

The Visual Value of Huizhou Couplets Empowered by AIGC in the Context of New Media

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Abstract: The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence (AIGC) is reshaping the content production model of new media and opening up new possibilities for the visual transposition of traditional culture. This paper focuses on Huizhou couplets, addressing the core issue of "enhancing visual value in the context of new media," and explores how AIGC bridges the gap between the textual meaning of couplets and contemporary visual expression. Beginning with the cultural connotations and visual characteristics of the couplets, the paper outlines a process that includes "cultural interpretation, AIGC generation, artificial redesign, and new media publication." The strategic integration of AIGC significantly enhances the visual appeal and information-carrying capacity of Huizhou couplets in new media contexts, such as short videos and social media platforms, thus expanding their potential applications in cultural tourism promotion and cultural product development.

Keywords: AIGC, New Media Context; Huizhou Couplets; Visual Value

1. Background and Significance of the Study

In the highly developed new media landscape, users are inundated with vast streams of information daily, making attention the scarcest resource. From the perspective of platform mechanisms, the recommendation algorithms of various new media platforms are driven by metrics such as click-through rates, completion rates, and user engagement. These metrics essentially quantify the success of visual content in capturing and retaining attention. Within this context, Huizhou couplets, as highly condensed symbols of local culture, suffer from low visibility and limited comprehensibility among younger audiences.

In terms of visibility, cultural content on mainstream platforms is often dominated by

highly visual symbols such as anime characters, gaming IPs, and "Guochao" (China-chic) illustrations. In contrast, couplets typically appear sporadically, embedded in architectural photographs or as background imagery at tourist sites. The absence of a stable visual identity and systematic presentation diminishes their prominence. As for comprehensibility, even when Huizhou couplets are occasionally encountered, younger audiences often perceive them merely as "antique" or "aesthetic" objects, failing to grasp the deeper cultural connotations they carry, such as familial ethics, social order, and philosophical ideals.

Furthermore, couplets are often composed in classical Chinese, rich in allusions, metaphors, and region-specific terminology, which require substantial cultural and contextual knowledge to fully appreciate. In new media environments, interpretations of couplets are frequently reduced to tourism slogans or promotional material for scenic spots, lacking nuanced elaboration on the relationship between textual meaning and spatial or cultural context. Therefore, this research is of both theoretical and practical significance in addressing these gaps.

AIGC, as a next-generation content production technology, opens up unprecedented opportunities for the visual transposition of traditional culture. On one hand, the image generation capabilities based on large models allow creators to quickly transform abstract cultural elements—such as allusions, imagery, and context—into visual representations through natural language prompts.[1] Traditional processes, which once required significant time to accomplish tasks like scene reconstruction, character conceptualization, and atmosphere creation, can now generate multiple iterations in a short period, providing a rich "visual material library" for subsequent manual selection and refinement. On the other hand, AIGC's ability to perform multi-style transfer and combination enables traditional culture to transcend the confines of a single "classical aesthetic"

framework, allowing for flexible integration with contemporary visual vocabularies such as illustration, Guochao (Chinese-chic), anime, and cyberpunk. This integration produces images that resonate more closely with the aesthetic preferences of younger audiences, while still preserving the core cultural connotations.

The visual value of Huizhou couplets is composed of a multi-layered structure. First, there is the linguistic-symbolic layer. The couplet text itself encodes values such as family traditions, ethics, and life philosophies. [2]Through the refined arrangement of characters, it achieves a high density of meaning, forming the core of its cultural essence. This textual layer serves as the foundation for the couplets' cultural significance and is the key to their symbolic power.

Second, the calligraphic-form layer is significant. Couplets are often rendered in specific calligraphic styles. The thickness, tension, and rhythm of the brushstrokes, along with compositional choices in layout and spacing, not only express the calligrapher's personal aesthetics but also visually produce a sense of order and rhythm. In this way, the abstract spiritual content is materially visualized through the "form of the characters," allowing the viewer to experience the spirit of the text in a tangible, artistic form.

