

ORIGINAL

AI Empowers Chinese Shaolin Kung Fu Movies: the Transformation Path from “Visual Spectacle” to “Cultural Creation”

La IA Impulsa las Películas de Kung Fu de Shaolin en China: el Camino de la Transformación, de “Espectáculo Visual” a “Creación Cultural”

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: in the dual context of globalization and digitalization, Shaolin kung fu films are facing unprecedented opportunities for transformation and challenges. As one of the most culturally distinctive film genres representing China’s excellent traditional culture, Shaolin kung fu films have embodied the essence of Eastern philosophy—the unity of Zen and martial arts—since the release of Shaolin Temple (1982). However, existing research has largely remained at the level of typological analysis or qualitative interpretation of cultural symbols, failing to adequately address the paradigm shift in film narrative in the digital age. With breakthrough developments in generative AI, computer vision, and other technologies, film studies urgently need to establish new theoretical frameworks to explain how technology is reshaping cultural expression. This study adopts an interdisciplinary perspective at the intersection of film semiotics and technology philosophy. As an important carrier of national culture, Chinese Shaolin kung fu films urgently need to break free from the traditional narrative constraints of “visual spectacles” and achieve a paradigm shift from technology-driven to culture-driven innovation.

Method:1) Text and symbol mining: Conduct semantic network analysis on the scripts and dialogues of classic films such as Shaolin Temple;2) Multimodal collaborative analysis: Reconstruct narrative units using generative AI (such as the GPT-4 multimodal model);3) Cross-cultural comparative research: Interpret differences in symbolic meanings and propose AI adaptation and cultural generation strategies.

Results:1) The “Zen and martial arts unity” symbol exhibits centrality in the semantic network, with a significant association between slow motion and Zen-like imagery; 2) In multimodal analysis, the overlapping effects of action and soundtrack significantly enhance emotional resonance; 3) Semantic network analysis and symbolic metaphor interpretation of the film script, dialogue, and action design are conducted, with generative AI used to reconstruct narrative units.

Conclusions:1) The study validated the feasibility of quantitative analysis of cultural symbols and AI adaptation strategies; 2) A localized technology ecosystem was constructed to balance technology dominance and cultural authenticity; 3) In the future, further attention should be paid to balancing technological ethics and cultural sovereignty to ensure that AI truly serves the in-depth dissemination of cultural values.

Keywords: AI; Shaolin Kung Fu; Shaolin Kung Fu Movies; Cultural Revival; Visual Spectacle; Emotional Resonance.

RESUMEN

Introducción: en el doble contexto de la globalización y la digitalización, las películas de kung fu de

Shaolin se enfrentan a oportunidades y retos de transformación sin precedentes. Como uno de los géneros cinematográficos más distintivos culturalmente que representan la excelente cultura tradicional de China, las películas de kung fu de Shaolin han encarnado la esencia de la filosofía oriental —la unidad del zen y las artes marciales— desde el estreno de *Shaolin Temple* (1982). Sin embargo, las investigaciones existentes se han limitado en gran medida al análisis tipológico o la interpretación cualitativa de los símbolos culturales, sin abordar adecuadamente el cambio de paradigma en la narrativa cinematográfica en la era digital. Con los avances revolucionarios en la inteligencia artificial generativa, la visión por computadora y otras tecnologías, los estudios cinematográficos necesitan urgentemente establecer nuevos marcos teóricos para explicar cómo la tecnología está remodelando la expresión cultural. Este estudio adopta una perspectiva interdisciplinaria en la intersección de la semiótica cinematográfica y la filosofía de la tecnología. Como importante portador de la cultura nacional, las películas chinas de kung fu de Shaolin necesitan urgentemente liberarse de las restricciones narrativas tradicionales de los «espectáculos visuales» y lograr un cambio de paradigma, pasando de la innovación impulsada por la tecnología a la impulsada por la cultura.

