



# A Study on the Shaping of Cultural Symbols and Narrative Design in Trend Toy IPs: Based on the Creative Practice of “CSIG Hatti the Adventurous Goose”

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**Abstract:** This paper examines how cultural symbols and narrative design shape art toy IPs to combat industry homogenization and short life cycles. Integrating emotional design with narrative theory, it proposes symbol development progressing from instinctive attraction to reflective identification, alongside “multi-narrative” techniques blending trends with positive culture. This transforms IPs into vehicles for user emotion and identity. The approach bridges individual consumption and social participation, enabling cross-media co-creation that extends IP longevity. Practice confirms this enhances recognition and engagement, positioning art toys as cultural media connecting youth with positive values — offering the industry commercially viable innovations with cultural depth.

**Keywords:** Trend toy IP; cultural symbol shaping; narrative design; emotional connection

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background and Problem Statement

Driven by Gen Z’s consumption upgrade, China’s collectible toy industry boomed around 2016 as blind boxes propelled niche artist toys into the mass market. These toys became emotional commodities and social currency for youth. However, rapid expansion caused severe homogenization: designs lack originality, gameplay relies excessively on blind boxes, and IPs lack depth for emotional longevity. Consequently, IP lifecycles shorten and user loyalty fades, creating a market of fleeting prosperity. This homogenization dilemma is the core bottleneck hindering the industry’s essential transition from producing short-lived hits to building enduring classics. Trend toys function as vessels for cultural concepts, offering powerful communication potential. However, while the market is flooded with superficial products, those embodying profound culture — such as revolutionary spirit — remain scarce. [1]As emotionally resonant media, collectible toys can subtly disseminate positive culture. Therefore, extending their role from conveying corporate values to promoting broader social positivity is the industry’s new-era challenge.

### 1.2 Research Objectives and Significance

#### 1.2.1 Theoretical Objective: Constructing an ‘Cultural Symbols – Narrative Design – Emotional Connection’ Analytical Framework

This study constructs a “Cultural Symbol - Narrative Design - Emotional Connection” framework to systematically guide cultural expression in art toy IPs. Integrating elements often treated in isolation, it first deepens “cultural symbol” as values embodiment translated through emotional design. Second, it expands “narrative design” into immersive experiences encompassing product, ritual, usage, and social interaction. Finally, it reveals “emotional connection’s” generation mechanism, showing how symbolic identification and narrative engagement guide users from aesthetic pleasure toward value resonance and community, achieving the transition from buying products to establishing relationships. [2] This integrated framework offers a more explanatory theoretical tool for art toy IP cultural research.

#### 1.2.2 Practical Significance: Providing an Actionable Design Pathway for Trend Toy IP and Pan-Cultural IP Development

This study offers actionable strategies for three key audiences. For designers, it decodes a complete process — from cultural extraction to narrative implementation — transforming them from stylists into cultural translators and narrative architects. For brands, it validates art toys as a powerful medium, offering a new paradigm for expressing corporate or local culture in youthful, engaging ways. For the broader IP development field, it provides cross-disciplinary insights. Its logic of “deep symbolic translation” and multi-dimensional narratives applies to animation, gaming, and merchandise, pushing the industry from shallow image licensing toward deep cultural integration, thereby enhancing IP longevity and comprehensive value.

## 2. Decoding “Hatti the Adventurous Goose”

### 2.1 Three-Dimensional Shaping of Cultural Symbols: From Abstract Concepts to Tangible Images

#### 2.1.1 Extraction and Translation of Symbols: The Visual Construction of CSIG Values (C/S/I/G)

The core design transforms four abstract values — “client reputation,” “courageous candor,” “collaborative win-win,” and “healthy growth” — into vivid visuals. Using Tencent’s classic “Penguin” as the foundational IP, the team symbolized the values’ first letters — C, S, I, G — as core identifiers. An “attire narrative” unfolds around each letter: the “Reputation Goose” wears a “C” cap and holds a coffee cup (a homophone for “reputation”), creating a relatable scene. Other values are embodied through props — a microphone for candor, a cloud cushion for win-win, a potted plant for growth. This approach condenses abstract concepts into character settings, postures, and props, achieving creative construction from abstract values to concrete “character personas.”

#### 2.1.2 Establishing the Symbolic System: Differentiated Narratives for Main and Hidden Variants

“Hatti the Adventurous Goose” enriches its narrative layers by constructing a complete symbolic system that includes main series and hidden editions. The four main designs tell independent value stories through letter logos and differentiated colors (such as the eye-catching red of the Reputation Goose). The hidden editions, “Trendy Goose” and “Champion Goose,” transcend the letter logic to achieve narrative sublimation: the former, with its entirely pink design and CSIG necklace, transforms values into fashion accessories, shifting towards individual expression; the latter, with its all-black tone, laurel crown, and medal, celebrates professional excellence. This differentiated narrative not only adds surprise to collecting but also forms a spiritual progression within the system from “practicing values” to “manifesting individuality” and “pursuing excellence,” making the IP series resemble a diverse team that collectively supports a multi-dimensional cultural value universe.

