

Exploring the diffusion mode of Quanzhou Marionette Opera Culture in youth groups

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Abstract. In a more diversified society and a worldwide economy, the rich culture of contemporary entertainment is more ingrained in all sectors of social life, while the tradition of folk art is vanishing. Traditional arts and folk culture are being lost. The traditional Marionette Opera, which has long played a part in Quanzhou's rituals and celebrations, is currently facing difficulties such as a declining audience and an antiquated mode of diffusion. This paper examines the historical growth and evolution of the Quanzhou Marionette Opera and examines the many topic matters and diffusion modes that have given non-genetic legacy new life through literature analysis and fieldwork. The development of new culture diffusion modes and techniques of dissemination in youth groups is crucial for increasing the living cultural legacy, boosting the cultural relevance of traditional arts, and creating a traditional arts cultural system.

Keywords: Marionette Opera; Youth; Cultural Diffusion.

1. Quanzhou Marionette Opera's historical context

Quanzhou Marionette Opera sometimes referred to as "Jiali Opera" or "Puppet Opera," is a well-established regional culture opera. For more than 2,000 years, people have debated the origins of the art form, which developed during the Han Dynasty and reached its zenith during the Tang Dynasty. Legend has it that when Emperor Liu Bang was besieged in Pingcheng, Chen Ping, his strategist, knew that the enemy leader Bardon was lustful and that his wife Xiongnu was jealous, so he took advantage of the conflicting emotions between the couple and set up a puppet in the shape of a dancing girl with a mechanism on top of the city. As soon as his wife learned, she evacuated and relieved the siege of Pingcheng out of fear that Bardon would favor the "dancing girls" once he had burst into the city. Because of the puppet's amazing accomplishment in reversing the enemy's advance, Emperor Liu Bang preserved it in the palace. Empress Dowager Bo later fell seriously ill during the rule of Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty. Despite repeatedly seeking medical attention, she was never cured. Instead, the puppet was employed in a theatrical performance to praise the heavens and drive away evil spirits, and Empress Dowager Bo was made well. Puppet shows have now become a requirement at the court for weddings and festivals, as well as to honor the gods and ward off evil spirits. Since then, puppet shows have been a requirement at the court for weddings and rituals, as well as to worship the gods and ward off evil spirits.

Through the merging of the art of rap, puppet performances during the Tang Dynasty grew throughout the centuries into a new style of theater, the Marionette Opera, which could present lengthy stories. People from the Middle Kingdom were compelled to relocate south to Quanzhou as a result of the three main conflicts of history; they brought with them sophisticated farming methods and many of civilization's fruits, as well as establishing the Marionette Opera in Quanzhou. With a thriving culture of international trade and business, ancient Quanzhou was once a hub for Chinese and foreign trade and culture. At one point, there were "people from 10 continents in the city" and "merchants from ten thousand nations on the rising wave. [1]" Here, a variety of maritime merchants, tourists, and monks gathered, bringing with them a range of religious cultures that merged with Quanzhou's native religious culture to produce a distinctive religious culture where a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought struggle. In this setting, Quanzhou

Marionette Opera, which draws on the humanistic, religious, and marine traditions of the Middle Kingdom, has developed into a cultural gem that has been passed down for thousands of years.

2. Quanzhou Marionette Opera in decline

The Quanzhou Marionette Opera has developed into an artistic crystallization of the traditional folk culture and ethnic cultural feelings of the Quanzhou region over millennia of cultural legacy. However, since the middle of the 1980s, when popular entertainment culture first began to develop, Marionette Opera, which has long been connected to Quanzhou's rituals and traditions, has seen an unprecedented onslaught. Fewer and fewer people are paying attention to theatrical culture as a result of the variety of entertainment options available. The theatre industry is stagnant, audiences are dwindling, and multiple theatre companies are sometimes at risk of going out of business. Statistics show that there were 374 different opera genres in the nation in 1983, but by 2012, that number had fallen to 286 with just about 100 still being performed regularly [2]. Faced with the harsh reality, even with a thousand-year history, the current state of the development of the Marionette Opera in Quanzhou is not optimistic. The interest of young people in the Marionette Opera is declining year by year, leading to a decline in the audience, hindering the diffusion of culture, and posing a serious threat to the Marionette Opera in Quanzhou's bloodline.

2.1 The decline of youth as a primary culture diffusion group

The way that contemporary people view that culture serves as a proxy for whether or not that culture has a development vision. In the middle to end of May 2018 in various areas of Quanzhou city, a researcher from the post-doctoral station of the Nanjing Arts Institute conducted a questionnaire survey on the awareness of and participation in Quanzhou Marionette Opera. The survey was directed at 100 teenagers, young adults, middle-aged individuals, and elderly individuals, with a male-to-female ratio of 1:1 [3]. Only one out of one hundred respondents in the juvenile segment of the survey had heard of the Marionette Opera; only five had seen it; twenty had heard about it, and 74 had never heard of it. The situation for the youth segment is also not encouraging, with only three audience members familiar with the Marionette Opera, and even though the proportion of young people who have heard of the show has increased compared to the juvenile segment, half of the audience still does not. In comparison, the situation is better for middle-aged and older audiences, with only five of them not having heard of Marionette Opera and more than half of them being familiar with it and having seen it [3].

