The Significance of Symbolic Diminution of Dunhuang Digital Art in Daily Life

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Abstract

Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes is a world famous cultural heritage, with high humanistic and artistic value and non-renewable.Under the concept of sustainability, digital technology offers a possible way to preserve the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes' architecture, statues, and murals in the face of increasing ecological damage. Digital technology has had a positive effect on the extension and preservation of Dunhuang culture and art in terms of convenience and efficiency, while also causing erosion and disintegration of the art itself, mainly in the form of a weakening of the symbolic nature of Dunhuang art. Based on Debray's media studies methodology, this paper examines the media ecosystem of Dunhuang digital art, comparing the differences between the media configurations of Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes art and Dunhuang digital art, and combining research with an analysis of three aspects of Dunhuang digital art: the value system, the subject of power and the carrier of communication. While affirming digital art, this paper offers insights and perspectives on the healthy development of the digital art industry based on the symbolic diminution of Dunhuang culture and art brought about by digital technology.

Keywords

Symbolism; Media domain; Value system; Power; Carrier.

1. Introduction

Dunhuang art is the only Grotto art in the world, and as a World Heritage Site, the southern section of the Mogao Grottoes has 492 Grottoes, preserving 45,000 square metres of frescoes, over 3,000 painted sculptures and more than a dozen wooden buildings[1]. But the materials and deconstruction are fragile - the cliff faces of the Mogao Grottoes are conglomerate layers, far less hard than rock. The Grottoes' painted sculptures and murals are made of clay, wood and straw, which are physically difficult to preserve and non-renewable, making it an urgent task to preserve the Mogao Grottoes and pass on Dunhuang culture. China's 14th Five-Year Plan and the outline of its 2035 Vision have clearly stated that it will "implement a digital strategy for the cultural industry", and that digital technology will provide a rich variety of means and pathways for the preservation of historical and cultural heritage. Digital art will gradually become one of the main art forms for the promotion of Dunhuang culture, extending Dunhuang art from physical space to mimetic space and enabling the immovable cultural heritage of the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes to break out of Dunhuang, out of the country and into the world.

Much of the scholarly debate on the role of digital technology in traditional culture has focused on the positive effects of digital technology on the physical preservation of Dunhuang Grotto art, as well as on the ease and efficiency with which Dunhuang culture can be disseminated, but the research has fallen short of addressing the dilution of content and the loss of symbolism that digital art brings to the dissemination of cultural heritage. The issue of digital technology's

symbolic dilution of traditional arts and culture is important because when we talk about 'promoting traditional arts and culture', the emphasis is on conveying the content and meaning behind the form, not just on preserving the external symbols of the form. Exploring the symbolism of Dunhuang Grotto art in digital art will help to move Dunhuang digital art away from formalism and prevent Dunhuang art, which has great cultural value, from being reduced to mechanical material in a technological age of instrumental rationality, thus building a multi-dimensional paradigm for the transmission of traditional culture, and allowing culture with national roots to be transmitted in a good and healthy way in a digital age of media change.

This paper will address the issue of diminished symbolism in the Grotto art of the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes, starting with the following aspects: firstly, a review of previous literature on Dunhuang digital art to explore the innovative aspects of this paper; secondly, a study of the relationship between digital art media and symbolism using media theory; thirdly, an analysis and discussion of the relationship between digital art media and symbolism through a questionnaire survey to summarise the underlying causes of diminished symbolism in Dunhuang digital art; and finally, a conclusion and outlook. Thirdly, the relationship between digital art media and symbolism is analysed and discussed through a questionnaire survey, and the underlying reasons for the decline of symbolism in Dunhuang digital art are summarised.

