

Breaking the Circle of Parody Art and Exploring its IP Creation

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Abstract: As a form of artistic creation, parody has both the imitation of previous texts and the aesthetic pursuit of cultural conception. From literary text to film and television text, this article mainly takes the parody of classic texts as an example to study the innovative way of parody to uphold the traditional culture and promote local IPs on the basis of classic literary and artistic works under the influence of the pan-entertainment trend, and to study the innovative path of parody IP. This article also analyzes the successful case of parody IP "breaking the circle" and discusses the new ideas of IP in the cultural industry.

Keywords: Parody; Carnival; Film and Television; Intertextuality; Cultural IP.

1. Introduction

Since the twentieth century, parody has been widely used in literary and artistic creation, and parody is no longer considered a vulgar and absurd form of creation, but rather a form of artistic creation and value expression. Bakhtin-Michael regarded parody as a carnivalesque, madcap, playful narrative mode with a strong anti-traditional and anti-sacred character, for parody deconstructs the value of the original while injecting new value judgments and aesthetic connotations.

2. The development track of local parody arts

Since the 1980s and 1990s, the contemporary pioneering Chinese writers, represented by Hong Feng, Yu Hua and Sun Ganlu, have focused on the survival and destiny of small characters. In Yu Hua's "Chronicle of a blood merchant", the character Xu Sanguan is a parody of the character of Ah Q in Lu Xun's "The True Story of Ah Q". The difference is that Yu Hua gave Xu Sanguan the hope of living rather than the coldness of death. In this way, Xu Sanguan's spiritual triumph is a self-redemption of suffering, and embodies the author's eulogy for the optimism of small individuals.

Different from Chinese contemporary pioneering literary texts, neorealist literature focuses on the trivial daily life of characters. The movie "I Am Not Madame Bovary" (2016) is adapted from Liu Zhenyun's novel of the same name. In the play, Li Xuelian and Qin Yuhe are parodies of the characters of Pan Jinlian and Ximen Qing from "The Golden Lotus". After Li Xuelian and her ex-husband Qin Yuhe faked their divorce, Qin Yuhe slandered her as a Pan Jinlian-type woman of debauchery, but she didn't consider herself as a symbolic, lustful and frivolous woman. Therefore, she stubbornly appealed for justice to prove that she was not "Pan Jinlian". With the twist of the storyline, when her repeated petitions failed and her ex-husband died in an accident and wanted to commit suicide, the owner of the peach orchard told her, "don't miss the whole forest because of one tree, it won't take you much time to find a new husband. "[1] Such a solemn and harmonious inspiration of the wisdom of survival at the bottom not only enhances the dramatic effect of black humor, but also strengthens the authenticity of the characters,

insinuating the emptiness of justice in the face of power and profit. Through the parody of the characters, Liu Zhenyun criticized the dark side of social reality. The typical performance is the parody of the official names, such as "Dong Xianfa"(to understand the constitution) and "Wang Gongdao"(to obey the justice)[2], who appear to be impartial and honest, but are vile and treacherous inside. As a form of irony, the official's name is just a disguise for things that "the more one tries to hide, the more one is exposed", which makes it even more humiliating. The irony of the unrealistic name highlights the ugliness of the officialdom and deconstructs the hypocrisy of the sublime, because of which the value of the unnamed crumbs fall to the ground and the ugly face of the bureaucratic style is mocked. Through parody, the novel shifts from "neo-realism" to "reality", aiming to tell the real life of the people of the lower class.