It is evident from this that the middle-aged and elderly make up the majority of Quanzhou's Marionette Opera audience today, while the city's youth are mostly unaware of and uninterested in this age-old form of entertainment. The Marionette Opera's former prosperity and influence are no longer present in Quanzhou, a world heritage site rich in intangible cultural heritage; the primary reason for this is the dwindling number of young people, who serve as the core group for cultural transmission.

2.2 Lacking in content that combines traditional with contemporary forms

Quanzhou Marionette Opera now boasts approximately 700 plays, making it one of the oldest and rarest theater forms in the area. Nevertheless, the inheritance and growth of any classic opera genre are inseparable from innovation, and a certain level of creative innovation must be carried out to draw fresh artistic vitality to increase the effect of cultural diffusion and brand competitiveness. Innovation in culture encompasses both innovations in the spiritual and material expressions that are given to it. Regarding material innovation, The Quanzhou Marionette Opera's production method and marionette design have not significantly altered since then in terms of the creativity of the material content. But the younger generation nowadays would love to see some fresh content, that Marionette Opera based on the current character content of the day. In terms of the innovation of spiritual expression, the Quanzhou Marionette Opera, like many traditional theaters, is focused

on the aesthetic sensibilities and values of the old Chinese tradition; however, traditional values seem a little out-of-date in the face of modern and diverse values, and it is challenging for audiences, especially young audiences, to connect with them.

2.3 Lack of contemporary, multifaceted media

Any form of popular culture that wants to improve diffusion outcomes must encourage a positive interchange between the culture and the target audience. Since many performances are now only held in physical theaters without the addition of an online platform for those who are unable to physically attend the theater to experience traditional opera culture, the outdated way of performing has gradually hampered the diffusion of modern Quanzhou Marionette Opera culture. Furthermore, if Quanzhou Marionette Opera only uses theatrical performances as a means of cultural diffusion and does not diversify its means of doing so, its reliance on a single medium of diffusion is likely to leave it trapped in a feedback loop of diffusion barriers amid the fierce competition for attention in the cultural industry market. Take the movie "Despicable Me" as an example; the movie's promotional video and extensive promotion on various platforms have undoubtedly contributed to its promotion. However, that is not the entirety of the film's publicity since the creation of the "Little Yellow Man" IP image and the ancillary products derived from the movie are also a significant portion of the film's overall publicity. It goes without saying that the Marionette Opera in Quanzhou has a rich cultural history. But the major reason why Quanzhou Marionette Opera is ineffective is that it follows a very limited diffusion mode if we only use one type of cultural diffusion, such as posters, and advertisements, and do not look for a more modern and versatile diffusion medium.

3. Quanzhou Marionette Opera's Innovative Communication Strategies

The diffusion and transmission of traditional folk art depend on innovation and progress, which is a persistent problem. It is now broadly acknowledged that innovation diffusion processes are dependent upon four main factors including: the characteristics of the innovation itself, the communication channels within the population of interest, the social system connecting agents, and a time factor[4]. The creation of IP images is progressively evolving into a fresh form of expression for the diffusion of traditional culture as a result of the continued expansion of the Internet. The fact that IP pictures can have separate image awareness in many subgenres reflects this uniqueness, and these performance qualities determine the IP images' high design extensibility. At the same time, it permits a more varied and extensive diffusion of culture, making it more pertinent to young people's aesthetic sensibilities and entertainment. For the public, particularly the new generation of young people, to understand the cultural connotation of Quanzhou Marionette Opera as a traditional folk art of southern Fujian, it is important to visualize the cultural heritage of the Quanzhou Marionette Opera through the design of its IP image.

3.1 Use of attractive IP images to appeal to young aesthetic

Nowadays, many facets of young people's everyday existence are being slowly influenced by the Moe culture. The IP image created by taking the character traits from the Quanzhou Marionette Opera and fusing them with the Moe culture appears to present a fresh chance for the Quanzhou Marionette Opera's inventive legacy. The "Moe culture" represents a way of life that is full of optimism and a burning passion for all that is good. The IP image of Quanzhou Marionette Opera should seek chances from the "moe" boom, design and innovate thoroughly, and utilize the allure of "moe" to enter young people's vision to optimize the quest for a better life and the psychological demands of curiosity of young people.

The Quanzhou Marionette Opera still has over 700 plays in its catalog, ranging from life scenes to mythological adaptations with a wide variety of characters. To create a new, representative, and appealing IP image for young people through the process of combining IP image innovation, we can

choose well-known plays or characters for in-depth research. Through this, the audience can learn more about the cultural context and historical origins of Marionette Opera and achieve the beneficial goal of widely diffusion the culture of Quanzhou Marionette Opera. For instance, Little Shami from the Marionette Opera "Little Shami Goes Down" is a well-known character that is adored by the audience and has a unique personality and sense of humor. Using this figure as a point of inspiration for the IP and the idea of Moe culture in connection to the IP image as a starting point, a new IP image that is both palatable to young people and embodies the fundamental principles of Quanzhou Marionette Opera may be created. Marionette Opera from Quanzhou has a rich cultural history that is preserved as an intangible heritage. There is significant potential for the creative diffusion and innovative development of Quanzhou Marionette Opera when combined with IP images and with the support of "moe" culture.