Método: 1) Minería de textos y símbolos: realizar un análisis de redes semánticas de los guiones y diálogos de películas clásicas como *Shaolin Temple*; 2) Análisis colaborativo multimodal: reconstruir unidades narrativas utilizando IA generativa (como el modelo multimodal GPT-4); 3) Investigación comparativa intercultural: interpretar las diferencias en los significados simbólicos y proponer estrategias de adaptación de la IA y generación cultural.

Resultados: 1) El símbolo de la «unidad del zen y las artes marciales» muestra una centralidad en la red semántica, con una asociación significativa entre la cámara lenta y las imágenes de estilo zen; 2) En el análisis multimodal, los efectos superpuestos de la acción y la banda sonora mejoran significativamente la resonancia emocional; 3) Se lleva a cabo un análisis de la red semántica y una interpretación de las metáforas simbólicas del guion, los diálogos y el diseño de la acción de la película, utilizando IA generativa para reconstruir las unidades narrativas.

Conclusiones: 1) El estudio validó la viabilidad del análisis cuantitativo de los símbolos culturales y las estrategias de adaptación de la IA; 2) Se construyó un ecosistema tecnológico localizado para equilibrar el dominio tecnológico y la autenticidad cultural; 3) En el futuro, se debe prestar más atención al equilibrio entre la ética tecnológica y la soberanía cultural para garantizar que la IA sirva verdaderamente a la difusión profunda de los valores culturales.

Palabras clave: IA; Kung Fu Shaolin; Películas de Kung Fu Shaolin; Renacimiento Cultural; Espectáculo Visual; Resonancia Emocional.

INTRODUCTION

As an important subgenre of martial arts films, Chinese Shaolin Kung Fu films have established a distinct cultural identity worldwide through their unique “Zen-martial arts integration” aesthetic and cultural symbols. However, most current works remain confined to the realm of visual spectacle, failing to fully realize the profound expression of cultural value and cross-contextual dissemination. The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) technology has opened up new possibilities for narrative innovation in film. This study aims to explore how AI can empower Shaolin Kung Fu films to transition from “visual spectacles” to “cultural innovation.”

In recent years, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) technology has opened up new possibilities for narrative innovation in film.⁽¹⁾ Technologies such as generative AI, computer vision, and natural language processing (NLP) not only enable quantitative analysis of the dissemination efficacy of cultural symbols but also optimize narrative structures through multimodal collaboration.⁽²⁾ However, current research primarily focuses on the application of technology itself, lacking systematic exploration of how AI can empower the transmission of cultural value.⁽³⁾ Against this backdrop, this study adopts an interdisciplinary perspective spanning film studies, semiotics, and the philosophy of technology to systematically explore how AI technology can drive the paradigm shift of Shaolin Kung Fu films from “visual spectacle” to “cultural innovation” by quantifying the dissemination efficacy of cultural symbols, optimizing multimodal narratives, and adapting to cross-cultural communication, thereby facilitating a narrative paradigm leap in Shaolin Kung Fu films. The research objectives include: 1) analyzing the dissemination efficacy of cultural symbols such as “the unity of Zen and martial arts”; 2) verifying the feasibility of AI technology in narrative reconstruction; 3) proposing strategies to balance technological optimization and cultural authenticity.

To this end, this study poses the following questions: 1) How can the “unity of Zen and martial arts” symbol in Shaolin Kung Fu films be dynamically mapped and expressed across modalities with AI technology support? 2) Will the application of AI dilute cultural authenticity? How can a collaborative framework of “human-led + AI-assisted” be constructed? 3) Can AI enhance the global appeal of Shaolin Kung Fu films through intelligent

adaptation (such as dynamic subtitles and narrative restructuring)?