Third, the spatial-environmental layer adds another dimension. Couplets are typically integrated into architectural components such as gateways, ancestral halls, and residential structures. Together with distinctive architectural features like horse-head walls, carved beams, and courtyard layouts, they form a cohesive landscape system. [3]This creates a visual field where text, architecture, and the natural environment interrelate, amplifying the ritualistic and historical resonance of the space. The placement of the couplets in these architectural contexts enhances their meaning, creating a deeper connection between the written word and its physical surroundings.

Finally, the material-craftsmanship layer plays a crucial role. Different materials and carving techniques—such as stone, wood, and brick carving—imbue the couplets with distinct textures, tactile qualities, and light-shadow interplay. [4]This layer provides a multisensory experience that transcends mere textual reading. The combination of visual, tactile, and even auditory elements (in the case of engraved

materials) enhances the couplets' impact and contributes to their comprehensive cultural experience.

Together, these layers constitute the unique visual-value structure of Huizhou couplets. They are, therefore, not merely textual or calligraphic works, but integrated visual-cultural units embedded in local spaces and everyday life. Through these layers, the couplets become not only expressions of personal and cultural values but also vital components of the aesthetic and sensory fabric of their environments.

2. Overview of AIGC Empowerment of the Visual Value of Huizhou Couplet in the Context of New Media

AIGC, or Artificial Intelligence-Generated Content, represents a content-creation paradigm underpinned by large-scale datasets and deep learning models. Within this framework, artificial intelligence systems autonomously produce multimodal outputs—encompassing text, images, audio, and video. AIGC exhibits several defining characteristics that distinguish it from traditional production methods.

First, it demonstrates exceptional efficiency and scalability. Generative models can rapidly yield a vast array of visual variations, supplying creators with a diverse set of preliminary sketches and design alternatives in a significantly condensed timeframe.

Second, AIGC offers remarkable stylistic adaptability. By modifying textual prompts or providing reference images, the system can seamlessly transition between different visual styles, such as ink-wash painting, digital illustration, cyberpunk aesthetics, or Guochao (China-chic) trends, while maintaining precise control over color schemes, compositional structure, texture details, and overall mood.

Third, its core mechanism is semantically driven. Creators can articulate abstract concepts, including thematic elements, symbolic imagery, scene settings, and emotional undertones, using natural language. The model then interprets these semantic inputs and translates them into concrete visual forms, making the process of "text-to-image" transformation both more intuitive and operationally manageable.

Huizhou couplets, as a distinctive branch of Chinese couplet culture, are deeply rooted in the historical development of the Huizhou region. Culturally, their themes predominantly focus on family values, ancestral ethics, personal

cultivation, and moral virtue.[5] Examples such as “Cultivate roots and clarify relationships” , “Revere ancestors and honor the clan” , “Diligence and thrift in household management”, and “Govern profit with righteousness” succinctly embody core Huizhou values: loyalty, filial piety, integrity, moral righteousness, and the pursuit of knowledge. These couplets are not merely literary expressions but also serve as daily reminders of familial order and social ethics, exerting a subtle yet pervasive educative influence through their constant visibility—what might be described as “seen everywhere and read everywhere.”

