

Transmedia Narratives Explored in the Convergence of Film and Games

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the theoretical significance and practical value of transmedia narrative in the fusion of movies and games, and finds that it not only enriches the way of storytelling and enhances the audience's immersion experience, but also promotes the ecological innovation and reconstruction of the cultural industry. Case studies, such as the interactive movie game of *Black Mirror: Pandasnake* and the cinematic narrative of *The Last Survivor* series, reveal the concrete application and effectiveness of transmedia narrative in the integration of movies and games. Transmedia narrative promotes innovation in the movie industry, facilitates the application of emerging media technologies, and provides a new impetus for the digital entertainment industry, but it also faces challenges such as technical bottlenecks, content creation and marketing. This study provides theoretical support and practical guidance for the exploration of transmedia narrative in the integration of movies and games, which is an important reference value for future research and practical innovation.

KEYWORDS

transmedia narrative; movie-game integration; digital entertainment industry; cultural industry innovation

1 Introduction

Movies and games, as the core media of contemporary culture and entertainment industry, attract a wide range of audiences and promote the prosperity of culture industry with their unique narrative logic and artistic performance. The innovation of digital technology and the deepening of media integration have blurred the boundaries between movies and games, and interactive integration has become a new trend. As a key narrative strategy in the digital era, transmedia narrative plays a central role in the integration of movies and games through cross-platform and cross-media construction to realize story coherence and interactivity ^[1]. Transmedia narrative enriches story presentation, enhances audience immersion experience, and promotes ecological innovation and reconstruction of the cultural industry, such as the interactive movie *Black Mirror: Pandasnake* shows its potential ^[2]. This study aims to analyze the theoretical significance and practical value of transmedia narrative in the integration of film and game, to explore its contribution to the theoretical studies of narratology and media integration, and to analyze its role in promoting practical innovation.

2 Overview of Transmedia Narrative Theory

2.1 Definition

Transmedia Storytelling, as an emerging field of narratology in the digital era, was proposed by Prof. Henry Jenkins in 2003 and elaborated in depth in *Convergence Culture* ^[3].

Its core lies in the synergy of different media platforms to realize the seamless transmission of information and value sharing, and to build a multi-dimensional unified narrative world. Cross-media narrative emphasizes the coherence of narrative content and the complementary interaction between media, bringing an immersive narrative experience to the audience.

Transmedia narratives are rich in connotations, requiring creators to establish logical connections between different media, and utilize multi-line narratives, character linkages, plot echoes and other means to enhance the coherence and attractiveness of the story (see Table 1).

Taking the Harry Potter series as an example, novels, movies, games and other forms of media work together to build a fantasy worldview, complement each other and form a unique narrative system. Cross-media narrative has three major characteristics: cross-platformity broadens the narrative boundaries, allowing the story to flow freely across media; interactivity enhances the depth and breadth of narrative experience, encouraging audience participation in storytelling; and immersion makes the audience feel as if they are in the story through high-quality audio-visual effects and interactive design ^[4].

These characteristics work together to make cross-media narrative in the integration of film and games to show great potential for innovation in the cultural industry to provide new ideas and directions, such as the interactive film “*Black Mirror: Pandasnake*” through the audience's choice to promote the plot, to achieve the depth of the integration of the narrative and the game mechanism, highlighting the infinite charm of cross-media narrative.

Table 1 Intermedia Logical Connections in Transmedia Narratives

Types of media	Logical correlation approach
Fiction	Textual depiction of details to build the foundation of the worldview
	Narrative builds characterization and storyline
	Creating an atmosphere that guides the reader's emotional involvement
Movie	Images present visual wonders and reinforce emotional resonance
	Convey information and emotions through camera language
	Utilize sound effects and music to enhance the viewing experience
	Combining images and plot to deepen worldview construction
Games	Enhance the interactive experience through players' participation
	Guiding players' exploration and decision-making through game mechanics
	Combining plot and gameplay to enhance immersion
	Utilize game elements (e.g. characters, props) to enrich the worldview

2.2 The Development History and Theoretical Framework of Transmedia Narrative

Since the beginning of the 21st century when Professor Henry Jenkins proposed cross-media narrative, with the rapid development of digital technology, cross-media narrative has demonstrated its unique narrative charm in the fields of television, publishing, movies, games and virtual reality. The application of the Internet, big data, artificial intelligence and other technologies has provided multifarious narrative forms and rich contents for transmedia narrative, and significantly enhanced its interactivity. In terms of theoretical framework construction, transmedia narrative covers the dimensions of narrative elements, structure and strategy: the elements need to maintain consistency in order to build a unified story world; the structure emphasizes the correlation and complementarity between media, such as the narrative interaction between movies and games; and the strategy focuses on attracting the attention of the audience to promote the dissemination of the content. In response to the challenges of integrating movies and games, cross-media narratives need to fine-tune the differences in narrative pacing, interaction and immersion experience to achieve seamless integration. For example, the audience's choice in *Black Mirror: Pandasnaakee* affects the plot, which demonstrates the innovation of transmedia narrative in the integration of movies and games, and at the same time puts forward higher requirements for narrative logic and plot design, which needs to be explored in depth in future research.