2. State of the Art

The following research has been done on digital art, "Digital art is purely computer-generated virtual images and physical art that can be both disseminated through the Internet and displayed in physical space, capable of infinite reproduction and interactive functions (Duanting Wang)[2]", "Digitality" is the premise and foundation of the creative activity of digital technology, which uses "digital" as the medium material to image the world, replacing "digital" with "bits". "Bits" have replaced "atomic" matter as a new artistic medium, a new form of artistic expression and a new material for artistic composition (Ying Huang)[3]". However, "people often talk about digital-based digital art more in terms of the application and prospects of digital technology[4]", "the emergence and rapid rise of digital art heralds the advent of a new cultural era, and the development of digital technology has brought about a revolutionary impact on the entire cultural and artistic ecology. The development of digital technology has had a revolutionary impact on the entire cultural and artistic ecology, bringing new problems and challenges unprecedented in the history of human art (Wei Zhao ,Hao Zhao)[5]", and on the drawbacks of the development of digital art, some scholars believe that "the changes of the times have brought about the contradiction between the diversity of information dissemination channels and the single form of traditional cultural heritage dissemination, and that the input of globalized information has caused traditional (Ruofei Du)[6]", Some believe that the main drawback lies in the change of technological equipment, "the digital archives are never something permanent, they are vulnerable as regards the maintenance and also the technological development in general, which makes software and hardware obsolete after only a few years (Narvika Bovcon)[7]". "Several critiques of digital methods in art history, and the digital humanities more generally, have focused on the limitations of methods based on quantifying or coding attributes of objects and monuments[8]", " high technology strengthens the expressive power of works, but also weakens the humanistic connotation of works (Wei Zhao ,Hao Zhao)[9]", in addition, "the excessive penetration and integration of digital technology into art and the accommodation and reliance on technical factors have also turned into a potential crisis of creativity decay in the field of art production (Ying Huang)[10]", which is "concentrated in the sinking and disintegration of the aesthetic value of art in technological essentialism[11]".

In terms of digital art research at Dunhuang, it is generally accepted that "digital technology has enabled the reproduction of large amounts of Chinese cultural information and has increased the speed of information transmission (Ruofei Du)[12]", and that "there are still many difficulties in preserving and developing the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes using traditional methods. In an era of rapid technological development, new breakthroughs have been achieved in the preservation and dissemination of Dunhuang culture through digital means such as two-dimensional and virtual reality technologies", "Advances in virtual reality and holographic technology have provided the impetus for the visual reinvention of the main body of Dunhuang Mogao Grotto art, with expressions gradually becoming digital and integrated "(Weilie Cheng)[13]". The dilemma of digital art at Dunhuang is mainly due to the constraints of the realities of the situation, with a large number of grottoes and murals still in need of restoration and post-restoration digital processing, recording and reproduction, a process that is lengthy and requires significant human and material resources (Ruofei Du)[14]".

As for the erosion and disintegration of digital technology on art itself, most studies have only looked at the broad scope of the loss of cultural connotation, without pointing out the symbolic weakening of art behind the loss of cultural connotation in digital art. There is no research that has been done to further refine the issue of the symbolic weakening of digital art at Dunhuang. This paper will further examine the issue of symbolic diminution in Dunhuang digital art, which is the innovation and value of this paper. The study on symbolic diminution in Dunhuang digital art is not "focus on the cultural loss associated with the disappearance and obsolescence of old technologies, in so doing exploring the aesthetic and expressive potential inherent in their rescue and resuscitation (David M. J. Wood)[15]", but rather a contribution to the ecological transmission and development of traditional Chinese culture' based on cultural heritage preservation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Médiologie Research Methods

Médiologie, first proposed by Régis Debray in 1979 in his book Le pouvoir intellectuel en France, is not a study of the media but of the interaction between communication technologies and culture in human societies. It focuses on the way in which historical processes or persuasions are concealed in geographical places, institutional organisations, the circulation of goods and social attitudes, and on the symbolic mechanisms behind ideas, thoughts and movements[16]. The Media Studies programme is part of a comprehensive rethinking of the mediation of culture, rejecting the separation of the cultural spirit from the technological vehicle and exploring the materialisation of the symbolic world[17], with the aim of examining the relationship between cultural thought and technological structures and considering how media carry and transmit messages.

In the past, art was often studied in terms of the history of stylistic evolution and philosophical aesthetics, resulting in the study of art mostly remaining at the external technical level of form and style. The limitations of the discipline have created a barrier to the complexity and profundity of artistic inquiry, leaving the multi-cultural messages expressed in art without a holistic interpretation. Art is not a record but a representation or expression, and this expression is more of a visual representation of people's ideas, forming an integral link with cultural, social and political ideologies, especially in the current society, where the organisation and operation of contemporary digital art involves a variety of fields, and the understanding and interpretation of art should not and cannot be interpreted from a single perspective. Debray's media studies approach allows an exploration of Dunhuang digital art to break down disciplinary boundaries, placing it in the context of sociology, politics, history and technology,

and allowing Dunhuang digital art to be understood more fully within the larger framework structure of society.