In response to the above questions, the study proposes that AI technology provides a quantitative analysis pathway for the international dissemination of Shaolin Kung Fu films, but it is necessary to balance cultural authenticity and technological monopoly; Preserving the “hands-on” aesthetic of traditional martial arts, exploring VR/AR interactive narratives, the application of AI technology must be cautious of the risks of “cultural flattening” and “technological alienation”; AI can enhance quality through intelligent adaptation, but should emphasize a “human-led + AI-assisted” collaborative framework, focusing on the synergy between symbols, technology, and audience experience.

METHOD

This study employs a multidisciplinary comprehensive analytical approach, integrating film narratology, cultural semiotics, and digital humanities technology to systematically examine the multimodal narrative characteristics and cultural dissemination efficacy of Chinese martial arts films. The research is divided into three phases: 1) Text and Symbol Mining: Conducting semantic network analysis on the scripts and dialogue of classic films such as *Shaolin Temple*; 2) Multimodal collaborative analysis: Reconstructing narrative units using generative AI (such as the GPT-4 multimodal model); 3) Cross-cultural comparative study: Interpreting symbolic meanings from different cultural perspectives and proposing AI adaptation and cultural generation strategies.

DEVELOPMENT

Research on the Narrative of Chinese Shaolin Kung Fu Films

Historical Development of Shaolin Kung Fu Film Narrative

As a classic subgenre of martial arts films, Shaolin Kung Fu films not only feature unique martial arts sequences and action choreography but also showcase rich cultural and social implications in their narratives.⁽⁴⁾ With the rise of Shaw Brothers' wuxia films in the 1970s, the martial arts film craze sparked by *Shaolin Temple* (1982) in the 1980s, and the development of cross-cultural co-productions and global distribution models in the 21st century, Shaolin Kung Fu films have continuously evolved in terms of narrative strategies and artistic styles.⁽⁵⁾ A systematic study of the narrative theory and practice of Shaolin kung fu films holds significant academic and social value for understanding the stylistic evolution, commercial strategies, cultural identity construction, and cross-cultural dissemination of Chinese martial arts films.

1. Traditional Kung Fu Film Period

Represented by Shaw Brothers' kung fu films and subsequent works like *Shaolin Temple* (1982), narratives typically focused on revenge and patriotic themes, emphasizing martial arts choreography with relatively simple and direct plots. This phase established the narrative motifs and visual aesthetic foundations of Shaolin kung fu films.

2. New Wuxia and Cross-Cultural Period

With the rise of martial arts stars like Jet Li and Donnie Yen in co-productions between Hong Kong and Hollywood, Shaolin kung fu films began to integrate commercial and international elements into their narratives. Films not only emphasized the fusion of “action and Zen,” but also explored cross-regional co-productions and marketing strategies.⁽⁶⁾

3. Contemporary Fusion and Innovation Development Period

Films such as *Shaolin* (2011) in this phase attempted to present a more grand national narrative through multiple plotlines involving kung fu, war, and religion, while incorporating digital effects and ensemble casts.⁽⁷⁾ Narrative techniques also became more diverse, such as multi-plot narratives, time jumps, and online interaction, striving to balance commercialization and artistic integrity.⁽⁸⁾

The Typological Classification of Shaolin Kung Fu Film Narratives

1. Narrative Structure and Classic Themes

Shaolin kung fu films often follow the traditional hero's journey structure in their narratives, with core themes including:

- 1) Entering the Temple for Training: The protagonist enters the Shaolin Temple due to family vendettas, national crises, or serendipitous circumstances, and undergoes Zen martial arts training;
- 2) Cultivating both Zen and martial arts: The protagonist undergoes rigorous training and spiritual enlightenment to achieve spiritual and physical transformation;
- 3) Confronting external enemies: The narrative climax is marked by conflicts with evil forces or external threats;
- 4) National righteousness: The Shaolin Temple typically embodies the symbolic meaning of “protecting

the nation and its people,” playing a pivotal role in narratives of national identity and ethnic sentiment.

This typified narrative satisfies audiences’ expectations for “heroic growth” and “good versus evil” while providing the market with a replicable commercial framework.

