



Research on the Narrative Strategy of Desktop Movies

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Abstract: Desktop movies use the computer desktop as the narrative platform and present the story through the electronic screen, reshaping the narrative mode of traditional movies. On the basis of drawing on the immersion of traditional movies, it combines the diversity and imperfection of computer media to form a unique interactivity, thereby realizing the narrative innovation of immersive narrative and interactive narrative. This article aims to deeply analyze the operating mechanism of this dual narrative in desktop movies, explore its impact on the viewing process and audience experience, and reveal how desktop movies redefine the viewing experience in the modern media environment.

Keywords: Desktop movies; Narrative mode; Immersion

1. Introduction

In the context of the information age, the popularity of digital technology has profoundly reshaped human life patterns and had a significant impact on cultural transmission and consumption paths. With the rise of video streaming platforms, especially leading enterprises such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, audiences now have unprecedentedly rich viewing options. With the widespread adoption of these platforms, the consumption scenarios of video content have expanded from traditional cinemas to diverse devices such as personal computers, tablets, and mobile phones. This change has driven filmmakers to think about how to integrate the audience's experience in the digital world into film narratives, giving birth to the novel creative mode of "Desktop movies." Compared to traditional film forms, this innovative genre integrates and fuses the two media of film art and computer technology, achieving interaction and complementarity between old and new media, positioning it as a remodeling and optimization upgrade version of traditional films.

2. The Definition of Desktop Movies

"Desktop Movie" originated from a video interview on April 30, 2015, with director Timur Bekmambetov, hosted by Brian Bishop. In this conversation, Timur Bekmambetov collectively referred to films like *Unfriended*, which take place in a desktop environment, as "Desktop Movie." Desktop movies are a new type of film form that mainly uses a computer or mobile phone screen as a narrative medium, using the actions of characters in the online environment (such as typing, video calls, web browsing, etc.) to drive the story forward. It usually adopts a multi-window display method to enhance the complexity and layering of the narrative, and is commonly found in horror and suspense themes, reflecting the online behavior and psychological state of modern people. Desktop movies combine the development of digital technology and the Internet, providing a unique audio-visual experience that meets the audience's need for a sense of participation and immersion.

3. Rules: Immersive Narrative

In recent years, the core feature of immersive narrative has been widely adopted in the field of desktop movies. Immersion means building a stable fictional environment, allowing the narrative focus to deeply integrate into it, using technical means to create an illusion experience, making the audience feel as if they are in a fictional space and becoming direct participants in this narrative process, thereby obtaining an immersive feeling. "Emphasizing the role of the environment / medium on people and the environmental factors that cause immersion." [1]

3.1 The mirror reflects the inner world of the characters

In desktop movies, the performance forms observed by the audience mainly rely on mirror reflection technology, specifically including two core modes: selfies and video chats. Selfie videos have become a log form of personal life images, not only giving rise to unique viewing habits and visual culture. Selfies, as a unique form of photography, have the core feature that the photographer is also the performer. This process forms a mirror-like interactive performance that reflects and presents the individual's existence in the form of images to the audience. In the virtual reality scene constructed by the computer screen, the set design of desktop movies needs to ensure that the visual elements are coordinated with the presented

virtual space form. In the movie “Searching,” the director cleverly adopted a large number of first-person selfie perspective images. This approach not only provides the audience with a unique immersive experience, but also shows the daily life of the characters in the online space. Through this selfie-chat style narrative method, the film vividly depicts the interaction between the characters and the virtual world, revealing the complex emotions and psychological states of modern people in the digital age. The selfie perspective not only limits the narrative scope of the story, but also enhances the authenticity and urgency of the story, allowing the audience to more deeply feel the difficulties and challenges faced by the characters.

3.2 Multi-window Extension of the Subjective Experience

Movies effectively enhance the immersive experience of the audience by constructing a closed-loop narrative structure and creating a dark environment within the cinema. One of the key strategies to maintain the immersive experience is to ensure that the immersed individual always maintains the perception of their subjectivity. As the overall visual expression form of “desktop movies,” the Graphical User Interface (GUI) undoubtedly embodies this epoch-making visual paradigm[2].