3.2. What is symbolism and what is symbolism in art

"Symbolism" means "image representation", that is, the use of concrete perceptual images to represent some abstract spiritual meaning. Symbolism in the broadest sense is a cultural anthropological concept with two main points: firstly, it emphasises the use of a visible symbol to represent the invisible; secondly, it points to the conventional relationship between symbol and meaning[18].

From a cultural anthropological point of view, art does not exist in isolation, but is a symbolic system that communicates through visual texts. The symbolic nature of art is the relationship between artistic form and the content of expression, which is conveyed to the audience through artistic symbols - images with visual effects, three-dimensional visual images, etc. In art, the artist uses 'meaningful forms' to act as a medium for both subjective and objective aesthetic activities, stimulating the imagination and aesthetic sensibility through the metaphorical and suggestive functions of the images or pictures, thus achieving the purpose of conveying information and communication. In the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang, for example, artists or artisans coded Dunhuang's artistic imagery with the collective psychology of their own social life as a backdrop, forming a magnificent symbolic world based on the content of one or more of the sutras in a complete, primary and secondary fresco, such as the large Nirvana Grotto 158 at Dunhuang shown in Figure 2, where the Grotto maker portrays Sakyamuni in Nirvana on the bed of a large Buddha through the wall. The image of Shakyamuni in nirvana is superbly carved out of a peaceful, confident, and titanic image, with the surrounding painting full of sadness "princes of various countries mourning" and "ten disciples mourning" frescoes to form a strong contrast, but also in harmony, and more to set off the Buddha's sublime sacred, transcendent realm. It is therefore crucial to the study of Dunhuang art to clarify that symbolism is the most important value system of Dunhuang frescoes and sculptures.
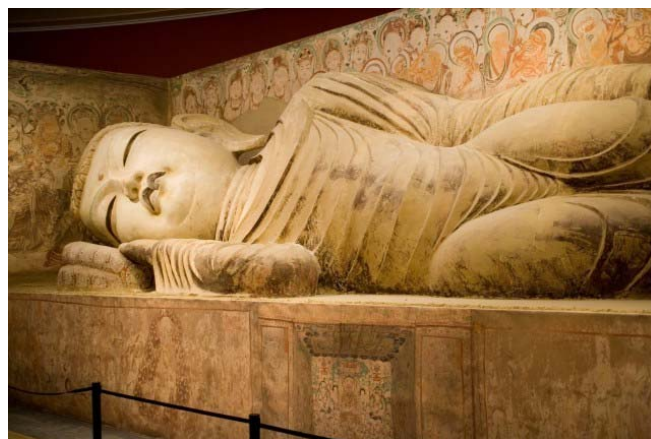

Figure 1. Cave 158, Mogao Grottoes, Dunhuang

3.3. The relationship between the artistic medium and symbolism

Debray's reflections on the mechanisms of communication that combine the spirit of human culture and technological carriers have drawn attention to the medium of communication, which, like the messages it carries, is a mapping of the material and spiritual aspects of the changes in social life. Works of art in ancient times were part of the rituals of the witchcraft process, and in order to commemorate and preserve them, art was mostly carved into solid material carriers such as walls and stones. Primitive art had to express the meaning of the world in its images because it could not imitate the world around it[19], so art in ancient times was a grand system of symbols made up of artistic runes. Entering the age of printing, artworks were

no longer just ritual objects carrying religion and sorcery. As productivity and living standards improved, people could trace, circulate and appreciate the aesthetic value of images through lighter carriers such as paper and silk. Paper making and printing allowed works of art to be reproduced and brought with them an expansion of dissemination, with the consequent weakening of the symbolic nature of art. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin pointed out that artworks can lose their cultural value as they increase their display value. In the age of mass media, the medium of art has become more integrated, with video and audio appearing together on the screen, the images are immediate and realistic, and the message no longer needs to be conveyed by the allusions in the symbolic system. In the digital age,as shown in Figure 2，images have become more and more subtle, artists, programmers, designers, media planners and a range of other workers combine with computer programmes to help us decode artistic symbols, we do not need to use our hearts or brains, we just need to view them visually, the digital media age has completely eliminated the need for the symbolic game of referencing, referencing and metaphor to convey information, the content of artistic messages,to some extent, is superficial and efficient.