3.2 Adapting to the times and emphasizing the diversification of content types

The setting in which Quanzhou Marionette Opera is performed now is different from that of the past, and if it is to contribute to sustainable growth, it must be creative in both form and content. However, this does not indicate that it is necessary to change the meaning that it already conveys; rather, it just implies that it must always be developed and expanded. Modern youth's curiosity has made it necessary for traditional culture to accommodate their aesthetic preferences, for instance, emojis frequently play a crucial part in internet talking and are occasionally even more expressive than corrected text. These emoji have a wide range of comedy, exaggeration, and vivid substance that not only makes the conversation more entertaining but also makes it more productive. The content of emoji packs has steadily expanded and acquired deeper cultural meanings with the growth of entertainment culture. Emojis have seen strong uptake over the last couple of years. All common mobile platforms and many desktop systems now support emoji entry, and users have embraced their use[5]. Therefore, Quanzhou's Marionette Opera should also stay current and create emotions that are appropriate to its unique culture, create a series of emoji packs that combine the IP image with the theatrical play according to the characteristics of the scenes, characters, the course of the play, the mood of the play, etc., while maintaining the essential elements of the IP image. We then use simple and symbolic elements to convey the main message. At the same time, the varied content of the expression packs also needs greater support from the script's content, and the script's content innovation can lead to the invention of the expression packs and other derivative series. For instance, using video snippets from "Iron Man" and "Lake Nagatsu" to create new Marionette Opera scripts could lead to improved diffusion effects. The Marionette Opera in Quanzhou has limitless potential for disseminating this historical culture, but the content has to be modernized. The new media may be employed to generate a positive cultural influence and draw in young people.

3.3 Concentrate on developing a variety of communication media

The communication media of Quanzhou Marionette Opera should be modified in light of the constantly evolving cultural diffusion forms in order to utilize not only the traditional media but also the key features of the new media and produce a variety of diffusion forms that are more relevant to the audience.

Traditional media like television, radio, posters, and newspapers have steadily lost their importance, while online performances like the "Cloud Theatre" have progressively taken over as the primary form of performance these media were crucial in getting the word out about the Marionette Opera in Quanzhou, and its development showed a lot of potential. Online theater is more accessible than offline theater for young people who are interested in online forms of entertainment. The "compartments" and "boundaries" of physical space are dismantled in online theater by digital interactive technology, which result in ecological shifts in how art is valued [6]. Through new communication platforms like webcasting platforms, performers can deliver their performances to the audience while fostering an interactive relationship with them through AR, VR,

and other cutting-edge technology. As a result, the audience is no longer just listening and appreciating but is instead immersed and connected in the cloud. Quality improvement will also be brought about through the launch of an official website, the introduction of public Twitter and WeChat numbers, the usage of quick movies, live broadcasts, and other new media tools for the diffusion of Quanzhou Marionette Opera culture.

Furthermore, IP Image have an increasing effect nowadays and are employed in branded creative design more and more frequently. The Quanzhou Marionette Opera is situated in the city of Quanzhou, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which is also known as "Underground in Xi'an, above ground in Quanzhou" and has a thriving tourism and trade sector. As a result, innovative products bearing the IP image of the Quanzhou Marionette Opera can be introduced for the entirety of the tourist experience, effectively diffusion the Marionette Opera while also boosting Quanzhou's tourism. At the same time, the qualities of pertinent attractions, such as Guanyue Temple and Tin Hau Temple, may be included into cultural and creative products design to mimic regional traits and make the content rich and connotative, by using the IP image as the primary creative vehicle and including the characteristics of pertinent attractions, such as Guanyue Temple and Tin Hau Temple, to echo the regional characteristics and make the content rich and connotative. The designers have blended the IP image of the Quanzhou Marionette Opera with contemporary design and absorbed the trendy and stylish attitude of the young to produce a creative product that is both cutting-edge and conventional at the same time. Traditional culture has adapted to the times while having additional development choices thanks to the quick pace of modernization, the Quanzhou Marionette Opera can be more effective by using this method of exploring the culture diffusion mode.

4. Summary

Quanzhou Marionette Opera has been preserved to the present day as an intangible cultural property that combines religious, maritime, and historical cultures and has endured for thousands of years without deteriorating. Traditional communication techniques are no longer able to match the broad cultural demands of today's society, and new and vibrant diffusion mode are therefore urgently needed in the contemporary worldwide economy and more diversified culture. It's crucial to maintain cultural connotations while transmitting information and communicating, as well as to adapt diffusion mode to the times, while understanding the interplay between tradition and innovation can help us increase the impact of Quanzhou's Marionette Opera more effectively.

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