

How can the defamiliarization techniques in animation be used to promote Chinese opera culture?

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Chinese opera

“A valuable part of China’s intangible cultural heritage, has a rich history ”

But is struggles to connect with younger audiences.

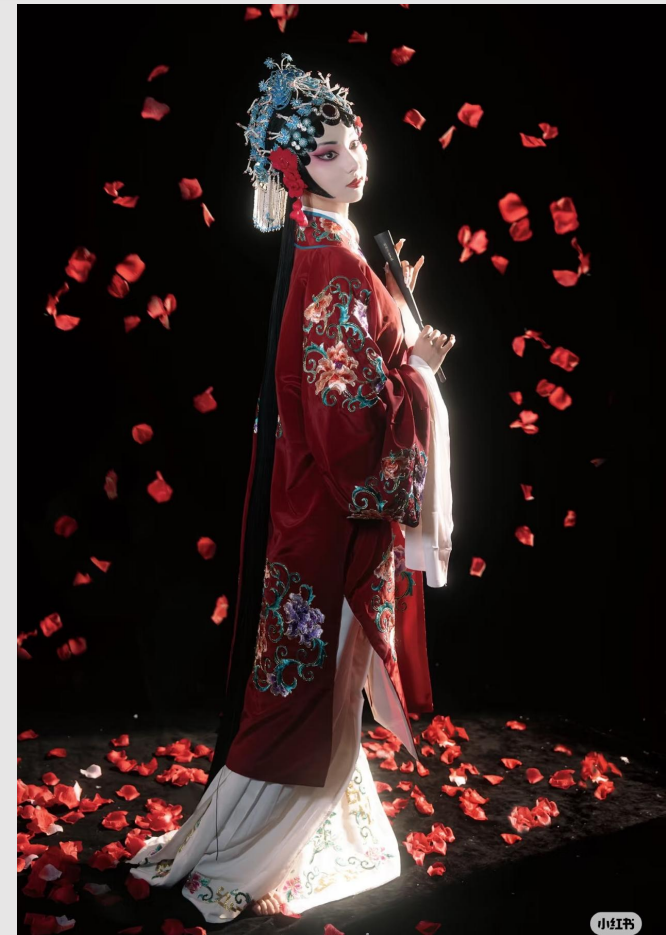


photo
by——
Zheng Wu



Animation offers a fresh way to bridge this gap through defamiliarization.

Exploring the Integration of Contemporary
Visual Aesthetics and Traditional Culture



Defining "Contemporary"

- “The characteristic of contemporary art lies in its focus on present-day issues and its ability to reflect the complexities of the contemporary world. It often challenges traditional concepts of time and history, navigating between the past, present, and future.” — *(Terry Smith, "What Is Contemporary Art")*

Defining "Contemporary"

- “In the field of animation, "contemporary" refers to the characteristic of animation that reflects current social culture and globalization dynamics through technology, visual language, and narrative innovation.” — (Pilling, 2001, *"Animation and Contemporary Culture"*)

Research Embodying “Contemporary”

Contemporary of the Research:

1. “present-focused and addressing modern societal issues.”

- It adapts to contemporary digital environments.

Modern viewers increasingly prefer cultural content delivered through digital media (e.g., short videos, interactive games).— *(Marija Aleksić; Mileva Pavlović 2014, “Contemporary practice of presentation: new tendencies in showing the cultural heritage”)*

Research Embodying “Contemporary”

- It adapts to contemporary digital environments.

For traditional Chinese opera, which is losing appeal among younger audiences, animation provides a **digital-age solution**.

Unlike “live performances”, animation fits well on **platforms** like social media and streaming services, broadening its audience and enabling interaction.



UllmannSteffen Ullmann

Research Embodying “Contemporary”

1. “present-focused and addressing modern societal issues.”

- It adapts to contemporary aesthetic demands.

“Modern audiences prefer visually impactful, innovative works, while traditional art forms often struggle to appeal. They favor fresh, dynamic styles aligned with current trends.”

Research Embodying “Contemporary”

- It adapts to contemporary aesthetic demands.

Animation is well-suited to meet these demands:

1. It adopts visual styles reflecting modern aesthetics, making it more appealing.



Cosmo Danchin-Hamard

Research Embodying “Contemporary”

- It adapts to contemporary aesthetic demands.

Animation is well-suited to meet these demands:

2. Its dynamic and immersive effects are a key strength.



Arthur Machado

Research Embodying “Contemporary”

- It adapts to contemporary aesthetic demands.

Animation is well-suited to meet these demands:

3. It easily blends traditional elements with modern design.
(such as integrating Chinese opera costumes into modern character styles) .



Research Embodying “Contemporary”

1. “present-focused and addressing modern societal issues.”

- It adapts to cross-cultural contexts.

“Cultural differences often make it hard for younger audiences to appreciate opera. Animation, as a modern medium, uniquely connects cultures.”

