The Research on the Writing Mechanism of Infinite Flow Novels in China's E-book Market

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Abstract. With the development of the times, people pay more attention to the field of entertainment, including but not limited to games, novels, music. At the same time, people became dissatisfied with the existing environment and continue to create more pastimes and entertainment categories. Among them, infinite flow novel was also a newly created network novel category in the last 15 years. Although in the past, people did not know the concept of infinite flow, but in recent years, the hot release of "Squid Game", "Beginning" and other TV series, let people have a new understanding of infinite flow, infinite flow novels. Until now, the once unpopular infinite stream of fiction has gradually become popular to people. Yet, true to its abstract name, the mechanics of writing the Infinite Stream novel are often unfamiliar to people, and even misunderstood by many. This article will explore the content of infinite stream novels by studying the infinite stream novels published on the Internet in China in the last 15 years. The reader learns about Infinite Flow's basic introduction, narrative mode, unique style, and the pitfalls it contains.

Keywords: Writing Mechanism, Infinite Flow/Stream, China, E-book Market

1   Introduction

Network novels are familiar to contemporary people, especially young people. At present, the network novel industry is greatly welcomed by people. On October 9, 2021, Zhang Yijun, deputy director general of the China Audio-visual and Digital Publishing Association, released the 2020 Report on the Development of Chinese Online Literature, which revealed that the market size of Chinese online literature reached 24.98 billion yuan in 2020, the number of online literature users reached 460 million, and the average daily active users were about 7,577,500. In addition, a total of 29.059 million online literary works were created in 2020, with more than 21.3 million online literary authors [1]. Yu Cike, executive vice president of the Copyright Association of China, said that in 2021, China's online literature industry achieved both social and economic benefits in terms of inheriting traditional culture, recording the development of the era

and leading the culture to go abroad. In 2021, the scale of China's online literature industry reached 35.8 billion yuan, up 24.1% year on year, and the number of users reached 502 million, accounting for 48.6% of the total Internet users, up 9.1% year on year [2]. Among the branches of online fiction, there is one that is getting hotter. The recent popularity of TV dramas such as Squid Game and The Beginning has brought the seemingly novel term "infinite flow" to the attention of the Chinese public. However, the development of "infinite flow", especially the infinite flow novel, did not last just a few years. In fact, even though the original novel of "Beginning" is labelled as "infinite flow" on the first platform of Jinjiang's novel reading, it is not a novel of infinite flow in the traditional sense. This article will analyze the writing mechanism of infinite flow novels from the definition, narrative characteristics, as well as its problems and causes.

2   Literature review

The origin of this category of the generalized infinite genre cannot be precisely defined, as there are many domestic and foreign examples. For example, in the 1993 movie "Phantom Hero," Danni, a young boy, can slip in and out of the movie. In the manga Killing City, which was serialized in 2000, Geno Ji, a high school student who died accidentally, is transported to a mysterious room to complete various tasks. In the cartoon "Martin in the Morning," which has been airing since 2003, the main character Martin can change into a different person every morning.

To further understand the concept of infinite flow, one can go back to the 1993 classic film The Day of the Ten Rats. The film tells the story of the traditional American Groundhog Day (February 2), weatherman Phil goes to a small town to report the news of the Groundhog, but something amazing happens. Every time he wakes up in the morning, it is the same day: it is always February 2, Groundhog Day. Co-writer Danny Rubin said in an interview, "When I first came up with the idea, I was just trying to get the structure right. Because it makes for a lot of interesting scenes. But I didn't start writing it until a few years later, when I was thinking about old age and what happens to a person's life if they live long enough. I realized that a movie about eternity would be too long, so I thought of the idea of a time loop. I can make a character repeat the same day endlessly and experience 'eternity' as a result. Now it's not just a structural trick, it's a story about a long human life" [3].