2.3 Transmedia Narrative Strategies for the Integration of Movies and Games

Transmedia narrative promotes the deep integration and innovation of different media platforms and breaks the boundaries of traditional media. In the fusion of movies and games, transmedia narrative realizes the best communication effect and user experience through innovative storytelling. The interactive movie game "*Black Mirror: Pandasnaakee*" is an outstanding representative of this innovation, which utilizes the branching narrative of choice, allowing the audience to influence the direction of the plot through their choices, which greatly enhances the audience's sense of participation and immersion. This innovation not only enriches the narrative form, but also provides new ideas for the integration of movies and games.

Transmedia narratives have also promoted innovation in the movie industry [5]. For example, movies such as *Top Gamer* have attracted a large number of young viewers by introducing game elements and narrative structure, demonstrating the great potential of transmedia narrative in the movie industry (see Table 2). Transmedia narrative also promotes the application of emerging media technologies, such as the integration and application of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and other technologies in games and movies, providing users with unprecedented immersive experiences. The convergent application of these technologies not only enhances the user experience, but also provides a new impetus for the innovation and development of the digital entertainment industry. Through cross-media narrative, different media platforms can learn from each other, synergize their development, and jointly promote the innovation and progress of the digital entertainment industry.

Table 2 *Top Gamer* Ticket Sales and Ratings

Projects	Value
Cat's Eye Rating	9.1
Number of audience ratings	170 thousand
Number of people who want to watch	105 thousand
Rating distribution	9-10 minutes: 80.8%, 7-8 minutes: 12.2 5-6 minutes: 3.5%, 3-4 minutes: 0.9%, 1-2 minutes: 2.5
Cumulative Box Office	438 million
First Day Box Office	85.424 million
First Week Box Office	390 million

Table 2 Top Gamer Ticket Sales and Ratings (Comtinued).

Projects	Value
Forecast	1.415 million
Milestone	Gross box office breaks \$400 million
Milestone Date	2018/4/2

3 Specific Practices of Transmedia Narrative in the Integration of Movies and Games

3.1 Transmedia Narrative Attempts in Movies

The attempt of transmedia narrative in movies is becoming an important trend in the digital entertainment industry, which significantly affects the narrative approach and audience experience ^[6]. Take *The Assassination of a Novelist* as an example, the movie integrates novel, movie and game elements, showing the unique charm of transmedia narrative. Director Lu Yang skillfully combines the text structure of the novel with the logic of the game narrative to build a complex world where reality and fiction are intertwined, breaking the traditional linear narrative through the closed loop of the narrative in which the novelist's creation affects reality, and the plot of the novel and the movie plot mirror each other, realizing the interplay of multiple parallel lines and reality and reality, enriching the narrative level, and enhancing the audience's cognitive experience. At the same time, *The Assassination of a Novelist* utilizes digital special effects and visual wonders to present fantasy scenes and game combat elements, bringing an immersive visual feast to the audience. Its otherworldly settings, character skills and battle scenes all demonstrate the game style, making the audience feel as if they were in the grand game world. The film emphasizes audience interaction, sharing behind-the-scenes footage and character settings through in-depth social media interaction to enhance audience participation and sense of belonging, and launching related games and peripheral products to continue the audience's exploration and experience of the movie plot. The cross-media narrative attempt provides new ideas for the innovation and development of digital entertainment industry.

3.2 Transmedia Narrative Innovation in Games

The game industry is deeply exploring the field of transmedia narrative, deeply integrating movie narrative techniques and visual styles into game design, aiming to enrich the narrative level of the game and enhance players' immersion experience. The tight plot, complex character relationships and delicate emotions of movie narratives add a unique artistic charm to game narratives. 《The Last Survivor》series of games draws on the linear narrative approach of movies to enable players to experience the inner world of their characters through fine plot advancement and characterization. The game cleverly uses cinematic camera language, such as close-ups, slow motion and rapid editing, to create a tense and exciting battle atmosphere and touching scenes, which significantly enhances the immersion and narrative depth of the game ^[7].