Spatially, Huizhou couplets are intrinsically integrated with Huizhou-style architecture. They are typically carved or hung on gateframes of ancestral halls, between columns in main halls, on archway lintels, and above residential doorways, complementing architectural features such as “horse-head walls”, small blue tiles, whitewashed walls, and dark green roof tiles. The vertical arrangement of the couplet text mirrors the vertical structure of the architecture, while the calligraphic rhythm echoes the spatial order of the buildings. Combined with craftsmanship techniques like brick, stone, and wood carving, these elements collectively create a rich, layered visual landscape. [6] Thus, Huizhou couplets are not isolated texts but function as “living words” and “readable architectural details,” deeply embedded within both architecture and local space, embodying local memory, family history, and everyday life. In recent years, the digitization of traditional culture has emerged as a significant trend in cultural communication and industrial transformation. Intangible cultural heritage projects, the “New National Style” visual aesthetic, and cultural tourism IPs have increasingly utilized new media forms such as short video platforms, social media, and online exhibitions to reach broader audiences. These platforms are characterized by symbolic representation, serialized presentation, and youth-oriented narrative and visual packaging. In the new media era, ecosystems centered around social platforms, short videos, and mobile devices have fundamentally reshaped how information is accessed and consumed, with visual content becoming the primary vehicle for capturing attention.

For younger audiences accustomed to scrolling through short videos and following trends,

couplets often appear as distant plaques or background text—lacking both visibility and interpretability, and struggling to stand out in an increasingly homogenized landscape of cultural content. However, through human–AI collaboration, systematic visual reconstruction and adaptation of couplets for new media can transform them from static “words on walls” into distinctive cultural-visual units. This process enhances their visibility, expressiveness, and dissemination in digital spaces, allowing them to resonate more effectively with contemporary audiences.

3. AIGC Visual Creation Practice Case Focused on Huizhou Couplets

In the practice of creative production, AIGC can be employed to reimagine and reconstruct the visual atmosphere of Huizhou couplets by strategically integrating popular visual style tags such as “anime,” “illustration,” and “cyberpunk national style” into the generation prompts. On the one hand, the adoption of anime and illustration styles helps mitigate the “sense of detachment” and “cultural distance” often associated with traditional couplets. Through the use of softer lines, more vibrant color palettes, and character-centered imagery, these styles translate the abstract cultural values, such as family ethics and life philosophies, embedded in the couplets into narrative visual scenes. [7] This lowers the emotional barrier for younger audiences and enhances their engagement. On the other hand, hybrid styles like cyberpunk national style blend traditional motifs with futuristic aesthetics, deploying visual vocabulary such as neon lighting, metallic textures, and digital symbols to situate Huizhou architectural elements, including archways, ancestral halls, and the couplet texts themselves, within a “tradition-in-the-future” narrative framework. This method preserves the core cultural symbols of Huizhou while introducing an innovative and surreal visual layer. Through such intentional stylistic integration and adaptation, the originally solemn and reserved visual character of the couplets is revitalized.[8] In the new media context, this presents a dual identity: one that maintains “traditional essence” while embracing “contemporary expression,” thereby significantly boosting the appeal and memorability of the couplets among younger viewers.

In the research process, audience reception and comprehension of AIGC-generated visual works

based on Huizhou couplets are systematically gathered through methods including surveys and semi-structured interviews. Respondents are invited to evaluate the works across dimensions such as aesthetic quality, stylistic preference, and visual impact, determining whether the output is "visually engaging and worthy of sustained attention" in a new media setting. [9] Concurrently, the study examines the audience's grasp of the underlying themes, including family values, ethical principles, and life philosophies, encoded in the couplets, probing the extent to which the imagery and emotional tone of the works facilitate comprehension. The research seeks to assess how effectively AIGC-generated visuals assist viewers in "understanding" the cultural connotations carried by the couplets. By organizing and comparing these subjective responses, a more holistic evaluation of the practical outcomes of AIGC-facilitated visual translation can be achieved, alongside the identification of any potential biases or limitations. [10] Given that users decide within seconds whether to engage with or skip content in fast-scrolling information streams, the capacity of a visual work to capture attention rapidly, often within the first screen, proves critical to its likelihood of being viewed, remembered, and shared.

