Analysis of the Narrative Features of Interactive Drama

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Abstract: Interactive drama alters the traditional one-way communication in film and television production. It differs from traditional film and television in that it has instantaneous, interactive, decentralized, and fragmented communication features. These traits also lead to alterations in the narrative logic and narrative objects. The narrative traits of interactive theater from these two transitions are attempted to be condensed in this essay.

Keywords: Interactive Drama; Non-Linear Narrative; Narrative Features

Introduction

With the emergence of social and cultural circles, diversified aesthetic interests of the public, mobile customization，and other features, the identity of the audience is slowly changing into the identity of the user, from a passive recipient to an active participant, with more users accustomed to independent choice and the pursuit of personalization, interaction has become a subconscious action of the user, and as a new trend pursued by young groups, film and television are also gradually increasing the proportion of interaction with the audience. In 2019, the interactive drama "Mystery of Antiques " was shelved on Tencent's video platform, and in early 2020, "Love Apartment 5" was broadcast on the IQIYI platform, in which the thirteenth episode brought the interactive drama into the public's view once again in the form of interactive viewing, with its subversion of the traditional drama viewing mode and the play of intimate interaction with the audience through technology. Its subversion of the traditional drama viewing mode and its intimate interaction with viewers through technology has once again generated a lot of buzz on the internet, becoming the single episode with the highest number of comments on IQIYI. Interactive dramas are interactive online videos that appear on new media platforms. When watching an interactive drama, users will play a character in the drama and encounter different branches of the drama as it progresses, with each plot point requiring a click on the corresponding option in the player to determine the subsequent direction of the drama.

As a new media art form, each of its audiovisual elements inherits and complements each other. In terms of narrative, it inherits the traditional sequence of events and differs from the narrative structure of the past in which events were arranged in order of occurrence.

1. Narrative logic: a subject-object perspective in a non-linear space.

Traditional film and television dramas tend to follow the current narrative, which emphasizes the coherent nature of the story, with a series of events that are linked in cause and effect, with a beginning, a climax and an end. In interactive drama, events generally occur in parallel, without sequential or causal links, and there is no logical connection between events, so that the extension of events in time and space can be clearly expressed. In S/Z, Roland Barthes proposes the 'ideal text', in which he argues that in addition to telling a complete story, it is more important to transform the reader from a passive recipient to an active producer of the text, which requires the text to be rewritten at will, to become a writable text. [1] The non-linear narrative technique used in the interactive drama narrative fits the characteristics of this ideal text, in which the recipient can cut in at any point in the narrative process, without emphasizing the beginning or the end, and receive information point by point, and without the constraints of time and space. The system finds the content corresponding to the keywords and presents it to the user.

As a result of the application of non-linear narrative techniques in interactive drama, a new spatial narrative has emerged, which

is web-like and has numerous plot strands, breaking the limitations imposed on the audience by the monocentric camera and perspective. The non-linear narrative unleashes the user into a virtual world with no rules, where everyone can choose any option that suits them in the play, where everyone can be the protagonist of the story, and where whichever plot direction is chosen is the viewer's diverse emotional needs, where no one is the protagonist, the protagonist is only the person who manipulates them - the screen You who choose this branch outside.

2. The narrative object: an interactive user immersion experience

Interaction is part of human nature, both as an instinct to obtain information and as an appeal for emotional communication. Maslow's theory divides human needs into five categories: physiological needs, security needs, belonging and love needs, respect needs and self-actualisation needs, each of these five layers contains the need for interaction within the self and with the outside world. As industrial society dominates people's direction and attitude towards life, the mass quantification of information and the repetition of media products lead to an ever decreasing amount of time and space for independent thinking, because of the unchangeable airtime of TV dramas and the unchangeable screening space of films, the "backward-looking" viewing method can no longer satisfy people's desire for interaction. The natural interactive narrative features transform the one-way content output into two-way interaction, reducing the time consumed in communication and interaction with the audience, thus achieving The effect of "1+1>2" can be achieved, thus firmly capturing the audience's attention.