From the language art of literature to audio-visual arts, parody films are taking advantage of the momentum and making excellent products. Since the 1990s, represented by Stephen Chow's film and television works, the creators of the drama have continuously adjusted the parody narrative strategy, deconstructing the satirical quirks of the classic texts. They have alluded to the aesthetic consciousness of popular consumer culture. Take Stephen Chow's "nonsensical" films and television works as an example, the writer-director has made a pungent and mocking deconstructionist narrative of the story themes and characters. Stephen Chow focuses his attention on grassroots characters, breaking the "face" image of heroic characters. In "Kung Fu" (2004), Starboy is a small-time gangster, but he eventually defeats the murderous demon Fire Cloud Evil God and becomes a hero who saves the whole slum dwellers. Such a metaphor of marginal characters breaking cocoons into butterflies demonstrates the consistent kung fu complex and humanistic care in Stephen Chow's films. Chow was not simply pursuing "nonsense" type of funny results, but using films as a medium to reflect social reality, digging deeper into it and humorizing the realistic subjects, and then making the public think deeply about social problems in the course of laughing. The film "The Mermaid" (2016) parodies Andersen's fairy tale The Little Mermaid. Stephen Chow's parody of fairy tale elements blurs the boundaries between reality and fairy tales, which is a spiritual compensation of adult stories in fairy tales and is a beautiful adult attachment and yearning for childhood. It will stimulate

the audience emotional resonance. [3]He deconstructs the center of the fairy tale mermaid story and dissolves the tragedy of mermaid love to create a traditional Chow-style nonsense movie, giving the story of mermaid love a happy ending. The director deconstructs the traditional image of the "prince" and elevates this normal character to a grassroots hero, maximizing the humorous effect, while the humor implies a deeper meaning. Stephen Chow has stepped out of the comfort zone of comedy films and let parody comedy take on a more ambitious and realistic theme, that is, trying to awaken the public's awareness of ecological protection through the aesthetics of writing, reflecting the demands of popular cultural ideology, showing the director's deeper thinking based on the level of ecological care, and leading to the motif of the harmonious coexistence of man and nature.

3. Breakthrough of parody art in new media age

From literature, film and television to variety shows, the objects of parody are more extensive and diverse. In recent years, the creative approach of parody has broadened the boundaries and expressions of variety shows, successfully achieving the breaking of the circle of artistic creation.

Firstly, as a creative technique, parody innovates the expression of traditional culture, the circle-breaking innovation in content and form is more intuitively reflected in cultural variety shows. In 2017, CCTV-1 aired a variety show on cultural and cultural exploration - "The Nation's Greatest Treasures", which used parody to improve the usual boring didactic form of cultural variety shows, making the parody variety show a young and innovative expression in the "storytelling" method, and the actors' vivid interpretation of the past and present life of "national treasures" presented obscure historical archives vividly on the screen. The interesting parody narratives of "national treasures" have expanded the scope of audience and increased the tolerance of the audience groups, while the narrative paradigm of the parody has been innovated and the artistic connotation has been enhanced. In the "The Nation's Greatest Treasures" program, Huang Bo, Yang Zi and other film and television actors are in the role of guardian of national treasures, and their vivid performance has become a way of "storytelling". Parody has become a visualization, a plot narrative. In setting the agenda of the program, the crew set the flow of the program into three segments: "suspicion setting - suspicion exploring - suspicion solving" : first, setting up suspicion through suspense to stimulate the audience's desire to "explore the suspicion"; second, setting up specific time and space scenes, characters and storylines to explore the suspicion step by step; third, setting up national treasures associated with historical figures and explore the story behind the story, by inviting the audience to immerse themselves in order to "break the suspicion". Represented by "The Nation's Greatest Treasures", the narrative mode of national treasures has been updated from "say → listen" to "say ⇌ listen". In this way, the viewer is no longer a passive recipient, but an active participant, a witness and an experienced who is called upon. By inviting the audience to participate in the storytelling process, the parody changes the passive state of the audience and brings the process of "exploring treasures and knowing treasures", thus contributing to the re-recognition and re-dissemination of the original ancient texts.

