

Exploring the Narrative Creation Method of Motion Comic Based on Ordinary People's Art

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Abstract

The emergence of Motion comics represents a novel animation genre that has emerged in the era characterized by information fragmentation and rapid consumption. Currently, the majority of domestic research on animation focuses on formal innovation and development trends. Narrative research primarily involves elucidating the compatibility of narrative elements in dynamic animation or exploring new interactive narrative models. There is a scarcity of research concerning content creation within the narrative context of dynamic animation. This article examines the formal innovations and current content status of Motion comics. From the perspective of Ordinary People's Art, informed by narrative and aesthetic theories, the content creation of motion comics is examined across three dimensions: fiction and truth, ideological and entertaining, unitarization and multilateralization.

Keywords

Motion Comic; Narrative; Ordinary People's Art; Ideological Content.

1. Introduction

As a relatively new concept that has emerged in recent years, the motion comic is a transitional form between animation and comic. It incorporates simple movements and sound effects based on the comic's storyboard, which not only has the advantages of dynamic and sound expression in animation, but also reduces the complexity of the animation production process. In a broader sense, motion comics are not a recent innovation. The earliest motion comic was "Broken Saints" in 2001. The most renowned work is "The Saw: Rebirth Comic," the first to be explicitly titled "Motion Comic." It was released by Warner Bros. in 2005. Owing to the absence of mobile internet devices, the motion comics that were initially linked to linear videos were merely a distinct type of animation. The concept of "motion comics" expounded upon by the author will not encompass the early forms of motion comics. In essence, motion comics are a new and robust form of animation narrative that has emerged in the mobile internet era, distinct from both animation and comics. Thus, conducting exploration and research into the narrative content of motion comics holds profound practical significance.

2. Innovation in the Form of Motion Comics

Comics, a medium of early narrative development, has given birth to numerous renowned and outstanding works. In Japan, a classic model has emerged, where comics are initially created to test the market before being adapted into animations, a strategy that has borne commercial fruit. Comics employ frame-by-frame images to mimic movie shots, use bubble text to simulate dialogue, and convey actions through various dynamic lines, forming a comprehensive discourse system. From its inception, comics have been blessed with two major advantages: first, it caters to the non-linear viewing demands of the audience; second, it is portable and suitable for mobile reading. With the advent of the mobile internet, strip comics have been born

from the conventional page comics, adapting to the new communication medium. During the reading process of strip comics, readers can simulate the passage of narrative time by a simple swipe, and the camera shots have also departed from their conventional presentation, harmonizing with the narrative time (the arrangement of frame-by-frame shots, sometimes compressed, sometimes with expansive intervals). The rhythm of the images is adjusted as per the plot's requirements, achieving a specific narrative effect. For creators, comics offer a lower production cost and shorter production cycle than animations, especially in today's content creation landscape, aligning with the prevailing development trend.

However, the shortcomings of comics are also evident. In China, comics have always remained a minority art form. Perhaps the rapid pace of social development has led to a lack of social refinement in comics. Compared to audio-visual art, comic art is at a distinct disadvantage. For instance, animation possesses a stronger capacity for information delivery, with the audience in a passive state of receiving narrative information. Conversely, readers of comics must devote considerable effort and have higher expectations for reading initiative. Secondly, comics have inherent limitations in expressing action. Cartoonists often resort to dynamic lines to mitigate this limitation, but the effect is quite limited.

Motion comics share many similarities with comic strips, both arising from animation forms based on new media, specifically mobile phones. Motion comics overcome the shortcomings of comic strips. Motion comics offer non-linear reading, convenient vertical screen scrolling, and incorporate simple animations and sound effects, with voice-activated lines. It not only retains the benefits of comic strips, notably the non-linear reading experience, but also enhances its narrative information-presenting capabilities. Compared to animation, motion comics also boast advantages of lower cost and shorter production cycles. While the detailed action sequences might not match the precision of animation, for narrative expression, the complete action is not the primary narrative element. In today's era of information overload, neither animation nor comics can match the narrative convenience of motion comics, which possesses a unique "lightweight" narrative edge. Motion comics are currently available on major comic platforms, with varying names. In the Qiaokang app, they are referred to as "Manju", in the Bilibili Comic app, they are "Audio Comic", and in the iQIYI app, they are "Manchuchu-based Animation". Some platforms do not differentiate them from animation.