Figure 2. Dunhuang digital art scene

The art medium and the symbolic system of art are closely related. From the perspective of media science, when the dominant force of art is closer to the masses, the more detached the art medium is from material entities, the more easily accessible the art carrier is, the closer the art image is to reality, and the more convenient and efficient the means of art dissemination is, the weaker its artistic symbolism is. At the same time, we can conclude from the history of the development of the art medium that the symbolism of a work of art and Historical, religious, humanistic and artistic values are directly proportional to their economic value.

3.4. How to take a mediological approach to the symbolic diminution of digital art at Dunhuang

With the ongoing development of new media and digital networks, new technologies have given Dunhuang Grotto art a multi-dimensional and varied presentation - the Digital Dunhuang Museum, Dunhuang Cloud Tourism, Dunhuang NFT (Non-Fungible Token) Collection, Dunhuang Multimedia Art Exhibition, etc. Dunhuang art carried by digital technology has expanded the dimensions of culture and created a chain reaction in all aspects of people's lives, culture and interactions. The digital technology of Dunhuang art has expanded the dimensions of culture, creating a chain reaction in all aspects of life, culture and interaction. The denaturalization of the vehicle, the multiplication of information and the acceleration of history have created a cultural boom and a historical miracle of "cultural heritage revitalization，As shown in Figure 3, the classic art image of the 'rebounding lute' from the Dunhuang frescoes has been given a new extension in digital art, with individual dancers being singled out from

their surroundings and created by digital technology into a digital art collection with a collection function.

Figure 3. Different expressions of the "Rebound Lute" in Dunhuang murals and digital art

In his book A Course in General Media Studies, Debray argues that behind technological progress there is a permanent possibility of cultural regression. The concept of a civilizational history staged by the media configurations of information dissemination (including technological platforms, spatio-temporal combinations, game regulation, etc.) and encompassing social institutions and political power. In line with Debray's notion of media domains, this paper briefly divides and contrasts the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes and Dunhuang digital art according to their media configurations as shown in table 1, thereby providing chains and clues to understanding the symbolic diminution of Dunhuang digital art.

Table 1. The Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes and the Dunhuang Digital Art Media Domain

	Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes	Dunhuang Digital Art
Historical background	From religiosity to artistry (cyclical time)	From historical to technical (dotted time)
Connection to people	Iconic and Aesthetic Systems	Interactive system
Subject of creation	Benefactors (bureaucrats, officials), Grottomen (officials, rich people)	Commercial organisations, arts groups, individuals
Dominant force	Authority (external religious royalty)	Mass (Around the Game & Pleasure)
Governing Bodies	Royalty, nobility, wealthy merchants	Museums, media, markets
Accumulation methods	National: public offerings	Private/public replicas
Dissemination vehicles	Material carriers (conglomerate, soil, wood, wheat grass, etc.)	Non-material carriers (data)
Carrier time range	Longevity	Transient
Scarcity of carriers	Very scarce and non-renewable	Mass production, reproducible
Information transfer efficiency	Long	Instant
Value System	Generating Faith	Access to stimuli
Purpose of dissemination	Expanding religious influence	Economic returns
Dissemination techniques	Handmade by artisans	Machine scanning, coding, reorganisation
Dissemination methods	Praise the power of this faith according to the idea of faith	Create an event based on a model of self-perception
Presentation	Clay sculptures and murals	Light and shadow, VR
Artistic features	Mythical, spiritual	for visuals, entertainment
Dissemination range	Local and surrounding areas of Dunhuang	Worldwide

The table shows that the subdivision of the entire media ecosystem from Dunhuang Mogao Grotto art to Dunhuang digital art has transformed Dunhuang art from religious mythology to popular entertainment, i.e. from a system of symbols to a disintegration of symbols, through the constant decoding and downgrading of information combined with mechanised mass reproduction.