Secondly, parody art captures the audience's laughter and

pain points. IQIYI's self-produced comedy competition-based variety show "Super Sketch Show" (2021) is such an example. Not only does it allow the audience to appreciate the aesthetic value of comedy, but this kind of fast-paced "new comedy" has also broadened the boundaries of comedy and enriched the forms of comedy, making various forms of comedy such as sketch comedy, comic talent, pantomime and musicals on the TV screen. The Sunrise Boys' "Laugh! Piorevic" tells a story about the "ban on laughing", which is a parody of the unreasonable censorship of a particular era. Through this program, the audience can easily discover and then ponder some social chaos in the current society, making the program more realistic. In "Playwright Navigator", participant Yin Beixi parodies the classic characters Guanyin, Ziwei and the chartered lady. The program is a new interpretation of the classic text in a post-modern context, which collages local representative elements and breaks the structure of conventional symbolism. This infiltration of the national culture by the performance gives more possibilities to the already innovative form of parody, and provides the public with a new and innovative parody template. The comedy program "Platform" is a parodic adaptation of Zhu Ziqing's essay "The Sight of Father's Back". Comedian Huang Chengcheng and Gu Yufeng have parodied the role of father and son in "The Sight of Father's Back". Through a performance in which the father doesn't know how to hug his son, they let the audience feel the subtle and introspective but deep Chinese fatherly love, which is touching. Comedy is a mirror of social life, an observer, a thinker and a presenter who is in the reality of the present. In this way, as far as the cultural value of parody programs is concerned, it achieves the cultural identity of the public while entertaining itself and the public, and thus becomes a cultural commodity with potential meaning and pleasure. According to John Fiske, "In a cultural economy, the process of circulation is not the turnover of money, but the transmission of meaning and pleasure." [4]As a cultural commodity, comedic parody not only activates the audience's memory of the source text, but also plucks the audience's sensitive and warm heartstrings. Therefore, the text production process of parody reflects the humorous and witty spiritual production characteristics of parody texts, which also brings aesthetic pleasure to the public.

Thirdly, parody has become a way to activate the telling of traditional culture. In recent years, Henan TV has been digging deeper into traditional culture, promoting traditional Chinese culture through more embodied and storytelling techniques, especially the successful combination of film and culture to achieve the "breaking the circle" of cultural programs, and this breakthrough is more intuitively reflected in the arts and culture programs. Parody as a method of presenting historical figures and restoring historical tropes facilitates a deeper understanding of traditional Chinese culture for the audience. In the Spring Festival Gala 2021, the cultural program "Tang Dynasty Palace" brings the silent and lovely human figurines to life through the dancers' imitation of the Tang figurines, who are sometimes generous and calm, and sometimes graceful, showing the great Tang style of the courtiers. In terms of artistic presentation, the performance of the musicians subverts the lyrical form of the previous classical dance, and instead adopts a more playful form, that is, the performers use exaggerated and dramatic movements to restore the process of the musicians attending the banquet. Supplemented by AR technology, parody makes the

prosperity of Tang Dynasty more visualized and three-dimensional in the eyes of the public. This method integrates digital humanistic care and contemporary people's emotional structure and aesthetic awareness into the media performance while showing the local style[5], a true representation of history. The classical dance "Pray" imitates the goddess Zhen Mi by the Luoshui River. It makes the goddess in "Luo River Goddess" dance, and also makes the beautiful women in the public's minds change from imagination to reality, reappearing. The charm of Tang Dynasty murals enhances the aesthetic depth of the program [6]. The dancers in the dance "Guardian Warriors of Longmen" imitated King Kong and the fairy, presenting a visual feast of both rigidity and softness to the audience, showing the elegant beauty of "Wu Belt as the Wind" in Dunhuang murals. Form serves content, "Guardian Warriors of Longmen" breaks through the artistic style of the original party. It combines traditional culture with new program styles through parody, and promotes the excellent traditional Chinese culture. This national memory based on cultural symbols has built an Aesthetic Paradigm for the variety show in the new media era. Of course, the popularity of Henan Satellite TV's programs is essentially the breaking of traditional culture again.

