

Research Article

# Narrative Strategies of Animated Short Films from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: Taking "A Dog Under Bridge" as an Example

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## Abstract

The "Reception Aesthetics" theory of the Konstanzer School in Germany holds that the meaning of a literary text depends not only on its own creative intention but also on the understanding of its content. On this basis, the audience is regarded as an important role in the narrative process of animated films, including "aesthetic distance", "expectation horizon", "calling structure", etc. The Birmingham Centre for Modern Literature was established in 1960 and holds a crucial position worldwide. The idea and method of "compilation and decoding" proposed by Stuart Hall made an important exploration for cultural research in China and had a considerable influence around the world. Raymond Williams' "cultural materialism" advocated the organic integration of Marx's historical viewpoints with specific cultural activities to form a new theoretical system. He Yun, a professor from the School of Fine Arts of Southeast University in China, encoded and decoded the hermit figures in Chinese landscape paintings based on the basic framework of "metaphor" and "recluseness", and decoded their emotional experiences. Through the analysis of the work "A Dog Under Bridge", this paper reveals how the author achieves a kind of encoding of narration through artistic techniques, thereby constructing a novel with realistic and transcendent significance. The "dog" in the film is not a simple character image, but a "symbol" with multiple cultural symbolic meanings. Its fate and choices are thought-provoking: life, freedom, and a sense of belonging. On this basis, by adopting an interdisciplinary cross-comparison method, this paper explores the blend of its narrative rhetoric between reality and escape, and how the audience enhances their emotional feelings through their own personal experiences and interpretations, thereby proposing new ideas and inspirations for the narration and emotional expression of Chinese animated films.

## Keywords

Reception Aesthetics, The Stray Dog Under the Bridge, Narrative, Emotional Experience

## 1. Introduction

In the 1960s, Hans-Robert Jauss of the "Konstanz" school in Germany first proposed the concept of "reception aesthetics" in his book "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" [1], arguing that "reception" "Aesthetics" is determined both by the writer himself/herself and by the psychological activities of

the readers. Another important writer, Wolfgang Iser, introduced the concept of "appeal" in his book "The Implied Reader in the Implicit Text" [2] and pointed out that "blankness" or "emptiness" "Gaps" play a crucial role in understanding and construction. As the core of a cultural study, the "encod-

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ing-decoding" [3] theory proposed by Stuart Hall mainly discusses the production and interpretation of media texts. Anime narration is also produced by writers for the audience. A process in which "encoding" is carried out and then "decoding" is performed by the audience. In Hall's interpretive theory, "negotiated interpretation" refers to the audience's reception of the media's information to a certain extent in a certain sense, while also modifying and improving it through their own experiences and perspectives. In order to link Marx's "social history" to specific cultural realities, Raymond Williams first proposed the new concept of "cultural materialism" in "Culture and Society" [4]. He argued that "culture" does not is merely a form of expression of the "mind" or "literature and art", and it is the product of a specific social environment and historical process. Williams regarded culture as a "comprehensive survival pattern" [5], which encompasses the material, intellectual and spiritual aspects. There are aspects. He criticized the traditional "elite" ideology, believing that "diversity" and "pluralism" advocate using the perspective of "the common people" to understand "culture". In this context, we can interpret different cultures from different perspectives, different angles, and different viewpoints. It breaks through the traditional dualism of "nobility" and "common people". "Retiring" is a traditional Chinese Taoist doctrine, which originated from the "Tao Te Ching" of Laozi [6], a great Taoist philosopher, and "Zhuangzi" [7] by Zhuangzi. The central idea lies in "going with the trend". Based on the above research, the thesis focuses on elaboration from the two aspects of narration and emotional experience.

"A Dog Under Bridge", directed by Tang Lihao, who graduated from the "China Academy of Fine Arts", won the "Best Graduation Project Award" at the Annecy International Animation Festival in France from June 13th to June 18th this year. The Annecy Animation Festival is the most influential animation festival in the world. In the same year, this animated short film also participated in a competition mainly for young animation producers held by the "Xunguangshe" on Bilibili (a content-sharing platform for animation and games) in the Chinese mainland, winning a gold medal, and it also won a silver medal at the 15th Art Fair of Zhejiang Province in China. "A Dog Under Bridge" is an animated film with a realistic theme, with a total length of 12 minutes and 44 seconds. This film starts from the perspective of a little dog living under an overpass, capturing the complex emotions deep in people's hearts and their struggle against real life. The film has crossed different cultural boundaries and reshaped the viewers' perspectives with its unique narrative style, winning recognition worldwide.