3.3 Case Study of Transmedia Narrative in Film-Game Fusion Works

As an outstanding example in the field of film-game integration, *The Last Survivor* series of games has constructed a real and emotionally rich post-apocalyptic world with its compact and profound narrative structure and cinematic presentation method. The plot of the game focuses closely on Joel and Ellie's journey of survival in the post-apocalyptic wasteland, and through well-designed plot nodes, it gradually reveals the complex emotions and human struggles behind the characters, which is complementary to the linear narrative approach of the movie, making players feel as if they were experiencing a cinematic adventure while controlling their characters (see Figure 1).

With its unique cross-media narrative mode, *The Last Survivor* series provides a new way of thinking for the development of movie and game integration works, and also brings players an unprecedented immersive entertainment experience. Looking ahead, technological advances and creative conceptual innovations will continue to drive the deeper integration and development of movie-game fusion at the narrative level.

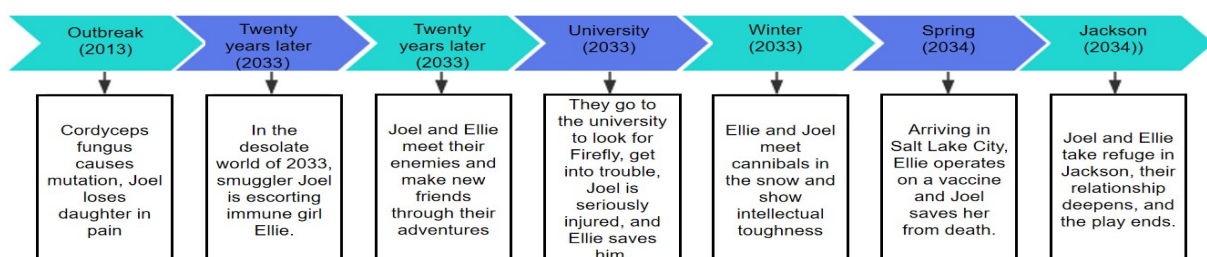


Fig 1 The last survivor 1 timeline

4 Challenges and Countermeasures in the Integration of Movies and Games

4.1 Challenges

In the process of movie and game integration, technical bottlenecks are particularly significant, the limitations of interactive technology constrain the enhancement of player immersion and interactive experience, while virtual reality (VR) technology brings new opportunities, but its high cost and technical barriers limit the wide application. At the level of content creation, cross-media narrative requires a high degree of unity between movies and games in terms of narrative logic and plot design, which poses a great challenge to creators, who need to reconcile the differences between the two in terms of narrative tempo and characterization in order to maintain a coherent and attractive story [8].

4.2 Response Strategies and Suggestions

In view of the technical challenges in the integration of movies and games, it is necessary to strengthen technical research and development, break through the bottlenecks of interactive technology and virtual reality, optimize the performance of VR hardware, reduce the cost, promote its popularization and application, and strengthen cross-field technological cooperation, and draw on advanced experience to improve the overall technological level. In terms of content creation, innovation should be promoted, in-depth understanding of the differences between movie and game narratives, exploring integration paths, introducing multiple narrative techniques, enhancing character interaction, improving story coherence and attractiveness, and at the same time, drawing on successful cases of cross-media narratives.

5 Conclusion

This study focuses on the exploration of transmedia narrative in the integration of movies and games, and systematically analyzes the integration paths and effectiveness of the two in terms of narrative logic, plot design and user interaction. Through specific case studies such as *The Last of Us*, the study reveals how transmedia narrative breaks the media boundaries and creates a rich and immersive narrative experience. This study innovatively and systematically analyzes the specific application and effect of transmedia narrative in the integration of movies and games, providing theoretical support and practical guidance for related fields. However, the limitations of case selection and the insufficient exploration of the deeper mechanisms of transmedia narratives point out the direction for future research, such as deepening the research on the application strategies and the impact of technological innovation in different cultural contexts. Looking ahead, the integration of interactive technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data, as well as the application of VR and AR technologies, will push cross-media narratives towards personalization and intelligence, opening up new narrative spaces. The continuous exploration of transmedia narrative in the integration of movies and games not only promotes the upgrading of the culture and entertainment industry, but also provides broad opportunities for academic research, encouraging more scholars and practitioners to jointly promote the deepening and expansion of its theory and practice.

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