

Research on the Narrative Method and Design of Cultural and Creative Picture Book Design

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, with the rapid development of social economy and the public's attention and emphasis on reading education and picture book art, the picture book market has shown a vigorous development trend, and has begun to penetrate into various industries, and the readers is more extensive. Based on this, this paper takes the narrative method and design of cultural and creative picture book design as the breakthrough point, analyzes the types and characteristics of common cultural and creative picture books, summarizes their existing problems, and puts forward optimization and innovative development strategies to solve the problems, in order to provide suggestions for the design and optimization of cultural and creative picture books.

KEYWORDS

cultural and creative picture book design; aesthetic judgment; narrative structure

Picture books are becoming more and more integrated with culture, and have become an important carrier for transmitting information and disseminating culture. However, in the current design process of cultural and creative picture books, there are some problems, such as insufficient mining of traditional cultural elements, formalization of artistic expression, the same theme and content of picture books, and the lack of obvious differences in content, so that the original and excellent picture books are relatively less. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct in-depth research on the narrative methods and design problems of cultural and creative picture book design.

1 Narrative Structure of Picture Books

The narrative structure of picture books can clearly reflect the development context and overall situation of stories, and directly affect the cultural output results and readers' sense of reading experience. No matter in drama, film, literature, or music and other artistic works, the narrative structure is very important. The narrative structure of picture books is the three-dimensional understanding of the concept of picture books, and the form of picture books is the material carrier of narrative. In picture books, the story text and visual factors are the thematic elements of the narrative, through which the pictures and words are interspersed and interacted with each other organically, and then they are transmitted to specific groups mainly in the form of parent-child reading, storytelling and browsing. Text and picture are complementary and explanatory to each other. Text can extend the function of the picture, and guide readers to add their own thinking and have multiple reading experiences with different feelings when watching the picture. A complete picture book should have a distinct theme, a coherent and fluent story situation, careful logic, core

ideas, multiple visual angles, and distinct personality traits of the leading and supporting roles.

There are four kinds of narrative methods in picture books. First, linear narrative, also known as “single-type”, guides the plot forward in the direction of time, without the climax and prominent plot. The second is the “W-type” narrative, which will produce two small climax in the narrative process and bring readers double surprises. The third is the “U-type”, which experiences the first high tide, low tide, and then the high tide. In the first half, some not good events continue to occur, and after accumulation to a certain extent, it begins to usher in a turning point, and finally achieves good results and ushers in a good ending. The fourth is the “the union jack-type” narrative, which means that the story seems to have no logic and be divergent, but in fact it has a fixed main line, main axis and core ideas. Based on this, the narrative structure of picture books is full of infinite possibilities. Creators can integrate their own whimsical ideas into picture books, make bold innovations, and create strange and excellent picture books with novel and unique entry angles and narrative methods, so as to promote the progress and development of picture book design^[1].

2 Development Status of Cultural Picture Books

The fine traditional culture of China is profound, rich in variety, and extensive, which is the deepest spirit essence of the Chinese nation and the representative of the cultural roots of the Chinese nation. According to the theme and content, the current cultural picture books can be divided into national culture, historical stories, mythological stories, geographical science and other themes. Historical and cultural picture books include “Two Thousand Year-Old Refrigerator: Utensils Containing Ice”, “Advertising in Song Dynasty”, “The Long Silk Road” and so on. Mythological story picture books, such as “Chinese Traditional Classic Mythological Stories”, have the style of Chinese ink painting and printmaking, which can present quaint and elegant mythological pictures and form a wonderful world rich in classical meanings, so that readers can feel the fun of traditional culture in the exquisite and captivating illustrations and vivid mythological stories. Picture books based on historical stories, such as “the Children’s History Encyclopedia Picture Book of the National Museum of China”, select typical and representative important events and figures from the historical development, describe them from the perspective of children, and vividly and completely restore the historical content through hand-painted large pictures. At the same time, some small games and experiments are added into these books to make reading more interesting. It is helpful to broaden readers’ horizons and help them easily learn and acquire historical and cultural knowledge^[2].

3 Shortcomings and Problems in Picture Book Design

3.1 Insufficient Exploration of Traditional Cultural Elements and Formalization of Artistic Expression

In the design and creation of cultural and creative picture books, the traditional cultural elements of China are not fully explored, and the connotation of traditional culture is not fully understood, so that the cultural elements in the final picture books only become a decoration and float on the surface. At the same time, the integration degree of traditional culture and picture books is not high, and there is a problem of the disconnection between content and form. Most picture books adopt similar forms of artistic expression, and the combination of text content and illustration, narrative structure and illustration style are relatively simple, which is easy to cause aesthetic fatigue and reading fatigue, and is difficult to open readers’ eyes.

3.2 Same Theme and Content of Picture Books, and the Lack of Obvious Differences in Content

Book market data shows that the types of cultural and creative picture books have increased, and show a continuous upward trend, which further expands the book market. However, the depth of the content of cultural and creative picture books is lacking, and the subject matter is relatively simple. In the content and theme selection, there are still mainly the Mid-Autumn Festival, Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, reverence for the sky and sea, goddess mending the sky and other familiar content, and the mining of other elements in the traditional culture is not sufficient, so that the content is lack of novelty, and the theme of the content is more narrow and less attractive.