Technology and the online environment have changed the laws of interaction, and the narrative art formed on this basis has become more open and present in the content in two interactive ways: firstly, narrative interaction within the media; secondly, narrative interaction between media, so that the interactivity of the interactive drama is cycled between human-computer interaction - interpersonal interaction, and the narrative content is constructed in this The former human-computer interaction is a process by which users interact with each other through the media. The former human-computer interaction is where the user communicates with the system through a human-computer interactive interface, where the system can, to some extent, enhance the user's organism and become an object of emotional attachment for the user during the interaction. Unlike traditional video, where a content text, a narrative line and a protagonist's point of view are usually viewed within a user interface, interactive drama presents multiple points of view within an interactive window, where the viewer needs to use the mouse to click on the options that appear at key points in the plot in order to continue the development of the storyline, unlike traditional video, where space is a constraint and space-time distance must be maintained. The viewer who reaches out and clicks on the options on the screen actively participates in the construction of the story world in an 'immersive' way, and the active interaction is more likely to mobilize their own viewing experience and feelings, as the viewer can see the second or even third life world in the interactive drama interface through the screen, combining the real individual and the The viewer can see a second or even third life world through the screen, combining the real person and the character in the virtual world into one, experiencing through human-machine interaction an alternative life experience that they may never encounter in real life, while the protagonist in the image can also "see" the viewer. The interactive narrative features of the interactive drama and the visual counterpoint become a mutual exchange, with the virtual world seemingly breaking the wall into the real world and the interface being the entrance to both dimensions.

Interpersonal interaction refers to the act of interaction between the viewer and the viewer. In interactive dramas, the author only provides the narrative environment and the main storyline, and the user enters the environment and participates in the creation of the narrative, influencing their own choices through interpersonal communication and directly or indirectly driving the plot.People in the real world interact indirectly with the characters in the virtual world, and the two-way interaction allows users to add value, virtualize and fluidize themselves while playing their roles.[2]

3. Platform aggregation: thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of narrative features

In a video network environment where "content is king", and in response to the diverse needs of users, the user community of

interactive drama uses the internet as a tool to participate in the creation of content through interactive narratives, achieving a shift from reception to interaction to creation. Interactive narratives in the online environment are complementary to non-linear narratives. While interactive narratives are 'created' with the participation of the participants, the story still has a unique ending, which smacks of self-deception and is still difficult to reconcile with the crowd, non-linear narratives compensate for this, as the different biased choices of the users in the interactive narrative can be presented in multiple linear story branches, and the story still revolves around the main line, with the users The user's choices simply create multiple possibilities for the development of the story, which has multiple endings, allowing the viewer to actively interact with the content and sublimating the work's existential meaning. As Holzman points out, the recipient is immersed in a non-linear sequence, and as they explore freely within the work, hyperlinks propel them from one world to another in plot-sound-visual-text.[3]

However, the narrative model of interactive drama has yet to be explored, and in the process of achieving success, interactive drama faces many problems in narrative that need to be addressed. In interactive drama, the application of interactive narrative leads to the connection between the work proper, the creative subject and the aesthetic subject as an aesthetic object. Interactive narrative necessarily requires the aesthetic recipient to be fully immersed in it in order to allow the recipient to temporally and spatially displace the chronological and logical order of the content, the sequence of storyline development, the character relationships and the ending, and to change the reading and viewing experience by personal preference through a series of conversational creative actions This direct contact experience undoubtedly destroys the original imaginary distance, the work becomes an interface for dialogue between the author and the participants, immersed in it, and what one sees is what one imagines, stripping the work of the beauty that imagination gives it.

4. Conclusion

The emergence of interactive drama has transformed content creation from author-based to recipient-based, opened up closed texts, formed different endings and textual meanings on bifurcated multi-line paths, made the work open, participatory and able to generate corresponding textual meanings through the actions of participants, attached importance to emotional resonance, and the time and space of viewing are determined by the user. With the support of digital technology, the scriptwriter only needs to create a worldview in the play, and the participants have unlimited creative possibilities, leaving a deep cultural imprint in the wave of the times.

References

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