4. Research Findings on the Visual Value of Huizhou Couplets Empowered by AIGC in the New Media Context

The integration of AIGC into the visual creation of Huizhou couplets within new media environments has significantly enhanced content visibility and attention metrics. Comparative analysis of platform data reveals that AIGC-generated visual content centered on couplet imagery consistently outperforms content based on traditional photographs or text-image descriptions across key engagement indicators, including click-through rates, dwell time, and interaction metrics such as likes, shares, and saves. Notably, AIGC-enhanced visuals, particularly when deployed in critical "first-eye" positions such as video thumbnails or initial images in content feeds, demonstrate distinct advantages in color contrast, compositional focus, and atmospheric depth. These qualities enable them to stand out among competing cultural content, thereby securing valuable exposure and key entry points for the

dissemination of Huizhou couplets.

From the perspective of audience reception, AIGC-generated visual works not only received higher ratings in terms of aesthetic appeal but also facilitated a deeper engagement with the cultural connotations of the couplets. Survey and interview data indicate that, compared to static text or isolated architectural elements, AIGC-generated imagery incorporating characters, scenes, and emotional atmospheres more effectively connects couplet content with specific life contexts, familial traditions, and value systems. This contributes to the formation of impressions that are both comprehensible and memorable. Several younger respondents noted that stylistic integrations such as anime, illustration, Guochao, or cyberpunk aesthetics made the thematic content of couplets appear less distant or outdated, aligning more closely with the visual vernacular encountered in their daily media consumption. This alignment, in turn, increased their willingness to engage through likes, comments, and shares, thereby stimulating secondary dissemination within social networks.

The research also identified key prerequisites and limitations of AIGC-driven visual translation. On one hand, without thorough prior cultural interpretation and a clear value framework, over-reliance on default model styles and trending visual elements during generation may result in outputs that diverge from an authentic representation of Huizhou or that employ generic or even distorted cultural symbols. On the other hand, certain works exhibited style convergence and formulaic visual patterns after multiple iterations, which risked diluting the textual nuance and subtlety inherent to the couplets. Overall, while AIGC demonstrates considerable potential for enhancing the visual value of Huizhou couplets, its effectiveness remains contingent upon human agency as the creative and ethical anchor, guided by thoughtfully designed prompts and intentional aesthetic curation. These findings reinforce that, within the new media landscape, the most sustainable approach is not "technology replacing culture," but rather achieving "cultural grounding through technological enablement" within a human-AI collaborative model of visual innovation.

5. Conclusion

This study, as an exploratory inquiry into the

"AIGC-Enhanced Visual Value of Huizhou Couplets in the New Media Context," has addressed the dual challenges of visibility and understandability faced by traditional couplets in digital communication. Through an integrated analysis of media environment shifts, cultural symbolism, and technical affordances, it has proposed a visual translation framework centered on the "text-imagery-visual" transformation and an analytical model encompassing cultural interpretation, AIGC generation, human-AI collaborative refinement, new media presentation, and visual value enhancement. By synthesizing practical cases, platform analytics, and audience feedback, the study demonstrates that, when underpinned by informed cultural interpretation and deliberate visual strategy, AIGC can significantly expand the expressive range of Huizhou couplets, improve their attentional performance and aesthetic resonance on short-video and social platforms, and facilitate their transition from static architectural elements into recognizable, shareable digital cultural assets. Consequently, this research offers novel technological pathways and practical paradigms for the re-dissemination and cultural revitalization of local traditions in the new media era.

In the context of new media, enhancing visual value has in fact become a key fulcrum for Huizhou couplets to break out of niche circles and reach broader audiences. On the one hand, visual presentations with greater tension and recognisability can capture users' attention within fast-scrolling information feeds, turning the couplets from "background elements" into points of entry—content that might otherwise be swiped past quickly is more likely to be noticed and lingered on. On the other hand, through intentional design choices in composition, colour, style, and media format, the abstract meanings embedded in the couplets—such as family values, ethics, and life philosophies—can be translated into more accessible visual situations and emotional atmospheres. This lowers the barrier to understanding for younger audiences and strengthens their interest and resonance.

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