In the era of new media, with the help of parody in the age of science and technology, the national treasure allusions, myths and legends, and folk intangible cultural heritage that have fallen into the dust of history have a worldly atmosphere. Through the superposition of technology and art, parody breaks through the aesthetic vision of a single symbolic form. It interprets the source text in a more novel way and meets the needs of the public to pursue diverse aesthetic experiences.

4. Cultural IP construction of Chinese classical arts

The value-added effect of parody came into being, creating a classic IP unique to China. Classic IP contains rich national cultural genes, and many of the motifs are like grains of immortal wheat. In this way, the parody of the motif has infinite possibilities for aesthetic re-creation and re-interpretation. In this direction, the parody of variety shows is the cultural reproduction of classic texts. Among them, the IP of classic masterpieces has great influence, and thus collectively and unconsciously becomes the preferred object of parody.

Firstly, the cultural IP creation of classical novels. Undoubtedly, classic IP contains excellent traditional cultural genes, and creators of different times have carried out timely reconstruction and interpretation of them. "Wu Kong" is a textual parody of the Ming Dynasty novel "Journey to the West", and it has set off a reading boom since the serialization of the novel "Wu Kong"; similarly, the movie "Journey to the West: Conquering the Demons" (2013) and "Monkey King: Hero is Back" (2015) are both the cross-text parody of Journey to the West. In addition, both of "Nezha: Birth of the Demon Child" (2019) and "Legend of Deification" (2020) are the cross-text parody of the Ming Dynasty novel "The Legend of Deification" in China. Through the intermixing of different elements, the desire for public identity is evoked. The movie "Nezha: Birth of the Demon Child" tells the story of Nezha's redemption against the odds, as he fights against an unjust fate even after cutting his bones and picking his flesh. The image of Nezha in the movie broke the established perception of the audience and gained their emotional resonance. The reason

for this, on the one hand, is that these works are adapted from classic novel texts and thus have certain fan stickiness, especially the reinterpretation of new modes of thinking, which makes the creation of film and television IP have a huge advantage; on the other hand, the secondary publicity of classic IP promotes the public's recognition and acceptance of the classics, and the visual symbols of national style elements are injected into the cultural IP, making the works full of rich classical atmosphere and distinctive national style, reversing the prejudice of young people towards Chinese animation nowadays, tearing off the label of "Low Child" animation works in the past, and enhancing the role of cultural IP in cultural communication. It has also improved the competitiveness of cultural IP in cultural communication.

Secondly, the classic IP derivative rewrites. Both "WHITE SNAKE" (2019) and "GREEN SNAKE" (2021) are adapted from Chinese folk tale "The Legend of the White Snake". The text of "The Legend of the White Snake" was initially set in Feng Menglong's "Stories enlightening the world" (1624) in the Ming Dynasty. Such classic texts are rooted in rich cultural ground, and creators adapt them on the basis of their cultural identity, structural integrity and rich characterization, which is more conducive to the creation of quality IP. The intertextual narrative of classic symbols also enhances the fun of the film, dissolves the strangeness in the film, rejuvenates the classic text, and presents a new narrative paradigm. Through Chinese animation, the director has unearthed a deeper concept of right and wrong, good and evil, complemented by a unique oriental aesthetic sensibility and cultural core, which conveys the mainstream socialist values to the audience. The parodied text deconstructs centrality while realizing the cultural identity of local film and television to the classic text, conveying a unique narrative paradigm and value pursuit. From this, it is easy to see the determination and confidence of the Chinese animation industry to create classic IP, and now the classic text IP as the core to the animation film-led IP creation model has gradually formed. From the box office success of "Nezha: Birth of the Demon Child", "Legend of Deification", the "WHITE SNAKE" series and "New Gods: Yang Jian" (2022), it is easy to see that the classic IPs have triggered the national style circle with cultural connotations, national memories, artistic styles and other symbols, triggering a deep resonance of young people's emotions. Based on this, the national style animation created by classic IP is beneficial to the cultural system of youth to establish a sense of national belonging and cultural identity. Through the creation of classic IP for film and television, a complete chain of animation industry has been gradually created, the success achieved in the process from pre-promotion to post-production of animation, etc. confirms that the national comic industry chain has formed a virtuous competition and production cycle, and at the same time, the creation of national style animation IP is also imperative. The successful adaptation of classic texts such as "Journey to the West", "The Legend of the Gods" and other parodies and the longevity of the Journey to the West IP series can show the great potential of traditional texts, and the huge commercial value of classic IPs can also be seen in the series of stationery, toys, children's clothing and other hot-selling products derived from them. However, the creation of classic IP should focus more on catering to the aesthetic and emotional needs of the current public, and inject new popular elements and aesthetic values into the classic IP.