4. Result Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Questionnaire design

In response to the public's perception of Dunhuang digital art and its symbolism, this study conducted a special survey in which the questionnaire contained two main parts. Firstly, it focused on understanding the basic profile of the respondents and their basic knowledge of Dunhuang art and digital art, such as gender, age, occupation, education level and personal monthly income, as well as whether the respondents understood Dunhuang culture and whether they had come into contact with Dunhuang digital art. Secondly, Firstly, through the collation and summary of a large number of Dunhuang digital art documents and expert arguments, the identification of 100 Dunhuang images in Dunhuang Grotto temple art and digital art, and the analysis of the main constituent factors in the design process of Dunhuang digital art, the physical and social factors affecting the symbolic nature of Dunhuang digital art were extracted, including 21 physical factors such as coloured sculptures, wall paintings, Sakyamuni, Maitreya, Guanyin Bodhisattva, Daishizi Bodhisattva, Bodhisattva of sustenance, Nine-Coloured Deer, Bouncing Pipa, Reclining Buddha, Nirvana Sutra Transformation Flying Sky, Lotus Flower, Checkerboard Cluster Flower, Zaojing, Black, White, Earth Red, Stone Green, Stone Green, Sutra Transformation Painting, Busen figure, and six social factors: historical value, humanistic value, religious value, artistic value, economic value, and scarcity. Finally, a questionnaire was developed using Likert's "five-point scale" for the 21 physical and 6 social factors, and the importance of each of the indicators was assessed based on the participants' knowledge of Dunhuang culture and digital art, in order to determine the symbolic level of Dunhuang Grottoes temple art and Dunhuang digital art.

The basic information table of the respondents shows that the randomness of the sample collection is ideal, and the respondents basically include people of different genders, different ages, different occupations, different education levels and different monthly incomes.

Among them, as shown in Figure 1, the proportion of Chinese men and women is basically the same, with men accounting for 48.21%; in terms of age structure, young and middle-aged people aged 25-50 predominate, accounting for 73.21%; in terms of education structure, bachelor's degree and above account for the largest proportion, reaching 92.86%, with 42.86% of bachelor's degree, 48.21% of master's degree and 1.79% of doctorate; in terms of monthly income structure, the The middle class of RMB 10001-50,000 accounts for the largest proportion, 46.43%, the middle income group of RMB 5001-10,000 accounts for 25%, and the middle and low income group of 2001-5,000 accounts for 16.07%. The selection of this sample is justified by the focus on the arts on the young, middle-aged, highly educated and middle class.

4.2. Questionnaire recall analysis

To get a symbolic feel for Dunhuang digital art, the questionnaire compared the original site of Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes with Dunhuang digital art. The questionnaire divided the historical value, cultural value, religious value, artistic value, economic value and scarcity of each Dunhuang art scene and work into five dimensions from low to high using a scale of 1 - 5. In terms of historical value, the original sites and works of art at Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes scored significantly higher than the Dunhuang digital art, with a maximum score of 4.69 and a minimum score of 4.28, with an average score of 4.533, compared to an average score of 3.882

for the Dunhuang digital art; in terms of cultural value, the original sites and works of art at Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes scored an average of 4.487, also higher than the average score of 3.957 for the digital art; in terms of religious value, Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes scored a maximum of 4.69 and a minimum of 4.2, with an average score of 4.467, while Dunhuang Digital Art scored a maximum of 4.48 and a minimum of 3.46, with an average score of 3.861; in terms of artistic value, Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes scored 4.477, higher than Dunhuang Digital Art's score of 3.974; in terms of economic value, there was little difference between the two, with Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes scoring an average of 4.092 and Dunhuang In terms of economic value, there is little difference between the two, with Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes scoring an average of 4.092 and Dunhuang Digital Art an average of 4.014; in terms of scarcity, Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes scores a far higher 4.345 than Dunhuang Digital Art at 3.699.