The originator of the infinite flow of novels in China is considered to be the Infinite Terror written by Zhtttty, an online novel writer. It was first published on Qidian Chinese website on April 06, 2007, and serialized on January 03, 2009. It tells the story of Zheng Zha, a white-collar worker, who is tired of the repetitive and boring modern life due to the loss of his closest friend. In order to explore the meaning of life, he enters a reincarnation world like a horror movie. In the world of reincarnation, people have to get stronger to survive [4]. After that, various novels on related topics followed suit. Due to the influx of similar network novels, the starting point of the emergence of a new genre - infinite flow.

The most mentioned point about infinite flow is the interesting setting. The starting point defines the infinite flow novel as "the protagonist travels and experiences in different time and space, and generally has the attributes of the main god space and mission, which is often adapted to the plot of movies, cartoons and novels". According to the Southern Metropolis Daily, the infinite flow refers to the unique space created by the unknown technology or power of the present world, calling the people of the present world in the past and sending them to virtual space for experience and completion of tasks [5]. In a word, infinite flow novels allow intelligent life to experience different stories and complete some tasks in different worlds (mainly two-dimensional worlds, namely fictional movies and television) due to the intervention of a certain force (which also has the characteristics of game upgrading and fighting monsters) [6].

In fact, infinite flow itself is a big setting, within which a lot of small Settings can be accommodated to meet the different reading needs of readers. Just like the name "infinite", infinite flow has a lot of room to expand. The real key is to be "all-encompassing", that is, to be able to include an infinite number of elements, such as science, religion, mythology, history, reality, film, anime, etc., and to have a reasonable worldview that fits all of them neatly. Different worlds or copies can have different rules and requirements, and the overall story is composed of separate units. With strong inclusiveness, the story will be more diversified and diverse. Covering as many types as possible means a higher probability of hitting the readers' hearts. In a novel of infinite flow, the main character often enters the mysterious "reincarnation space" for various reasons and goes to the replica world of different elements to complete the task, thus obtaining extraordinary power, but has to take risks and reincarnation in the other world forever.

There are two main schools of infinite stream fiction. The first category is the traditional infinite flow, this kind of novel to repair truth, fantasy, wuxia - based. The excellence of the traditional infinite flow is that it deepens the meaning of infinite flow to another level. The "all-encompassing" mentioned above, that is, the discussion of human nature, or the light and darkness of the world, while including infinite elements. This kind of traditional infinite flow has high requirements on the level of conception and creation, so there are few works and not many fine works. The second category is the infinite stream of data. After the publication of Infinite Horror, there appeared a lot of works following the trend of the infinite stream. However, the response of readers began to tend to be flat, and a large number of readers flowed to fantasy novels. Until the new data flow "ace evolution, the advent of infinite data unlimited flow of creation, with the rigorous technique, through specific Numbers to show readers specific scenes, and reduced the infinite flow past works, there are many empty descriptions by the author in the infinite flow to see the new continent, infinite flow and started a new development from now on.

The narrative mode of infinite flow is mainly three interrelated narrative elements: "system", "scene" and "task" [6]. Often in a novel of infinite flow, the protagonist, for various reasons, from the original world into the mysterious "reincarnation space", to a variety of magical replica worlds to complete the task, thereby obtaining extraordinary power, but has to continue to adventure and reincarnation in another world.

The "original world" is mostly the normal earth itself, or the earthly world. Other characters, such as the main character, enter the "reincarnation space" for a variety of reasons. The first is the destruction of the earth for unknown reasons, and the protagonist is forced into a game of life and death. Representative works include Earth Online and so on. The second is when the protagonist dies in the human world and enters an endless game, represented by the Human Trial Game and so on. The third is the protagonist in an ordinary day is involved in a supernatural event, representative works such as Infinite Terror. Another kind of strange is that the protagonist is not a normal human, living in a world full of ghosts, representative works such as the World Outside.

Similarly, in the story setting of the Infinite Flow novel, there is a "master god system" that overrides everything and controls the power of life and death. The system takes a cold look at what people are doing in the game, making rules and Posting tasks. Characters are forced into the system, under the threat of death passively accept the rules and complete the system-released tasks. The status between people and the system is not equal, and the characters cannot go against the will of the system, and they can only passively accept the punishment or reward given by the system. Rewards are often non-physical, such as upgrades, points, superpowers, death-free cards, designated cards, etc. Punishment is often a double whammy of body and mind, either sent to a more brutal trial, or deducted points, stripped of powers, or even wiped out completely [7].