3. The Division between Elegance and Vulgarity in Motion Comic Narratives

As a new narrative style, motion comics are more in line with the requirements of the development of the times. The trend of popularization of content creation also makes it have considerable development potential. Although there are many outstanding works such as "Guwei Nanting" in motion comics, the existing problems cannot be ignored. Nowadays, there are many works in the field of motion comics with low-level meaning, Mary Sue, overbearing CEO, homosexuality and other themes, which are called "cool drama". These vulgar works that only pursue simple sensory pleasure and lack profound meaning have become a major label of this emerging animation form.

The narrative art of motion comics should be "ordinary people's art" rather than "vulgar art". The so-called "ordinary people" refers to ordinary people who are innocent and simple, have not received art education and theory, but also have no prejudices about any literary and artistic doctrines and theories. They are the largest readers and audiences of all literary and artistic works in ancient and modern times. In the current social context, literary and artistic works, especially popular literary and artistic works such as motion comics, only pursuing the artistic connotation of elegance and putting the works on the shelf are obviously wrong. We

should achieve both elegance and meet the aesthetic of the public, while taking into account the commercial value.

In the book "The Form of Ordinary People's Appreciation of Literature and Art", the aesthetic master Mr. Zong Baihua wrote: "The literature or art of the first-rate writers in human society is mostly so-called 'elegant and popular'. They have considerable 'popularity'. Here, 'popularity' is distinguished from 'vulgarity', 'kiss-up-to-the-sky' and 'vulgarity', emphasizing a universality and humanity. Appropriate 'vulgarity' can be used as a subsidiary content for works without affecting the core of the expression content of the work. The overall narrative still revolves around the deep meaning and realm. Such narrative works do not affect their being called excellent.

4. Creation of Narrative Content of Motion Comics

4.1. Fiction and truth

There are many descriptions of "world" in narratology. The creative process of narrative works is a process of establishing a certain connection between the fictional world of the work and the real world outside the work in the author's world. In layman's terms, art should be derived from life and higher than life. This connection is reflected in classical narratological theory as fictionality and empiricism. Fictional narratives are faithful to fantasy or idealism; while empirical narratives are faithful to the truth of facts and feelings. The "truth-seeking" here is different from empirical truth, emphasizing that the fictional world of the work must be connected to the real world.

For narrative works such as anime that are popular among ordinary people, it is even more important to grasp the relationship between fiction and truth. Mr. Zong Baihua believed that "the scope of objects that ordinary people enjoy is limited to things that express their personal experiences in literature and art, or the defects they feel urgently in their lives and the illusions they seek to recall." Therefore, ordinary people enjoy literature and art in pursuit of pure spiritual satisfaction. This satisfaction includes two aspects: one is to gain some empathy experience through literary works from the perspective of narrative experience (i.e. extension of real life); the other is to gain some fantasy satisfaction through literary works from the perspective of narrative fiction (i.e. dreaming).

The process of connecting the real world and the fictional world is undoubtedly in pursuit of the "authenticity" of the virtual world. This authenticity is the essence of truth and the truth of regularity, that is, the realistic reflection of literary and artistic works. Whether a motion comic work attracts people from fiction or touches people from experience, only with this "authenticity", the narrative is a form of accumulated rational sensibility and accumulated content, which can be called beautiful art, and can create good motion comic works different from the popular dramas.

4.2. Ideological and Entertaining

It is not shameful to pursue the entertainment of works. According to Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the personality structure is divided into id, ego, and superego. The id is the most primitive part, born with instinctual impulses, including sexual and aggressive impulses. The id is governed by the "pleasure principle". Therefore, the expression of entertaining content also belongs to the true nature of life and sensibility, which is in line with the universality and humanity of ordinary art.

The ordinary people appreciate literature and art for the simple satisfaction of spiritual life. Although it is simple, the deep meaning and realm beyond the satisfaction of spiritual life are the indispensable core part of excellent literary works. In other words, "popularity" does not hinder the works from being great, but it is by no means the core of the greatness of the works.