Table 3. A comparison of the value of Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes and Dunhuang digital art
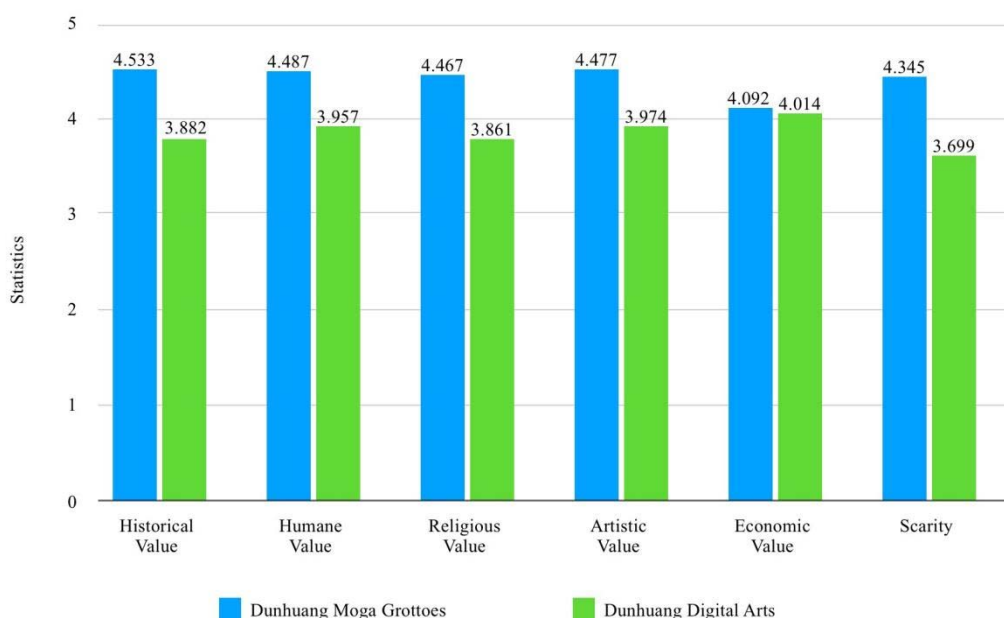
At the same time, the survey on the awareness of Dunhuang culture and art and Dunhuang digital art found that 87.5% were aware of Dunhuang art, of which 7.14% liked it very much and knew about it, only 5.36% did not know about Dunhuang art, while 41.07% had not heard of Dunhuang digital art.

This shows that the symbolism of Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes is higher than that of Dunhuang digital art, and that there is still much room for Dunhuang digital art to be popularised and improved. The questionnaire was designed to identify the extent to which the general community perceives Dunhuang art to be more or less symbolic in different media forms, as well as digital art as a form, in order to inform a deeper exploration of Dunhuang digital art.

4.3.   Analysis of the reasons for the weakening of Dunhuang's digital art symbolism

The relationship between the form and content of art is necessary to establish symbols, and in terms of the symbolic nature of art symbols, the content of art must be greater than the form itself in order to build symbolic connections. A Debrayian approach to the study of digital art at Dunhuang's diminished symbolism can be attributed to three main factors: changes in the value system of art, changes in creative power and changes in the system of communication vehicles.

4.3.1.   The changing value system of art: from religious belief to collective ecstasy

The Mogao Grotto art of Dunhuang and the digital art of Dunhuang were born in two very different eras with very different value systems. As we can see from the comparative table of media domains above, Dunhuang's Grotto temple art was born under the influence of Buddhism, and its main function was to generate faith and extend its religious influence with religious and mythological stories that touched the heart, so that the transformation of each story into a pictorial symbol and the compilation of a systematic system of symbols could fulfil this grand religious purpose.

Dunhuang digital art is built on a value system that reaps financial rewards, and the images are domesticated through a consumerisable process. Computer systems algorithmically calculate the popular impression of Dunhuang and then tailor the most popular Dunhuang images to the consumer group. What Dunhuang digital art shows is what the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes look like after they have been optimally processed, "They are destroying the original symbolic value of the images[20]." When Dunhuang's new art form ceases to carry the weight of religious belief and aims to reap financial rewards, it transforms from a symbolic vehicle for culture and art to a collective mindless orgy of consumerism.

