

Exploration on the Narrative Function and Aesthetic Expression Path of Font Design in Animated Films

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Abstract

Animated films captivate audiences with their unique visual language and narrative styles, and font design within them also plays a crucial role. This article will explore three aspects: the functions of font design in animated films, its stylistic characteristics, and case studies. It will analyze how fonts interact with images, characters, and narratives, and further point out the aesthetic and communicative values of font design in animated films, demonstrating its unique and significant importance.

Keywords

Animated Film, Typography (Font Design), Visual Narration, Aesthetic and Communication Value.

1. Introduction

Typography has already occupied a crucial position in various fields such as graphic design, advertising, and film subtitles[1]. Conclusion

Typography in animated films is not only a tool for text communication but also a vital component of visual storytelling. Through its interaction with visuals, characters, and cultural symbols, typography has achieved a transformation from "information conveyance" to "aesthetic creation". In the future, with the advancement of technology, typography in animated films is likely to see more applications featuring dynamism, immersion, and cross-media integration[4].

in animated films, typography not only serves as a medium for conveying information through text, but also often takes on the important role of a visual symbol, closely connecting with character design, color application, scene setting, and narrative rhythm. Especially under the influence of the current digital context, typography is no longer confined to appearing in the opening and closing credits; it also frequently becomes an integral part of the narrative.

2. The Functions of Typography in Animated Films

2.1. Information Conveyance Function

One of the fundamental functions of an animated film is to narrate its content and plot, and text serves as the medium for carrying information [1]. Elements such as the film title, subtitles, slogans, and background text all transmit the information within the story through different typographic forms.

2.2. Atmosphere Creation Function

Typography design can enhance the film's atmosphere and help audiences immerse themselves in the narrative context more quickly. For horror-themed animations, sharp and fragmented fonts are often used to create a Gothic-style terrifying atmosphere. In contrast, fairy tale or

warm-themed works usually pair with round, handwritten-style fonts to build an atmosphere of childlike innocence and magic [4].

2.3. Cultural and Symbolic Function

Similarly, typography also carries cultural information and symbolic meanings. For instance, Gothic fonts in Disney films are often employed to depict a medieval or mysterious atmosphere, while Japanese animations tend to retain text elements like Chinese characters (kanji) and kana in the works, making the typography itself a carrier of cultural identity.

3. Design Characteristics of Typography in Animated Films

3.1. Dynamism and Contextualization

Unlike traditional static text in print media, typography in animated films is often dynamic. Fonts can change in accordance with the content presented on the screen or transform to meet the needs of the plot. For example, in the animated film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, comic-style typography is adopted [3]. This typography is not only used for subtitles but also echoes the actions and scenes, creating an immersive comic-book experience that allows the audience to better perceive the style and essence conveyed by the entire film [4].

3.2. Connection with Character Design

In some animated films, typography is aligned with the temperament of the characters. A typical example is animated film *Shrek* (see Figure 1), which uses slightly rugged Gothic fonts. These fonts echo both the "rough" outward appearance of the protagonist and the ancient fairy-tale setting of the story, achieving a cohesive artistic effect.



Figure 1. Animated film *Shrek*.

3.3. Cross-Media Integration

In the context of animated films, typography becomes part of the brand's visual identity system, spanning from the opening credits to derivative materials such as posters, games, and merchandise[2]. For instance, the official typography of *Frozen* (see Figure 2) has been

extended to toy packaging and advertisements. This cross-media application of typography ensures a consistent and unified image of the film across various platforms.



Figure 2. Text design and typography in Disney's *Frozen* series.

4. Case Studies

4.1. Coco (2017)

Its title font (see Figure 3), steeped in Mexican traditions, uses highly decorative lines and colors to mirror the Day of the Dead vibe, conveying the film's cultural roots and leaving a distinct brand mark.



Figure 3. The typography and text design in the animated film *Coco*.

4.2. Spirited Away(2001)

Most fonts here have a Japanese handwritten style (see Figure 4), showing Eastern delicacy and mystery. The calligraphy on the "contract" is not just a prop, but also highlights the "identity and name" theme.



Figure 4. The typography and text design in the animated film *Spirited Away*.

4.3. Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (2018)

It adopts comic onomatopoeic fonts (e.g., "BOKK!", "WHOOSH!") with on-screen actions (see Figure 5), creating cross-media visual language that breaks film-comic boundaries and offers unique aesthetics.



Figure 5. The typography and text design in the animated film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*.

5. Conclusion

Typography in animated films is not only a tool for text communication but also a vital component of visual storytelling. Through its interaction with visuals, characters, and cultural symbols, typography has achieved a transformation from "information conveyance" to "aesthetic creation". In the future, with the advancement of technology, typography in animated films is likely to see more applications featuring dynamism, immersion, and cross-media integration.

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