### 2.2 The Immersive Experience of Narrative Design: Constructing a Multi-Touchpoint Storytelling Space

#### 2.2.1 Product-Centric Narrative: The ‘Character Stories’ Told Through Form, Colour and Accessories

The art toy itself serves as the primary narrative text. “Hatti the Adventurous Goose” endows abstract values with personality through design, color, and accessories. Form and posture lay the narrative foundation: the “Reputation Goose” holds a coffee cup [2] (a homophone for “reputation”), shaping a warm service partner; the “Courageous Goose” grips a microphone, portraying a composed speaker; the “Growth Goose” carries a potted plant, embodying an explorer. The color system provides emotional tone — red for trust, brown for composure, blue for exploration. Accessories like the coffee cup, microphone, cloud cushion, and potted plant serve as visual props representing each character’s mission. Without explanation, users intuitively perceive these identities, instantly transitioning from observer to story participant, laying the emotional foundation for value identification.

#### 2.2.2 Narrative of the Consumption Process: “Surprise Encounters” and “Epic Collections” Brought About by the Blind Box Mechanism

The blind box format transforms the act of consumption into a dynamic narrative process. The uncertainty before opening constructs a “serendipitous encounter” narrative, where employees “encounter” randomly assigned work attitudes or team spirit the moment they unbox the blind box, enhancing the narrative’s sense of authenticity. The collectible nature of the blind boxes guides a “collecting epic” narrative: the process of gathering all four main designs becomes a journey of systematically understanding and identifying with the core values of CSIG; the exchange of duplicate editions generates a “social chapter,” lubricating colleague relationships; and the hidden editions, as “rare achievements,” [3] inject a higher spiritual pursuit and sense of honor into the narrative. The entire consumption process is narrativized into a personal growth epic, progressing from “serendipitous encounter” to “actively collecting” and finally to “achievement unlocked,” with values being subtly conveyed through the gamified experience.

## 3. The Cultural Value and Future Pathways of Trend Toy IPs

### 3.1 Research Conclusions

#### 3.1.1 Cultural symbols are the ‘roots’ of an IP, whilst narrative design provides the ‘soil and water’ that allow those roots to grow

This study demonstrates that an enduring trendy toy IP relies on the organic symbiosis of cultural symbols and narrative design. Cultural symbols serve as the IP’s “roots,” determining its spiritual core and unique value — whether corporate values or positive social energy must be distilled into a recognizable, emotionally resonant visual system. Narrative design functions as the essential “soil and water,” enabling these roots to flourish. Through product characterization, gamified

consumption, life-scenario integration, and social co-creation, narrative design infuses static symbols with dynamic vitality. This brings abstract concepts to life through tangible, engaging experiences. The deep integration of symbols and narratives constitutes the complete mechanism for establishing profound emotional connection; neither element can be dispensed with.

### **3.1.2 Successful design achieves a triple value leap: emotional companionship, community connection and cultural dissemination**

The ultimate significance of successful trendy toy IP design lies in achieving a systematic leap in value. First, it completes the transition from “toy” to “emotional companion.” As demonstrated by “Hatti the Adventure Goose,” rounded shapes, soft materials, and anthropomorphic characterization transcend mere objecthood[4], becoming a warm visual anchor in employees’ work memories. Second, it facilitates a shift from “personal collection” to “community connection.” Exchangeable blind boxes and shared-symbol social topics naturally foster collaborative relationships, forming interest-based groups that enhance belonging. Finally, it drives a shift from “value reception” to “active dissemination.” When users, driven by emotional investment, spontaneously “show off treasures” on social media and explain cultural meanings, they transform into active dissemination nodes, achieving secondary amplification and widespread diffusion of cultural influence.

## **3.2 Research Limitations and Future Directions**

This study is grounded in corporate culture IP-inaction, using “CSIG Hatti” to explore value symbolization and workplace identity. Findings are context-specific. The proposed methodology — cultural positioning, symbolic translation, narrative permeation — remains untested in broader fields like local culture or literary IPs. These contexts differ in cultural complexity and audience diversity. Thus, applying the model elsewhere requires adaptation and further validation — a limitation of this study and a direction for future research. Future research can deepen along two cutting-edge directions. First, integrating digital storytelling — using AR/VR and the metaverse to give physical dolls “digital life” via apps that unlock animations and interactive games, creating a synergy between physical collection and digital experience. Second, developing systematic user co-creation models — moving beyond spontaneous customization to open frameworks with official design tools, modular platforms, incentive mechanisms, and copyright management. This would channel user creativity back into official product iterations, forming a mutually enriching ecosystem. Together, these directions will evolve collectible toy IP design from designer-led narrative delivery to a co-cultivated story ecosystem between brands and users.

## **Acknowledgments**

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