The outcome varies according to the context of the world. In the first type, the protagonist eventually discovers that there are higher civilizations in the universe. Higher planets to prove the value of the earth, the protagonist, and other earth people in the survival game test. In the end, the Cape Group proved its worth, and with the help of outside forces, rescued their compatriots, rebuilt their homes, and finally returned to a peaceful life. In the second type, the main character finally defeats or even replaces the final enemy after a level quest. The person behind all this may be the artificial intelligence robot that generates the human consciousness, also may be the sinister terrorist organization. In the third and fourth, the protagonist experiences various supernatural events in the process of solving mysteries, and even obtains supernatural abilities. He gradually gets to know more similar people who have the same experience. With their help, the protagonist understands the rules of the whole world, finally solves the riddle, reveals the truth, and returns to normal life [8].

In short, in the Infinite stream novel, the protagonist and other characters struggle not only to survive but also to find the truth. There are always happy endings, such as the main character returning to normal life, the Earth coming back to life, etc. Of course, there are exceptions, such as the novel Hell App, in which the character defect leads to suicide. But the Infinite Stream novels are almost always about exploring the nature of human nature. In the story, there are people who hurt others for their own survival, and there are people who give up their lives for others [9]. Through the characters' reflections on their own outlook on life and on abstract factors such as space and time, readers can resonate and reflect on real life. It is because people are not satisfied with the reality that they love the infinite world. It is also because people have infinite thoughts that they create the infinite world.

The infinite flow novel contains various elements, so the author's writing power is very demanding. The quality of the infinite stream novels is divided because of the diversity of authors' abilities. The quality of the infinite stream novel, there are three characteristics. First, the text is vivid, and the picture sense is strong. "Immersive" is the most advanced way of the infinite flow novel. When reading a novel, the reader usually sees the eyes in the novel through the eyes of the protagonist, and thus feels as if he is in the strange world described by the author. Second, "imagination" is magical and unique. Unlike a typical novel, which usually has only one setting, an infinite flow novel contains various elements, which are fused together and represented in a mission or level in the "main God space". An infinite flow novel, with hundreds or thousands of chapters at least, contains at least four or five "small worlds". In this small world, the author can use whatever Settings he likes or is good at, such as the ghost type, the technology type, the campus type, the west fantasy type, and sometimes even combine each other. For example, in the level of an infinite stream novel, the author combines the campus element with the ghost element, in which the main character explores the cause of a student's death by searching for key things and communicating with key people. The various backgrounds of the Infinite Stream novels show the different creatures of the authors. For example, in the Human Trial Game, people's life on earth is only a partial experience, and the real beginning is the "main God space" entered after death. Here, people are divided into districts, and different districts are inhabited by different classes of people. People gain trade funds by brushing customs, improving their social status, and trying to move to the noble area A, while money and power, in reality, have become less important. Third, full of despair and uncertainty. Many cultivate immortality novels, won't make the person produces the "imminent" is the cause of tension, the text of the main character in the face of the enemy is an advantage, this advantage is probably the main character has a "golden finger" overwhelmingly fight back and win over to the enemy, it is possible that the author deliberately set enemy IQ is not high, the power is not strong and so on. An important reason for the excitement of infinite flow novels is that they are set to "the protagonist is in the light, and the final opponent is in the dark". As mentioned before, people are on the losing side of the "main God space" and sometimes even encounter human cannibalism. Therefore, the protagonist can only run around in various worlds, in the despair of finding a glimmer of life, the slightest mistake will die. In fact, the levels in the Infinite Stream novels are similar to the levels in the games, where when the character completes a level, he is greeted by more difficult tasks. If you don't want to do it, or if you make a similar order against the "Master space", then you will be wiped out. Even the various abilities of the main character are given by the "main god space".

3   Methodology

This paper will explore the writing mechanism of infinite stream novels by studying the infinite stream novels from 2007 to now. Their initial platforms are mainly Jinjiang, Qidian, etc., all from the Internet. They contain at least a hundred chapters and at most five thousand chapters.