The operation window is an actively executed experience where you can freely zoom the screen, click to enter, or drag an icon window frame around the desktop, which makes this subjective perspective even stronger[3].

4. Form: Interactive Narrative with the Main Body

Husserl once expounded a theory of the transcendental ego consciousness that transitions to “others”, involving the concept of intersubjectivity between two “subjects”. This theory not only applies to direct interactions between people, but also applies to the operational behavior of network tools and the communication activities between subjects. On various social networking platforms, users are increasingly inclined to record and display real-life segments in virtual space. From the perspective of intersubjectivity, the “subjects” between individuals mutually construct each other through a conscious interactive process, thereby generating an intangible interactive narrative structure.

4.1 Physical perception participates in the interaction

In the desktop movie “Open Windows”, physical perception is ingeniously integrated into the narrative structure. The film creatively uses modern technological means such as mobile phones, computers, and various network cameras and monitors to capture real-life materials in real-time and integrate them into the viewing experience. This unique presentation method makes the images on the screen closely connected with the audience’s daily life, forming an unprecedented immersive viewing experience. In the movie, the rapid switching of a series of pop-ups not only enriches the visual effect, but also stimulates the sensory interaction of the audience. These pop-ups are like multiple mirrors, simultaneously displaying different scenes and events, causing various parts of the audience’s body to have an instinctive reaction to these unexpectedly presented stimuli, such as sudden sounds or unusual movements. This design not only enhances the tension and suspense of the story, but also prompts the audience to be more emotionally involved and experience a psychological adventure that intertwines virtuality and reality with the characters.

4.2 Multi-channel information processing

In traditional film works, the use of multi-level composition and depth-of-field lens technology can achieve the superposition of visual information and create a rich and multi-dimensional scene depth. At the same time, the elaborately designed multi-source configuration can create a complex sound level, allowing the superposition of auditory information to jointly construct an immersive viewing experience[4]. The audio-visual expression method of desktop movies innovatively integrates information from different time and space. It uses the dynamic video screen of the computer desktop and the built-in sound system to achieve the simultaneous presentation of multi-spatial-dimensional video content and its accompanying sounds within the same time frame. In traditional film narrative, audio-visual language mainly focuses on presenting the same physical space scene at the same time, constructing a unified time and space dimension. In contrast to this, the emerging form of desktop movies focuses on depicting the images and sound elements scattered in different spaces within the same specific time span, thereby creating a unique multi-point perspective experience. In the movie “Unfriended 2,” the creators skillfully used the scene of a large multi-person video call to successfully bring the characters scattered in different times and spaces together on a single screen, thereby constructing a complex and tight narrative structure[5]. Its innovation lies in the realization of cross-time and space interactivity, allowing the audience to switch different windows on a single screen interface, thereby overcoming the perspective limitations in the traditional viewing mode, and thus being able to display information content more comprehensively and richly[6].

5. Conclusion

As an emerging narrative form, desktop movies enhance the audience's viewing experience through the presentation of multi-channel information and the active participation of the audience. Desktop movies not only improve the efficiency of information transmission, but also deepen the audience's understanding of the characters' psychology and emotions, forming a more complex and three-dimensional narrative experience[7]. Through video conversations, chat windows, and other methods, the audience can feel multiple situations on the same screen, satisfying their "voyeuristic" desires, and promoting the interpretation of the story and the emotional connection with the characters. In addition, body perception is extremely important in the interaction of desktop movies. The audience's body, as a medium, can resonate with the characters' emotions and behaviors through perception methods such as vision and hearing. Through mirror-reflective performances, the audience can not only experience the inner world of the characters, but also observe the characters' behaviors and emotional changes as bystanders. This dual viewing mode enriches the audience's emotional response and experience, reflecting the unique charm and value of desktop movies in modern digital culture.

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