Research Embodying “Contemporary”

- It adapts to cross-cultural contexts.

Many global animated films blend elements from various traditions, appealing to diverse audiences.

“contemporary art tackles present-day issues and reflects modern complexities.”

- Furthermore, this study offers practical models for "the protection and revitalization of intangible cultural heritage".



Spirited Away



Coco

Research Embodying “Contemporary”

Contemporary of the Research:

2. “It can bridge technology and culture by modernizing traditional symbols.”

- Reinterpretation of history.

My study reinterprets history by revisiting and deconstructing traditional opera stories, reimagining cultural symbols to give them new vitality in a contemporary context.

Research Embodying “Contemporary”

- Reinterpretation of history.

The slide illustrates this idea. The girl's design blends traditional opera costumes with modern illustration, while the white bear adds a dreamy, fairy-tale touch.

This approach breaks opera culture out of its traditional framework, and showcasing the charm of opera symbols in a modern context.



Research Embodying “Contemporary”

2. “It can bridge technology and culture by modernizing traditional symbols.”

- Innovation in narrative techniques

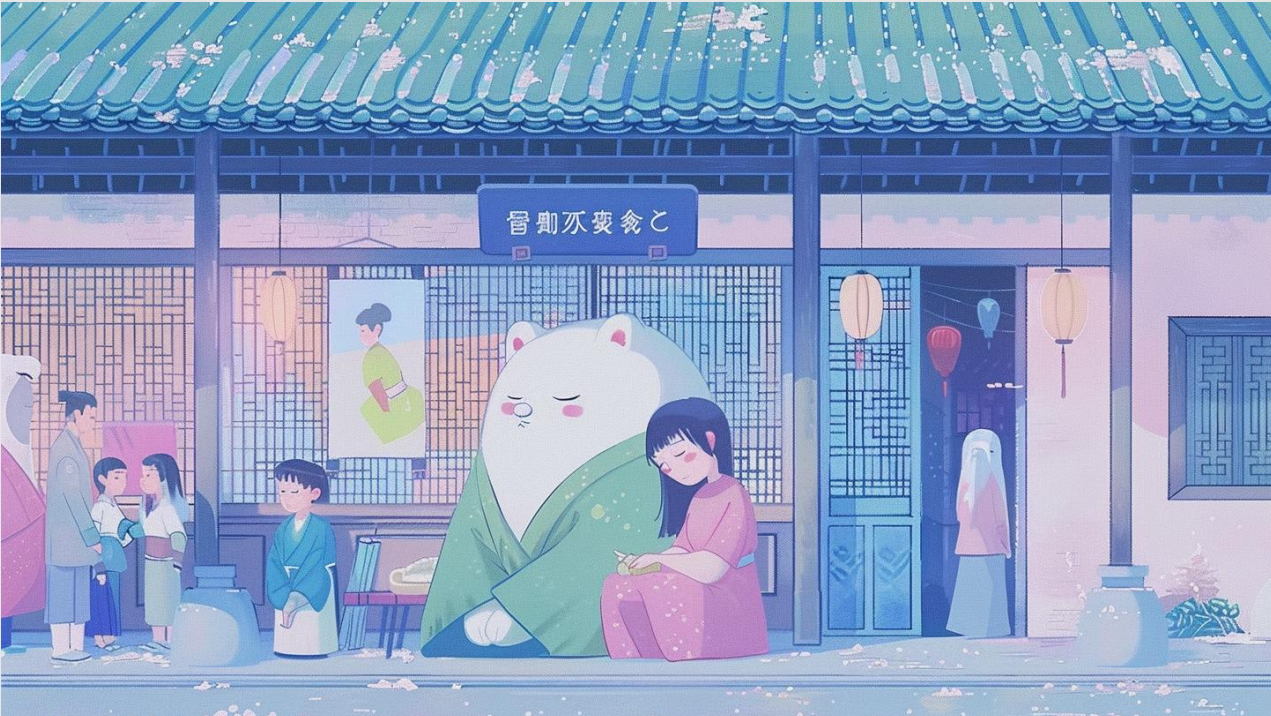
Defamiliarization techniques in animation go beyond traditional linear storytelling by using nonlinear, multi-perspective, or interactive methods, breaking away from stereotypical opera structures. Flashbacks, jumps, and loops enable creative storytelling, offering fresh views on traditional tales.

Research Embodying “Contemporary”



- Innovation in narrative techniques

The slide illustrates this: the interaction between the girl and the white bear, though simple, evokes emotion and a sense of time. The two scenes transcend time, blurring past and present—a key strength of animation storytelling.