4 The Optimization and Innovative Development Strategies of Cultural and Creative Picture Book Design

4.1 Fully Excavate Cultural Elements and Enrich and Perfect the Connotation of Cultural and Creative Picture Books

The excellent traditional Chinese culture is the material library for the creation of picture books. However, due to the late start of picture books in China, original picture books are relatively rare, and excellent picture books are insufficient. Therefore, the design of cultural and creative picture books should fully tap into the excellent traditional Chinese culture, carefully select high-quality cultural elements and contents from it, such as historical classic stories and ancient poems, and innovate, transform and arrange them. At the same time, wood prints, New Year pictures, paper cutting, ceramics, embroideries and other folk arts can also be integrated into the artistic creation of picture books to further stimulate readers' interest in reading and bring readers a rich reading experience. In addition, China's painting art and calligraphy art have great aesthetic charm and high artistic value. Picture book design and creation can find inspiration and draw sufficient nutrients from painting art and calligraphy art, and give it new cultural significance while inheriting excellent craftsmanship. For example, the picture book of "Ink Chinese Characters" organically and skillfully integrates the three elements of ancient poems, ink paintings and Chinese characters, which can not only stimulate children's interest in reading and learning, and improve their attention to Chinese characters, but also enhance students' aesthetic quality, so that they can experience the beauty of traditional culture, and achieve a win-win situation.

4.2 Flexible Use of Narrative Methods and Enable the Innovation and Development

Of Cultural and Creative Picture Book Design

According to the theme and communication content of the picture book, narrative methods and strategies should be flexibly selected, and a variety of narrative means should be adopted to connect the story plots skillfully to form a complete story. Common narrative methods include object restoration, fragment combination, and feature enhancement. Object restoration is the design and creation of picture book images based on historical records and existing physical objects, and the restoration is the most basic narrative method. Object restoration requires creators to follow the principle of fact, and scientifically and reasonably conduct the arrangement, to ensure that the creation has a high accuracy, and the narrative effect can be played. Feature enhancement uses exaggerated expression techniques to strengthen some of its feature attributes on the basis of ontology, so as to highlight important information and better convey information. For example, color enhancement, shape enhancement and conceptual exaggeration can better present

characters' psychological activities, backstories and related settings, which helps readers grasp key information and understand the story plot. For example, in the design practice of Jinan travel picture books, phoenix wings on the shoulders of characters and the combination of legs and phoenix feet are used to further strengthen the phoenix features in the portrayal of characters and help readers better understand the setting of stories. Fragment combination is similar to the story board in the film, which divides the story into different time segments and juxtaposes continuous animation pictures to form a narrative with time linearity and link the before and later development of the event. Under this narrative method, each picture is only a fragment in the story, which presents a continuous sequence of pictures, and finally combines to form a linear time structure of events.

In addition, color suggestion and color narrative can also be used. In general, readers tend to pay attention to the story plots and picture book images, and ignore the component element of color. However, color plays a very important role in picture book narration. Using color as a carrier, it can trigger changes in readers' psychological perception, thus helping to construct narrative scenes, better render narrative themes, and complete the narration and explanation of theme events. For example, the picture book "Feifei is Angry: Very, Very Angry" flexibly changes and uses colors to present the theme with the change of narrative rhythm. Based on the differences of different colors, it vividly shows the children's emotions going through the changing process of "generation, explosion, relief, calm" in turn, with a distinct and three-dimensional emotional atmosphere, which can not only drive readers' emotional experience, but also help to supplement and improve the narrative. The creators can also introduce some hints in the narrative process to reduce the text unnecessary description and explanation, and encourage readers to dig deep hidden information from the given pictures and actively verify their expectation judgment in the subsequent reading, so as to enhance the "narrative tension" of the picture books, attract readers in the reverse direction, improve readers' sense of reading picture books, and deepen their understanding and impression of the stories^[3].

4.3 Rely on Digital Technology Means and Design the Interactive Reading Picture Books

Interactive picture books are also known as electronic picture books. Interactive picture books pay more attention to the interactive experience between readers and picture books, and generally have innovative elements such as touch and sensory interaction, interactive design of games and entertainment. Readers can operate the functions on the screen to control characters and then integrate themselves into the story scenes. Through the interaction between the two sides, they can obtain a good reading experience from static to dynamic, and better experience the fun of picture books. Game participation is mainly based on the development of the story plots, and enhance the fun of picture book reading with the help of coloring and jigsaw games. For example, in the picture book "Chicken Feather Letter", the creator introduced game interaction and touch interaction to enhance readers' reading experience, so that readers can interact by sliding their fingers to turn the page. In addition, the picture book is also set up a number of interactive levels, and each level has a corresponding task. Thus, the readers can only proceed with subsequent reading after completing the tasks.

5 Conclusion

To sum up, the design of cultural and creative picture books should fully tap cultural elements, and comprehensively, accurately, and uniquely select content to enrich and improve the connotation of cultural and creative picture books. Flexible use of narrative methods can enable the

innovation and development of creative picture book design. Relying on digital technology, interactive reading picture book design is carried out. Thus, the narrative of picture books is smooth and coherent, the story plot is easy to understand, more high-quality works can be created, and the prosperity of picture book art can be promoted.

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