4.3.2.   Change in creative dominance: from information monopoly to information homogenisation

In ancient times, each social class had its own way of communication, and in the social conditions where the masses were generally close to illiteracy, information was in the hands of only a few people, and it could be said that whoever had the information held the power, and the power was an asymmetrical relationship - "the communication of power was one-way that is, from the top to the bottom[21]". Digital networking facilitates symmetrical communication, there is no clear hierarchy in the internet domain, everyone is a sender as well as a receiver of information, "the counter-current of communication disrupts the order of power[22]"and "each new medium bypasses the class of mediators nurtured by previous ones[23] ", the process of moving from Dunhuang Mogao Grotto art to Dunhuang digital art is one of transferring dominant power from the hands of religious royalty to the hands of the digital community of people. But digital communities are not the same as masses, they are merely accidental points of intersection in the Internet due to algorithmic systems, and are fundamentally different from the 'communities' of socio-cultural life that are drawn together by shared culture, psychology and values. Digital communities of people, characterised by flash gatherings and the collective use of the same computer language throughout the world, can produce a collection of information but not a collection of intelligence, and ""intelligence" is not a natural wealth like water or air, which can be regenerated indefinitely ", therefore, "a stock of ideas, which cannot survive and regenerate in any environment through any medium[24]", and symbols and metaphors, which have never been a game of the intellect, means that although the number of individuals communicating has become greater, and the number of digital art forms in Dunhuang has increased, creativity has not increased, but rather the content is, in the selection of the reproduction machine, the winners will be the stars and the dictators. In The Life and Death of the Image, Debray points out that the weaker the image is in communicating with the mind, the more the media effect must be reinforced, and the less "content" is conveyed in art, the more it needs to be disseminated. The less "content" is conveyed in art, the more it needs to be disseminated, both aesthetically and politically, and the more the symbolic recedes, the more personal it becomes, because "the play of the symbolic belongs to the collective".

4.3.3.   Changes in the system of communication vehicles: dematerialisation, ephemeralisation and mechanisation of media vehicles

Dunhuang Grotto art is vast in number and volume, with traces of change from Grotto to Grotto, and unique and complete thematic content between the murals and painted sculptures within

each Grotto. In Dunhuang's digital art, the coding process of electronic computer technology replaces the creative thinking of the artist, and the subjectivity of the whole digital art system is no longer focused on the art itself, but rather shifts to other aspects of the digital art system, such as hardware development, programming, and commercial planning and promotion, where the original physical carriers such as gravel and clay disappear and the carriers are mixed with the data being transmitted. The dematerialisation and ephemeralisation of media carriers results in the superficiality and informality of the content conveyed, for example, memorable big events are often inscribed on stone monuments rather than casually written on cursive paper, "the recording tool changes the spirit of the recorded content[25]", and at the same time, when the original work is transformed into the material of digital art, as its integrity and authority are destroyed, the symbolism is also modified or altered.

Figure 4. Dunhuang digital mural work site

The mechanization of information transmission channels brings with it the mechanization of content transmission. Digital technology can reproduce art images, but it cannot restore the real site with the same context. Digital art always shows a partial information in relation to the whole Dunhuang, "the pictures show the optimized image of reality, they are destroying the original symbolic value of the image[26]". Secondly, the process of "creation" of digital art is to scan and copy past artistic creations, turn them into materials, then dismantle and reorganize them, and generate new art through technology, which can also produce a variety of art forms, but only additive stacking of past artistic symbols. is incapable of generating distinctive and unique content. "Information is becoming less and less decoded by audiences, who have left the decoding of information to the machines[27]". When the form of art loses the support of its content, it is impossible to talk about the symbolism of art.

5. Conclusion

Digital art at Dunhuang is a combination of changes in value systems, power and carriers that have resulted in a weakening of symbolism, an inevitable "after-effect" of the digitisation of traditional culture and art. However, the emergence and development of digital art is a trend of the times, and reflecting on and exploring the loss of symbolism in Dunhuang's digital art is a 'critical response' to the development of new media rather than a denial. In the current cultural context, the digitisation of traditional culture and art is both a continuation of history and the beginning of a new era of digital art as an artistic text.

A measured approach to the digital age, with more respect for traditional culture and less mental noise and visual pollution, is a rational approach to the future of Dunhuang digital art. At the same time, given that the popularity of digital art has a lot of room for growth and expansion in the future, cultivating interdisciplinary and complex talents in the digital art direction, improving the artistic skills of technicians in the digital art system, and establishing industry norms are The future of digital art at Dunhuang will be more professional, more systematic, more detailed and more in tune with the roots of our culture.

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