Thirdly, the potential crisis of classic text IP parody in the

context of pan-entertainment. Neil Postman, in his book "Amusing Ourselves to Death", predicted that "here is entirely devoted to the idea of entertainment, and as such proclaims the spirit of a culture in which all public discourse increasingly takes the form of entertainment." [7]At present, the network era has given rise to a group of netizens who have directed parody to the end of "entertainment to death". Nowadays, all forms of creation have tended to be entertainment-oriented. Netflix groups gained more attention by imitating current hot topics, and then sought for fan economy, guiding fans to make real and virtual consumption. At the same time, in the current era of eyeball economy, the potential crisis of IP creation is the consumption of the public's attractive resources. Rooted in the era of commercialized mass consumption, the commercial attributes of parody texts are inherent. However, if the commercial and artistic aspects of parody films cannot be balanced, the result will be a waste of audience appeal resources. The movie "Journey to the West - Land of the Daughters" (2018) parodied the classical masterpiece "Journey to the West" in China, but its release caused a wave of spoofs. The film seeks fan economy with the star as a gimmick, creating aesthetic pleasure to a certain extent, but the "magic" of the traditional IP makes the parody of the text ridiculous. Hillis Miller argues that "each text itself destroys itself by feeding on the previous text"[8]. The adaptation of the character roles and value themes of classical masterpieces, the parodists incorporate their own aesthetic sense, but it is very easy to flow into formal innovation, therefore, the parody IP should be created by integrating the art form with traditional cultural symbols, digging deep into the artistic value behind the classic works, and making the works fine, nationalized and modernized.

The value of parody is also to explore more creative forms to bring spiritual enrichment and enjoyment to the public. In the wave of the times, film and television, short video, online literary works that act as are worshiped by young people, the parodists explore and discover in the footsteps of their predecessors, constituting a subversive and radical parody that dissolves the inherent thinking and builds the connotation of "new, strange and special" works, bringing visual and aesthetic pleasure to the public.

5. Conclusion

Parody has drawn different levels of attention in different eras, but the parodist's attitude toward parody in different eras is attributed to the exploration of the world and the criticism of life in that particular period. Therefore, the parodist's boldness in parody is conducive to breaking the creator's

inherent mindset and integrating into the new era in a more popular way. This "non-serious" joke innovation gives creators more formal possibilities, and at the same time shows the reproducibility of parody, reflecting the legal recognition of the times, especially with the development of the information age, the Internet's openness gives contemporary young people more possibilities for parody. With the diversification of parody forms, the innovative direction of parody also needs to be considered. While creating classic IPs, creators should innovate and carry out diversified development across industries, and should not excessively pursue the performance of carnival entertainment. Perhaps, the expression of humanistic attributes is the ultimate destination of parody, and the formal carnival brought about by the lack of metaphysical value is difficult to break through the core of the story under the original model. Therefore, creators must abide by the value law of parody when parodying, inject new vitality into the text while deconstructing the centrality of the text, and endow the text with new artistic value and ideological connotation.

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