## 2. Acceptance Aesthetics and Animation Films

### 2.1. Acceptance of Aesthetics and Cultural Theory

In the field of literary and artistic research, "Reception

Aesthetics" is a major field of literary and artistic research, mainly studying the reading and understanding of literary and artistic works. It is both the basis for judging the works and an examination of the role they play and the entire process of interpretation in reading. The theory of "Encoding and Decoding" proposed by Stuart Hall emphasizes that communication is not only the transmission of messages but also the construction and interpretation of meaning. Reading comprehension is a subjective activity, and the same content can be understood differently by each person. Raymond Williams' "Culture Materialism" examines the composition and development of society as a whole, pointing out all the lifestyles, customs, beliefs, and social habits it contains. In the 1960s, the "Encoding and Decoding" proposed by Hall was an important research topic, mainly studying the entire process from the generation to the acceptance of media information. It emphasizes that communication is not only the transmission of messages but also the construction and interpretation of meaning. Message comprehension is a subjective activity, and the same content can be understood differently by each person. Hall analyzed the three basic viewpoints of "decoding": dominant hegemony, negotiation status, and confrontation status. Hall's research on "decoding" is also applicable to the film "A Dog Under Bridge". All kinds of symbols and metaphors in the film can be regarded as the messages encoded by the author and the readers, and are interpreted by the viewers based on their own cognition and experience. For the same symbol or metaphor, readers' understanding may vary during the reading process, which reflects the culture and diversity of the interpretation subjects. This creative choice is not only the writer's own view but also closely related to the cultural, social, political, and other broad backgrounds in which they are situated. Taking "A Dog Under Bridge" as an example, its author uses a unique narrative technique and perspective to express an emotion within the global context. Through this, we can further explore how the film becomes a cultural and social phenomenon and then influences and shapes the public's perception and actions. Williams' "Cultural Materialism" theory provides us with a broader perspective for interpreting the work "A Dog Under Bridge". The film is not only a work of art but also a culture and a social phenomenon. This is a transformation of cultural forms in a certain historical stage and as a cultural form. Through the analysis of its emotional construction and the public's mentality, it helps us understand the changes of the times and the changes of culture. Williams contends that "culture" is not confined to the realm of "literature and art" and "scholarship"; it also encompasses a way of life, customs, beliefs, and social habits. He defines culture as "a complete mode of existence", expanding the denotation of culture and extending it to everyday life. Williams made a profound criticism of Marx's "base-superstructure" model and pointed out its excessive simplification of the actual situation of society. Williams proposed the concept of "Hegemony", which refers to the process by which the ruling class maintains their rule through their own culture and social mechanism. At

the same time, he also highlighted the "Counter-hegemony" phenomenon, which is a force that poses a threat to the existing power through its own cultural practice and resistance behavior. Williams theoretically explored how various types of culture develop and evolve in different social and economic environments in different historical contexts. He believes that cultural forms are not immutable; they develop and change through the continuous struggle and transformation of society. Williams first defined an emotion and mindset, namely an emotion and mindset that prevail throughout a specific period, namely "Structure of feeling". This emotional construction reflects the changes of the times and the flow of culture, and is of great significance for us to understand this cultural phenomenon. The animated work *"A Dog Under Bridge"* is not only the self-expression of the artists, but also a manifestation of a culture and society. This article analyzes the film from three aspects: reception aesthetics, encoding and decoding, and cultural materialism, thereby revealing how the film functions on the perception and actions of the public as a cultural and social phenomenon.

## 2.2. Animation Narrative and Secluded Emotions

In literary theory, reception aesthetics is an important branch that focuses on how readers interpret and understand literary works. This theory not only evaluates works based on the text itself but also considers the role and interpretation process of readers. Stuart Hall's "Encoding and Decoding" theory emphasizes that communication is not only the transmission of information but also includes the construction and interpretation of meaning. Decoding is a subjective process, and different people may have different interpretations of the same information. Raymond Williams' "Cultural Materialism" explores the relationship between culture and social structure, arguing that culture encompasses the entire lifestyle, customs, beliefs, and social practices. These theories provide a rich perspective for analyzing films. He Yun's [8, 9] research explores the close connection between metaphor and seclusion. Metaphor, as a rhetorical device, helps us understand abstract or complex concepts by mapping concepts from one domain to another. Seclusion, on the other hand, refers to things that are beyond the scope of direct experience and cannot be directly perceived through the senses. In artistic creation, metaphor is often used to express secluded themes, such as the motifs of "fishermen" and "loggers" in Chinese landscape paintings, which not only depict natural scenery but also metaphorize secluded life. This is especially true for the historical figures and events recorded in the "Memoirs of Secluded People" in the "Twenty-Four Histories" [10]. These historical documents provide an important official basis for studying the secluded theme of traditional Chinese literati art. In artistic forms such as painting, poetry, and music, the theme of seclusion is widely reflected, such as "roles," "ancient harps," "rhythms" in landscape paintings and "fishermen and loggers" in poetry. Metaphor is not