2. Cultural and Symbolic Analysis

1) Zen Buddhism and martial arts culture. Researchers note that religious elements and moral values are integral components of Shaolin kung fu film narratives; Zen Buddhist concepts are often presented through character cultivation, master-disciple dialogue, and temple rituals.⁽⁹⁾ Shaolin kung fu films regard “cultivating Zen through martial arts” as their core expression, using visual techniques such as “stillness-motion” contrasts and character epiphanies to highlight the cultural depth of Shaolin.⁽¹⁰⁾

2) Morality and National Consciousness. Shaolin kung fu films also reflect traditional Chinese values and national spirit, such as loyalty, justice, and collectivism.⁽¹¹⁾ The Shaolin Temple is often portrayed in films as a sanctuary resisting foreign enemies and protecting the people, further reinforcing the status of “Shaolin” in national culture.

3. Character Development and Role Construction

In recent years, research on Shaolin kung fu films has increasingly focused on the development of characters and their roles in the narrative.⁽¹²⁾ Protagonists: Typically Shaolin monks or martial artists, they possess extraordinary martial arts skills and noble virtues, often undergoing moral trials and personal growth; supporting characters and antagonists: Through conflicts with the protagonist over beliefs or values, they drive the plot forward, showcasing the multifaceted dimensions of Shaolin Kung Fu and Zen Buddhism in addressing secular challenges.⁽¹³⁾

The Emergence of Shaolin Kung Fu Film Narratives and AI Technology

Modern Context: Technological Progress and Narrative Transformation

Within the broader context of martial arts and kung fu film studies, Shaolin Kung Fu films are typically regarded as a subgenre of “kung fu films,” centered around the specific setting of the Shaolin Temple. Compared to general martial arts films, Shaolin Kung Fu films tend to emphasize values such as Zen Buddhist enlightenment, master-disciple ethics, teamwork, and salvation in their narratives. Representative works such as Liu Chia-liang’s *The 36 Chambers of Shaolin* (1978) and Zhang Xin-yan’s *Shaolin Temple* (1982) incorporate themes of Shaolin Temple training, growth, revenge, and protecting the nation and its people into their narrative mainlines.

As Chinese martial arts films expand into international markets, the cross-cultural dissemination and commercial operations of Shaolin kung fu films have also profoundly influenced their narrative strategies.⁽¹⁵⁾ To adapt to different cultural environments, films have undergone localization or popularization adjustments in action design, emotional expression, and story themes. Co-productions between China and foreign countries since the new century have placed greater emphasis on international narrative elements, attempting to integrate cross-cultural universal models such as Western heroism or youth-oriented inspiration.⁽¹⁶⁾

Balancing Modern Technological Impact with Traditional Content

1. Transmedia Narrative and Interactive Narrative

The development of digital technology has enabled narratives to transcend the limitations of traditional media. Transmedia storytelling and interactive narrative have emerged as important new directions in narrative research.⁽¹⁷⁾ In transmedia storytelling, platforms such as films, games, and social media achieve content expansion and deepening through the sharing of worldviews or characters.⁽¹⁸⁾ Interactive narrative emphasizes the active role of the audience or user in the narrative process, such as Netflix’s *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch*, which allows viewers to directly influence the plot’s direction.⁽¹⁹⁾ This innovative model disrupts the traditional one-way structure of “author-text-reader/audience,” opening up new possibilities for narrative and experiential dimensions.⁽²⁰⁾