Research Embodying “Contemporary”



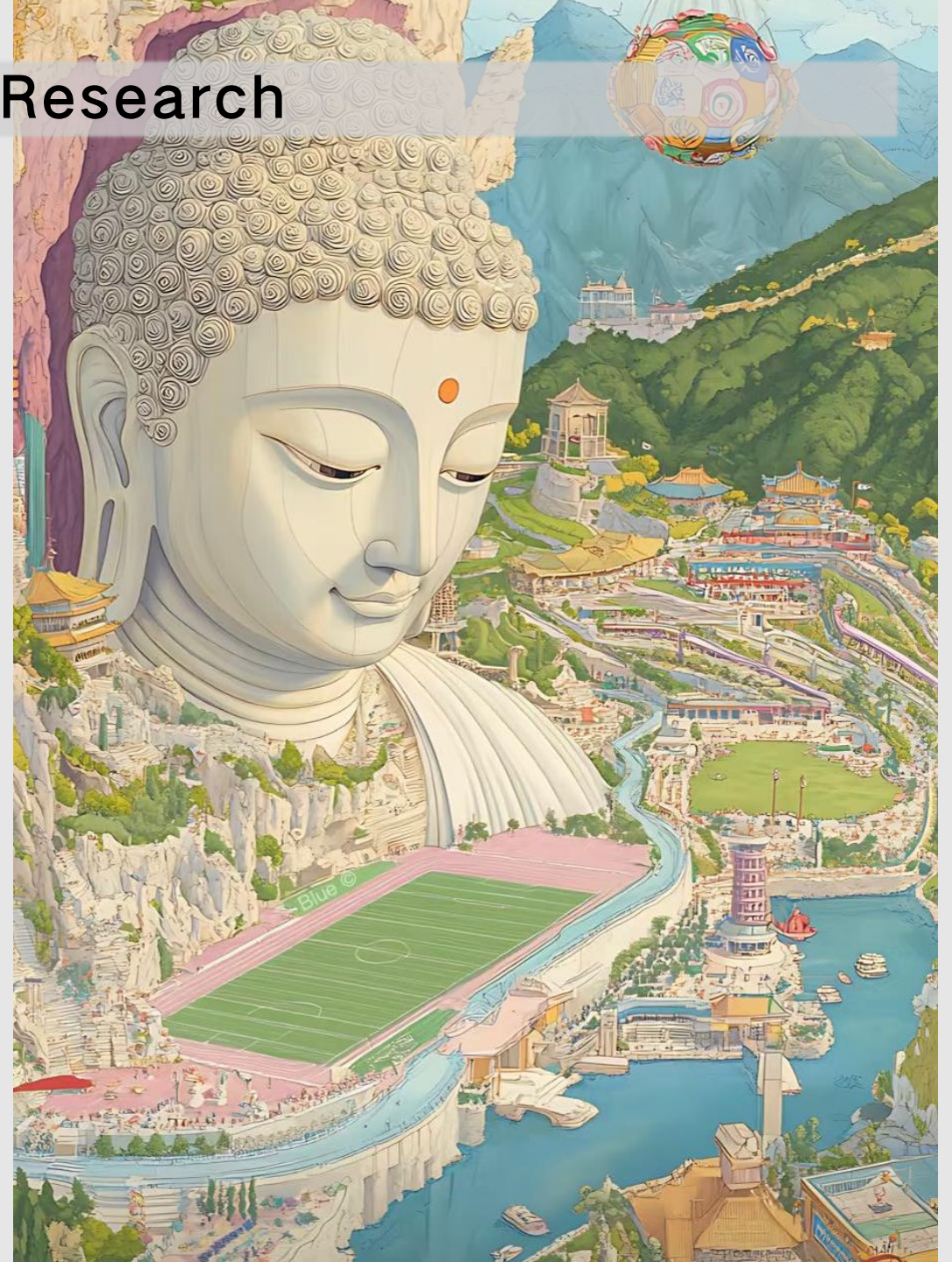
2. “It can bridge technology and culture by modernizing traditional symbols.”

- The contemporaneity of technology.

Advancements in CGI, VR, and AI have elevated animation’s visual quality and efficiency. By combining color, design, motion, and environments, animation creates impactful visuals and conveys complex ideas traditional art forms cannot.

Contemporary Significance of the Research

- In a word, the goal of this research is to use animation to engage younger audiences with opera culture, promoting its **revitalization and dissemination** in a **modern context**.
- This approach breathes **new life** into traditional opera while offering **fresh methods** for protecting intangible cultural heritage.
- Defamiliarization techniques play a key role by **breaking preconceived notions** of opera, sparking **interest and emotional connection**.
- like the Buddha statue backdrop combined with modern elements, creates a cultural collision that feels both unfamiliar and familiar.



Contemporary Significance of the Research

As mentioned before: *"contemporary moves between the past, present, and future, challenging traditional concepts of time and history, filled with reinterpretations of history and visions of the future."*

My research works within this framework, revitalizing opera culture while exploring its contemporary significance.

Thanks !