As a subsidiary content, "entertainment" can be used appropriately in works without affecting the core idea of the content expressed by the work. As Robert Scholes wrote in "The Nature of Narrative", it is precisely with the help of this ideological character that the fictional world can be connected with the sensory world (the world we feel) or the conceptual world (the world we perceive). In the book "The Art of Screenwriting" by Lajos Egri, he also provides us with a good counter-argument: he attributes the primary premise of good dramatic works to a clearly structured central idea, and he believes that the process of writing a play is a process of proving the validity of this argument to us. Narratives with "ideological content" can be considered truly beautiful narrative art.

However, the position of "legitimacy of entertainment" is not the same as that of "pan-entertainment". The endless expression of "ideological content" can ignore entertainment, and can be regarded as an abstract art that is profound and mysterious (consistent with elite aesthetics, but not targeted at the public aesthetic); the endless release of "id impulses" will lead to complete animality and destruction, which makes narrative only a tool for satisfying the id through fantasy, and becomes a truly vulgar and meaningless narrative.

To sum up, "ideological content" reflects the essence of truth and is the premise of beautiful narrative art. The conveyance of "ideological content" is at the core of narrative art creation, but entertainment also has considerable legitimacy and rationality. Especially in popular narrative art works such as motion comics, ideological content should be the core, and entertainment should be subordinate. We should seek a dialectical unity of the two, and truly achieve the goal of teaching through entertainment.

4.3. Unitarization and Multilateralization

In the creation of motion comics, the relationship between simplicity and multiplicity should be well handled, that is, to make the label of the work clear and prevent the content from being too simple. The extreme simplification of narrative will lead to the edge of narrative and reduce the attraction, just like the historical narrative will lack vitality because of its scientificization. The narrative works that people appreciate most are those that combine different narrative types effectively and richly. However, the simplification in today's motion comic works is often not intentional, but rather the result of a single thinking model that creates a void.

In the content creation of motion comic narrative works, we need to highlight a single narrative form to add narrative characteristics to the work (adding distinctive labels), such as "fantasy", "history", or "love", but we also need to achieve balance and harmony between various narrative forms.

The comic "Gu Wei Nan Ting" is a typical representative of multiple narrative forms. The plot of Wang Ye's life in the work is set against the backdrop of the Qing Dynasty's entry into the country, including various characters such as the "Prince" and "Yin General" in the story, as well as the "Qing Dynasty Hotel" that reflect the historical nature of the narrative. As for the depiction of the various forces fighting over the "Taishui" throughout the ages, the various ghosts and gods, and various secret spells, it clearly reflects the mythological color. As for the male protagonist Gao Ying, who was inadvertently involved, he was originally a normal freshman, but was involved in the "millennium plan" of the Buddha due to a series of strange encounters. Apart from the Taishui in his body, he himself was always a normal loser, which adds a touch of legend to the work. The "imitation of reality" and "character psychological description" that are reflected throughout the story express the feelings and reality of the environment to the audience, thus revealing the mimetic nature of the narrative. Symbols are also reflected in the narrative, such as the four colored Taishui, which represent the four gods and demons, and are reproduced through the behavior of the characters: the green one represents the gods and demons, the red one represents the heart demons, the soap one represents the creator, and the white one represents the plague. The Buddha is a "pure rational

embodiment" who has suffered from the evils of the world, believes that the evil of all things comes from the heart, and attempts to eliminate human nature and build a harmonious world. With multiple narrative modes, the work jointly demonstrates the narrative theme of "the relationship between good and evil and human nature".

5. Conclusion

In this era of fragmented information and rapid consumption, anime creators must maintain an incredibly high creative pace to meet the demands of high-volume, low-quality consumption. The advent of motion comics greatly facilitates the creative process in animation. Neither animation nor manga possesses the concise narrative strengths of motion comics. With the swift advancement of the times, many novelty items disappear before they have a chance to be included in the dictionary. Regardless of the narrative innovations, they will inevitably wane as the benefits diminish. What remains most fundamental, enduring, and timeless is still the art of narrative content. However, to create good content requires us to base ourselves on ordinary People's art, while also dealing with the three dimensions of narrative in works, namely fiction and truth, ideological and entertaining, unilateralization and multilateralization.

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