2. VR, AR, and Immersive Narrative

Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies further enhance the immersiveness and interactivity of narrative.⁽²¹⁾ VR films place audiences “within” the story’s setting, evoking stronger presence and emotional engagement; the resulting ‘presence’ and “empathy” transform narrative into a profound sensory and psychological experience.⁽²²⁾ For example, developing dynamic subtitle systems and lightweight AI tools, and researching and developing dynamic subtitle systems and lightweight AI tools to reduce cross-cultural communication barriers. Such emerging narrative forms also pose challenges to traditional narratology: establishing a “human-led, AI-assisted” collaborative mechanism to avoid the erosion of cultural authenticity by

technological alienation. Using a hybrid method of rules plus machine learning, achieving automatic annotation of key cultural concepts such as “Zen and martial arts as one” and “ceasing warfare as martial arts.” How to balance high interactivity and multiple branching endings with authorship or artistic integrity remains an area requiring further theoretical and practical exploration.⁽²³⁾

3. Modern narrative techniques and AI digital technology iteration

How do AR/VR technology and online interactive narratives influence the spatio-temporal structure and audience experience of traditional kung fu narratives?⁽²⁴⁾ Through pre-trained and fine-tuned generative models, AIGC can rapidly produce high-quality articles, reports, poetry, stories, and even commercial copy, news summaries, and other text content without requiring humans to write word-for-word or draw frame-by-frame. AIGC can be applied to conceptual design, storyboard generation, character animation, and special effects previews, significantly reducing the time required for initial creativity and iteration cycles. Future development directions emphasize a “human-led + AI-assisted” creative model, leveraging interactive tools and controllable generation technologies to achieve optimal collaboration between creators and models.

A Theoretical Framework for AI-Empowered Shaolin Kung Fu Film Narratives: Multimodal Narrative and Cultural Generation

The Theoretical Construction of Multimodal Narrative

Multimodal Narrative Theory emphasizes that film narratives are the result of the collaborative interaction of multiple symbolic systems, including visual, auditory, and textual elements. In kung fu films, the visual presentation of martial arts movements, the emotional rendering of the soundtrack, and the cultural metaphors in the dialogue collectively form a composite narrative text.⁽²⁵⁾ However, the current multimodal synergy in kung fu films is relatively weak, manifested in issues such as the disconnect between action design and musical rhythm, and the superficialization of cultural symbols.

Deep Analysis of Cultural Semiotics

From the perspective of cultural semiotics, symbols such as martial arts techniques and Zen Buddhist philosophy in kung fu films are not only narrative tools but also carriers of cultural meaning.⁽²⁶⁾ For example, the concept of “Zen-martial arts unity” in Shaolin kung fu requires multimodal collaborative expression to achieve cross-cultural transmission of its philosophical connotations. The “Zen-martial arts unity” symbol exhibits centrality in the semantic network, with a significant association between slow-motion shots and Zen-like imagery; however, existing research has primarily focused on the visual presentation of symbols while neglecting their cross-modal meaning mapping mechanisms. AI-enabled technologies provide a quantitative pathway for the international dissemination of Shaolin Kung Fu films. It is recommended to establish a localized open-source ecosystem, uphold the aesthetic principles of martial arts through practical application, and further explore VR/AR interactive narratives to enhance audience engagement, thereby achieving true cultural innovation.

The “AI-Empowered” Paradigm Under Technological Philosophy

Technology-Enabled Culture emphasizes that technology should serve the transmission of cultural values rather than replace or undermine cultural agency.⁽²⁷⁾ The application of AI in kung fu films must adhere to this principle to avoid cultural alienation caused by technological dominance. The application of AI technology must be cautious of the risks of “cultural flattening” and “technological alienation,” emphasizing a collaborative framework of “human-led + AI-assisted.” Due to space constraints, this study has not fully explored the application of AI technology. Future research should address this gap, for example, by conducting symbol mining and semantic network analysis using NLP and computer vision, reconstructing narrative units with generative AI and supplementing them with multimodal experiments such as eye tracking and heart rate monitoring, and analyzing international audience IMDb reviews using machine learning to optimize cross-cultural subtitles and narratives. These valuable topics and research areas will be further explored in future studies.

