They become focal points of media attention and public discourse. Domestic cities such as Wuxi, Sanya, and Yinchuan host film festivals annually or biennially, capturing the attention of the world. Not to mention the influence of international metropolises like Berlin, Shanghai, and Tokyo, which successfully shape and disseminate their local urban image through various film festival activities. Hosting film festivals can elevate a city's status to that of a renowned global city. For example, China's Golden Rooster and Hundred Flowers Film Festival, held consecutively for several editions, captures the media's and the nation's, even the world's, spotlight.

4. Conclusion

The shaping and dissemination of urban image require long-term implementation and substantial human and material resources. As one of the most favored mediums of information consumption, film and television culture plays a pivotal role in the process of shaping and disseminating urban image. It can fully demonstrate its functional role by integrating the city's image with film and television works. Through the emotional impact of film and television narratives, it establishes a favorable perception of the city among the public. In the practical application, it is important to use the methods effectively and leverage the characteristics of film and television culture to shape and disseminate the urban image from multiple perspectives and in a comprehensive manner. By truly integrating the urban image with film and television culture, the driving force of the cultural industry is realized, which in turn stimulates industrial progress and promotes urban development.

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