



Construction and Prospect of "Meta-universe" Film and Television Works — Take the Movie *Ready Player One* as an Example

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Abstract: Recently, "meta-universe" has exploded rapidly in various fields, but how to construct and develop it in film and television works still needs to be explored and thought. *Ready Player One* is a film and television work about the "meta-universe". Through the integration of film narrative and game elements, the film builds a virtual world in the "meta-universe" that is different from reality. The analysis of the film is helpful to promote the construction and development of films and television works related to the "meta-universe".

Keywords: meta-universe, *Ready Player One*, virtual reality, film and television production

The meta-universe dates back to the science fiction novel *Avalanche*, in which the author mentions the concept of a future in which real humans live together with virtual humans via VR devices. But nowadays, virtual idol, actor, singer, host and so on increasingly appear. In the meta-universe, with the continuous progress of virtual reality technology, the combination of modern technology and film and television will be constantly integrated into the real life. Understanding the meta-cosmic elements of *Ready Player One* will help the future use and development of virtual technology in the film and television industry.

1. Meta-universe movie narrative and game elements fusion

With the emergence of electronic technology and the development of social media, more and more people are accustomed to using mobile phones, games and other social entertainment products. Nowadays, with the help of holographic projection, 3D modeling, real-time rendering and other technologies, it is not difficult to restore and recreate a highly simulated character or world, such as *TRON: Legacy*, *Avatar*, *The Thirteenth Floor*, *Free Guy*, *Ready Player One*, *Lucy*, *Summer war*, *Wreck-It Ralph* and so on. Many science fiction and animation films and TV shows have used audio-visual wonders to show the exploration and curiosity of human beings in virtual worlds.

1.1 Dystopian cinematic narratives

Currently, *Ready Player One* is considered to be the movie that comes closest to the concept of a meta-universe. Set in 2045, the film sees a dystopian society and economic structure collapsing and people becoming addicted to a VR game called Oasis. In the movie, when the protagonist in real life wears VR glasses, the audience will enter a virtual game world with the perspective of the protagonist through VR immersive glasses, helmets and other equipment. With the adoption of immersive experiences, the public's expectations and desires for what the meta-universe looks like are growing. However, the film also presents a series of problems caused by the meta-universe, such as virtual life merging with real life, people losing themselves and being immersed in games.

In the movie *Ready Player One*, director Steven Spielberg adopted the narrative strategy of alternating reality and virtual reality repeatedly, taking VR games as the lead, so that the public can experience the audio-visual charm after the integration of film and game during the movie watching. The whole process is like falling into a fantasy world, a fantasy and beautiful dream created by VR and video games. The film depicts two worlds, "reality" and "game". The widening gap between the rich and the poor makes people unable to accept the changed reality, and more and more people want to experience the feeling of success through games. A game world with rules that are completely different from the real world becomes a refuge from reality. People in the virtual world to get unconstrained visual experience and the ultimate feeling of the peak. At the same time, the film overlaps the elements of police chase, growth adventure, game life, dystopia and so on, so that all kinds of audiences can find their favorite elements and plots.

1.2 Exquisite artistic details

Of course, virtual digital people, objects, scenes and other elements in the meta-universe are likely derived from or

adapted from their real-world counterparts. According to statistics, there are more than 150 classic symbol images and saluting classic plots in the film. These artistic details are carefully hidden by the director, but tempt the audience to seek them out. It shows the film's meticulous attention to detail. In real life, the protagonist lives on a shoestring with his aunt. But when he wears VR glasses, he can enter the IP symbol "oasis" and become a superhero with unlimited scenery. No matter how far away his dreams are, he can reach them.

In the film, the director named the IP symbol "Egg". The egg is a treasure left by Hardy, the creator of Oasis, when he passed away. In the film, these eggs are composed of IP symbols in various media and art fields, such as some classic anime games, movies, rock and roll, toys, graphic novels and so on. Classic characters in all kinds of film and television games can appear here at any time, and can touch the emotional memory switch of the audience at any time. During the expedition, the person who finds the IP symbol will not only gain control of the Oasis, but also get a share of the company worth \$500 billion.

Therefore, the director is extremely careful in the control of artistic details. Of course, in the creation of film and television, we should correctly handle the use of IP symbols to prevent property disputes. Dealing with the artistic details is conducive to better creation of the virtual film and television works.

2. The dialectical relationship between virtual games and the real world

2.1 Virtual technology is full of real feelings

The film is set in a futuristic science fiction world, where humans live in stacked blocks and the protagonists struggle with high-tech VR wearables. In this world, the audience can see the future "real world" on the edge of chaos and collapse, and then enter the virtual game world "Oasis" after VR experience. At this time, the protagonists change into the game players in the "oasis", and the audience seems to enjoy an ultimate audio-visual feast.

It is worth mentioning that the film caters to audiences of all ages. The true feelings of virtual technology can be felt by all age groups. As a result, meta-universe can strike different sparks for different groups. For example, people born in the 60s and 70s can experience familiar movies and soundtracks. People born in the 1980s and 1990s can find those popular game characters and even the animation and game scenes they were obsessed with. All of these elements have been combined to appear in the game in 2045, and are presented in a way that the post-00s generation likes. It gives the audience a sense of excitement and fantasy as they are stitched into a specific history. So *Ready Player One* is a tribute to the old classics, but with a new twist. The meta-universe itself presents an explosive force beyond imagination, and behind it lies the "critical mass" of related elements of the meta-universe.

2.2 The game life is the real life

The dialectical relationship between virtual games and the real world reflected in the theme of the film has a certain cultural significance. With the improvement of people's living standards, more and more people pursue spiritual progress after their material needs are met. Hence the life of the game in *Ready Player One*. When some people are overwhelmed by the pressure of reality, they even have words like "lying flat" and "crumbling", and the meta-universe itself is an interactive and immersive experience that can fully satisfy their spiritual needs. The "compensatory effects" of reality in the meta-universe tend to be addictive. In China, in order to protect minors, most video games need to set up an anti-addiction system for minors. *Ready Player One* is precious for sublimating the positive side of real life. In the competition between games and the virtual, the director calls for life to embrace the real at the end. However, it left the outcome open and did not give specific measures.

As a virtual space beyond reality, the meta-universe needs fine-particle mining and real-time synchronization of users' anti-addiction and privacy information. Although the vision of the film and television industry is to let people switch between the virtual and the real freely. Control the game, not be controlled by the game. However, some risks of addiction are difficult to prevent, which not only requires people to strengthen their own identification and self-control, but also requires the state to strengthen the supervision of online games and other industries.

3. The future of meta-universe movies

With the continuous development of globalization, the creation of film and television works must be inseparable from the addition of new elements. With the development of science and technology, there will be more and more meta-universe films and TV works. As simulation technology continues to advance, audiences need to be taught how to distinguish the real from the virtual. It will be the trend of future development to appropriately add the concept of meta-universe in film and television works.

In the realization process of the future of the meta-universe, the film and television industry can build a batch of original, forward-looking and regional VR industry IP projects according to the needs of industrial development and combined with the concept of the meta-universe to highlight its own characteristics. This is not only conducive to promoting the innovation of the film and television industry, but also can promote some cultural and creative products, and even virtual reality game theme parks, escape rooms, game scripts and other integrated tourism and cultural venues to promote economic development. However, if the values and operating rules of the virtual world are obviously negatively differentiated or even opposed to the real world, producers should also deal with the contradiction between assimilation and difference, formulate policies and rules in advance for supervision, and realize the mutual coordination between science and technology and humanity, so as to promote the positive and healthy development of the film and television industry.

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