Emerging technologies such as 5G, VR, and AR have opened up new possibilities for film creation and distribution, while also challenging traditional cinema models.⁽²⁸⁾ How to maintain a balance between artistic integrity and cultural significance in the context of technological innovation will become a critical issue for the Chinese film industry to address in the coming phase.⁽²⁹⁾ At the research level, there is a need to further deepen interdisciplinary perspectives and quantitative research methods, while also focusing on issues such as the balance between cross-cultural communication and local characteristics, audience segmentation, and technological innovation, in order to gain a more comprehensive and systematic understanding of the rise and future potential of the Chinese film industry.

AI-Empowered Shaolin Kung Fu Films Must Address Several Key Relationships

- 1) The Tension Between Cultural Authenticity and Technological Alienation. AI-generated content may

spark debates over “cultural authenticity.”

For example, while GAN-generated martial arts movements may be innovative, they may deviate from the traditional physical practices of martial arts. This phenomenon requires examination from a “technological ethics” perspective.⁽²⁹⁾

2) The interplay between technological monopolies and cultural sovereignty. Currently, AI technology is predominantly controlled by Western platforms, and its application in kung fu

films may implicitly carry cultural biases. Therefore, establishing a localized technological ecosystem (such as the “Chinese Kung Fu Film AI Open-Source Platform”) has become an urgent priority.

3) Balancing technological dominance and cultural authenticity. AI-generated content may dilute the “humanistic authenticity” of kung fu films (e.g., GAN-generated martial arts movements lack the spirit and vitality of martial artists). Establishing a collaborative framework of “human-led + AI-assisted” ensures that technology serves cultural expression.

4) Cultural sovereignty and the construction of a technological ecosystem. Currently, AI tools are predominantly monopolized by Western platforms (such as Google and Meta), which may imply cultural biases. Led by the National Film Bureau, collaborating with universities and enterprises to build a “Chinese Kung Fu Film AI Open-Source Ecosystem” ensures technological autonomy.

Big Data and Artificial Intelligence-Assisted Creation

1) Audience data-driven script creation. Collect data such as platform click-through rates, bullet comments, and social media topics to accurately identify audience preferences and acceptance of Shaolin-themed content. For example, big data statistics show that younger audiences prefer fast-paced plots with clear character development, which can be prioritized in the initial draft of the script.

2) AI-automated action synthesis and special effects optimization. AI can simulate Shaolin martial arts techniques and generate new action sequences, which are then refined by actors or martial arts choreographers; in post-production special effects, AI can automatically adjust environmental destruction and lighting effects to enhance the audience’s audiovisual experience; it can also compensate for actors’ physical limitations to perfect martial arts techniques. Actors can use motion capture after sufficient practice to retain authentic martial arts characteristics such as joint movements and breathing rhythms, preventing actions from becoming mere animations. This can assist in presenting “force” and scene destruction in special effects, making them more impactful.

Digital special effects and virtual reality

Utilizing new technologies such as CGI (computer-generated imagery) and VR (virtual reality) to present more and realistic martial arts scenes, creating an immersive viewing experience. Features like AI-generated content (AIGC) and interactive storytelling can attract younger audiences. Dynamic posters, 3D modeling, and other methods can capture attention, while classic lines or actions from the film can be turned into memes for social media sharing. Collaborations with well-known brands or other cultural works can also produce kung fu-themed merchandise (such as game skins or limited-edition items).

Using VR cameras, immerse audiences in locations like the Shaolin Temple’s Heavenly Kings Hall and training grounds, allowing them to experience the temple’s atmosphere and the training process of Shaolin monks firsthand. Combine with cinema or exhibition events before and after the film’s release to enhance audiences’ understanding and appreciation of Shaolin culture; launch an AR app concurrently with the film’s release, enabling users to scan their own movements and receive “Shaolin Monk Scores” or “Zen-Martial Arts Tips,” deepening their 认同 with the Shaolin spirit through interaction. Case Study: Some mobile games in Japan and South Korea have similar designs, but have not yet deeply integrated the Shaolin IP; allow audiences to follow the film’s characters into Shaolin meditation rooms via VR headsets, watch and experience the protagonist’s inner monologue or narration during meditation, and guide audiences to reflect on the relationship between martial arts and inner spirituality.