4   Results

In general, there is a big difference between infinite flow and similar mode fast wear. Generally, fast wear is focused on a subject, from the perspective of a protagonist. Infinite Flow, on the other hand, tends to describe groups of characters, with more than one protagonist, who cooperate with each other to generate greater power and sometimes complement each other. The group image can make the story of the work more hierarchical, with more perspectives and possibilities. At the same time, the group image can also make the characters plumper, and the characters can often achieve each other.

It is precise because that there is more than one protagonist, diverse characters mean complex character relations and emotional relations. Under extreme conditions, emotional changes and fluctuations, and the prominent good and evil of human nature stimulate readers' sensory nerves more. The setting of the environment in the infinite flow novels is often very bad, at which time the evil of human nature is naturally exposed. Even the plain narration can reach the point of arousing disgust, which can easily show the criticism of evil, and make the good quality and goodness appear particularly precious. An excellent unlimited streamer in the exciting story behind the ups and downs, see those who stick to human nature.

In spite of their differences in lineage and circumstances, the people who enter the space of the main God all have strong characteristics. Most of them are soldiers, athletes, doctors, and other people with special skills. They have high intelligence, good physical quality, good physical and psychological quality, a strong desire for life, optimistic, calm, prudent, brave, and tenacious. Because, only in this way, the hero can in all kinds of well-known horror films through the pass, resurrection, upgrade [10].

5   Discussion

The main defect of infinite flow novels is the issue of copyright. Due to the all-encompassing nature of the infinite flow novels, the authors of them can theoretically borrow any original story, so how to deal with the relevance and purity of the plot has become the main problem of the novel. Many infinite stream novels inevitably use content from other works. For example, Infinite Horror, the first infinite stream novels, uses content from Alien, A Nightmare on Elm Street, Resident Evil, and the Lord of the Rings, etc. To avoid copyright disputes, it has so far been unable to be animated, and many infinite stream novels have not even had a chance to be published. However, the definition of the copyright of infinite stream novels is still very vague. Many people have discussed on Zhihu and other websites whether the novel is infringing and whether it should pay copyright fees, but no accurate conclusion has been reached so far. As a result, many authors are deterred by the fear of copyright problems.

In addition, the uneven quality of works is also an important factor limiting the development of infinite flow novels. Because infinite flow novels covers excessive subject matter, involves too many aspects of the content, and features overwhelmingly complex plots, it often cannot justify itself in the end, leading to the poor perception

and experience of readers. For example, in the final world of the Inferno App, the character is required to draw a door with chalk, which is used to release ghosts to harm the world. According to the "Main God Space" in the book, players can make wishes, but if they wish, they may become ghosts and infect their world. However, in violation of his "sociopath", he eventually commits suicide for the sake of the Earth. Many readers think that the main character's actions are unreasonable and belong to the "bad ending". The main reason is that the author's early preparation is not enough, leading to the protagonist's thinking change at a moment, which is a mistake in writing. Moreover, the ending with the death of the main character is rare in all the stories, so some readers think it is unacceptable. Therefore, the processing of details and the fluency and rationality of the plot are essential. The writer needs not only the ability to manage a large number of plots but also the ability to organize and sublimate all the contents and to take into account the big picture of all the stories and characters.

6   Conclusion

Infinite Flow novels are characterized by copies of science fiction colors and group image descriptions. People can observe the actions of the same protagonist facing the world with different themes from the perspective of God. The description of group images enriches the plot of the novel. By describing the interaction of people with different personalities, occupations, and abilities, readers can see the author's understanding of the world and his attitude toward the good and evil of human nature from these characters. Especially for the infinite stream novels with science fiction color, because they are full of myths, legends, science, religion, and other elements, people in order to survive in the difficult society, it is hard to avoid blood and violence. People's desires are magnified by these primitive, cruel worlds. As a result, the reader can not only experience the characters as they go through the task, but also observe the collision between characters from above. This is why the infinite stream has gained popularity.

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