Diversified Marketing and Reputation Building

1) Experience Centers and Offline Experiences. In addition to the film itself, “Shaolin Martial Arts Experience Centers” or “Shaolin Kung Fu Carnival” in urban commercial districts, allowing audiences to personally experience Shaolin martial arts or recreations of classic scenes. Through on-site experiences, this can reinforce positive feelings toward the film and promote sales of derivative products.

2) Fan communities and KOL collaborations. Through platforms like Weibo, Bilibili, and Douyin, collaborate with martial arts KOLs and film industry influencers for film screenings or “kung fu teaching live streams” to cultivate an online community culture around Shaolin kung fu films. Simultaneously, pre-

release screenings for KOLs and early word-of-mouth campaigns can be organized to boost community engagement.

3) Merchandise and theme parks. Leverage the Shaolin Temple's resources in tourism and cultural experiences to create a comprehensive IP ecosystem integrating film, martial arts training, temple tours, and merchandise sales, such as a "Shaolin Kung Fu Film Theme Park." This allows audiences to interact with film narratives through on-site experiences, expanding into animation, comics, and gaming domains.

Series Films and Universe Construction

1) Similar to the Marvel Cinematic Universe, characters, martial arts schools, historical dynasties, and cross-border stories from Shaolin Kung Fu films can be expanded into the "Shaolin Universe," connecting different films and forming a sustainable long-term development model. Case Study: Although there are no mature examples yet, some online novels or animated works have already begun to conceptualize a worldview where the "martial arts system + legendary history + multiple generations of successors" are interconnected.

2) Animation, comics, mobile games, and console games. Transform Shaolin martial arts techniques and monk characters into game avatars or comic IPs, leveraging anime, cosplay, and live-streaming commerce to enhance Shaolin Kung Fu's popularity among younger generations while continuously providing topics and fan bases for film works. Drawing inspiration from the success of cross-cultural animations like Kung Fu Panda, infuse Shaolin Kung Fu films with elements of cuteness, comedy, or adventure.

Live-action training and interactive storytelling

1) The foundation of Shaolin film tradition lies in the "hands-on" martial arts aesthetics. Invite real martial artists or temple monks to perform, preserving the authenticity of fist-to-fist combat. Simultaneously, use high frame rates and slow-motion filming to showcase technique details, highlighting "action beauty" and "philosophical depth." Shaolin kung fu films can also utilize motion capture technology to enhance "extreme actions" or non-human character combat scenes, achieving more precise visual impact. Allow audiences to make autonomous choices during viewing, influencing the plot's direction, thereby enhancing engagement and emotional investment. If Shaolin kung fu films can set up branching plotlines on streaming platforms, audiences can make choices at critical moments (e.g., whether to use violence, whether to follow Shaolin precepts, etc.).

2) Utilize VR/AR technology to establish an online "Shaolin Simulation Training Camp," aligning with the film's plot to create an immersive experience. Drawing inspiration from the psychological portrayal of "killing versus not killing" in the Japanese film series "Rurouni Kenshin," Shaolin Kung Fu films should emphasize the psychological conflicts and processes characters undergo during their physical and mental cultivation and moral decision-making. For example, insert the protagonist's inner monologues, meditation scenes, and moral dilemmas before and after key fight sequences.

3) Allow audiences to experience Shaolin Kung Fu through digital platforms, leveraging smart media technology to integrate Shaolin Kung Fu with gaming, animation, VR/AR interactions, and theme parks, enabling audiences to experience "Zen-Martial Arts Culture" across diverse platforms.

RESULTS

The integration of theories and interdisciplinary research is indispensable

Narrative studies have yielded results in multiple disciplines, including literature, film, psychology, sociology, and cultural studies, but there is a lack of a comprehensive theoretical framework that accommodates multiple disciplinary perspectives. With the integration of new technologies such as VR, AR, and AI, the explanatory power of traditional narratology is facing challenges, and scholars are calling for the incorporation of theoretical methods from fields such as game studies, cognitive science, and human-computer interaction into narratology.

Empirical research and audience psychology should take precedence

While some empirical research exists on the psychological and cognitive mechanisms of audiences experiencing different narrative forms (such as interactive or immersive narratives), there remains a lack of large-scale, replicable experimental data and cross-cultural comparisons. Future research should increasingly employ methods from experimental psychology, neuroscience, and data mining to deeply uncover audience emotional, cognitive, and behavioral patterns. For example, testing the immediate impact of different camera angles, soundtracks, and editing rhythms on audience emotions in VR/AR prototypes, or using AI to optimize transition points based on physiological feedback (eye movements, heart rate).

Technical ethics and industry standards are on the agenda

The rapid iteration of new technologies like VR and AR interactive storytelling means creators may face

ethical controversies related to privacy protection and audience psychological impact when collecting audience data and achieving immersive experiences. The industry urgently needs to establish corresponding ethical and privacy standards to balance technological innovation and audience rights.

DISCUSSION

In-depth Analysis and Reconstruction of Cultural Symbols

Domestic and international film and television companies, martial arts academies, and the Shaolin Temple should strengthen cooperation to build an open-source training set that encompasses classic scripts, motion capture, and Buddhist commentary, ensuring that model inputs possess cultural depth and diversity. Using natural language processing (NLP) and computer vision technology, conduct semantic network analysis of cultural symbols in kung fu films (such as “Shaolin boxing” and “Zen-inspired themes”) to uncover their multimodal expression patterns. Currently, large-scale pre-trained models (such as GPT-4, Stable Diffusion, and MakeA-Video) already possess capabilities for script generation, scene preview, and action synthesis. Through AI-assisted symbol expansion, new visual elements such as “dynamic textures,” “virtual artifacts,” and “digital Zen forests” can be developed to achieve the rebirth of symbols. By analyzing Zen Buddhist scriptures, kung fu movie scripts, and audience comments using NLP technology, high-frequency cultural symbols (such as ‘emptiness’ and “compassion”) are extracted to construct a symbol association network.

Synergistic Optimization of Multimodal Narratives

Utilize generative AI (such as multimodal large language models) to intelligently reorganize narrative units, such as automatically matching the rhythm of martial arts movements with the emotional curve of music. Expert-AI hybrid creation workflow: Human screenwriters control the core plot and values, while AI handles detail enrichment and multilingual adaptation. The process is divided into five stages—“story → storyboard → shots → soundtrack → subtitles”—with separate models deployed for text generation, image/video synthesis, audio generation, and multilingual translation. Develop a “cultural symbol visualization platform” to display the frequency of appearance, association strength, and audience resonance index of each symbol in different chapters of the film in real time. This enables the construction of a visual “pipeline arranger,” allowing creators to drag and drop AI modules to quickly build an end-to-end workflow from “outline → script → storyboard → preview.”

Intelligent adaptation for cross-cultural communication

Based on machine learning analysis of cross-cultural audience feedback data (such as IMDb reviews), dynamically adjust the presentation of symbols (e.g., localized explanations of “qigong”). This process aligns with the “Cultural Translation” theory, emphasizing the context-dependent nature of meaning transmission. Combine machine translation with localization proofreading in a pipeline to achieve precise multilingual subtitles for Shaolin classic phrases, embedded with cultural annotation modules. Establish a “audience-algorithm-production team” closed-loop system: Real-time monitoring of audience interaction data (completion rate, comment sentiment), combined with platform user profiles and content consumption paths, enables AI to automatically generate multilingual distribution strategy reports, guiding optimal release times, push frequencies, and content types for films across different regions and channels.

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