only a linguistic phenomenon but also a cultural one. It reflects the worldview, values, beliefs, and ways of thinking of a specific culture. Seclusion, as an important component of Chinese traditional culture, embodies the ancient people's yearning for freedom, detachment, and spiritual pursuit. This is highly compatible with the character of "a dog" in the animated film *"A Dog Under Bridge"*, and some visual symbols in the film narrative also transfer the emotion from metaphors to a secluded life. Audiences achieve an emotional experience that cannot be expressed through words by empathizing with the marginalized characters in the film through their own decoding [11]. This guides the way of thinking and behavior of the audience. Hans-Robert Jauss, a member of the Konstanzer Schule in Germany, introduced the concept of reception aesthetics in "The History of Literature as a Challenge to Literary Theory" [1], proposing that the meaning of literary works lies not only in the author's intention but also in the reader's reception process. Literature and animated films share common narrative functions and are closely related. The former involves the relationship between authors, works, and readers, while the latter involves the relationship between directors, films, and audiences. Under this interdisciplinary theoretical framework, reception and aesthetic theories provide guidance for both literature and animated films. Jauss introduced the concept of "reading horizon," which refers to readers' expectations and anticipations of the content, form, and style of a text before reading it. This horizon includes readers' cultural background, social experience, historical knowledge, and understanding of literary genres. As readers' reading horizons change, a reading distance arises, prompting readers' interpretation horizons to continuously integrate and synthesize with the textual meaning through interaction. Before watching an animated film, audiences usually collect relevant information, such as the title, poster, trailer, box office performance, and word-of-mouth reputation. Based on their cultural cognition, movie-watching experience, textual knowledge, and appreciation of art forms, they form an internal reading horizon. During the movie-watching process, they tend to interpret the narrative plot while emotionally investing. The development of the plot may unexpectedly change this reading horizon, creating an emotional reading distance, thereby maintaining the audience's continuous anticipation of the story. When the aesthetic distance narrows and the narrative becomes predictable, the audience may lose emotional engagement. This reflects the application of Yous's theory of the horizon of expectation and aesthetic distance in the narrative of animated films. Another important figure in reception aesthetics, Wolfgang Iser, proposed the theory of the "calling structure of the text" in his book *"The Implied Reader"*. Iser believed that the "blanks" or "gaps" in literary works are crucial for readers to participate in interpreting and constructing meaning. These blanks are intentionally left by the author, encouraging readers to fill them during the reading process, thereby forming personalized interpretations. The author transmits information or emotional calls to the audience, and the audience responds actively and accepts and

interprets the work. American playwright Robert McKee in "Story" [12] The narrative emphasizes that a successful narrative requires a deeper emotional layer, which is achieved through subtext, allowing the audience to perceive the unspoken motives and emotions of the characters. Suspenseful sentences stimulate the curiosity of readers or viewers through hidden information and deeper meaning. The kSummon structure sets open questions or ambiguous situations, prompting readers to actively interpret the hidden meanings in the subtext. In the narrative of the animated short film "*A Dog Under Bridge*," the interaction between subtext and metaphorical Summon Structure forms a dynamic dialogue, establishing a two-way communication between the audience and the director. As the audience interprets the subtext, they become more engaged in the inner world and emotional empathy of the characters, generating a stronger anticipation horizon and aesthetic distance, thereby enhancing the narrative effect of the film.

### 3. Accepted Text and Expected Vision

#### 3.1. Text Interpretation and Emotional Response

According to the theory of reception aesthetics, the interpretation and emotional response of the audience towards the text "*A Dog Under Bridge*" are deeply influenced by their personal background, expectations, and experiences. Reception aesthetics emphasizes the crucial role of readers or audiences in generating the meaning of a work. "*A Dog Under Bridge*" is an animated short film with real-world significance. Before watching this film, the audience may form expectations based on the film title, posters, their cultural knowledge, and previous viewing experiences. These expectations will influence their interpretation and emotional experience of the film text. This is also an application of Stuart Hall's encoding theory. Considering the title and posters, the audience may anticipate a warm story about friendship, family, growth, or significant emotional moments. The title "*A Dog Under Bridge*" may imply a storyline about loss, search, reunion, or the loss of a pet. The audience may expect an emotional story about a stray dog during the decoding process, hoping to have a touching experience. During the viewing process, the audience interacts with the actual content of the film based on their expectations, which affects their interpretation of the narrative. Compared to traditional stories of finding and reuniting with a stray dog, "*A Dog Under Bridge*" changes the expectations. Instead, this story tells the lives of marginalized characters in the city through the emotional perspective of the director's self-projection and the dog's observational viewpoint. This narrative, which combines cultural and social reality, brings many metaphorical interpretations to the audience. The "bridge" scene serves as a stage, allowing these diverse characters with different identities to showcase their real stories to the audience through their inter-

action with the dog. Through the art form of animation, the director uses the dog's narrative perspective to depict urban life. This perspective is not just a metaphorical narrative but allows the audience to experience the secluded reality from the dog's observer's perspective. This redefinition of the text creates a detachment from the audience's natural perception, which is reflected in the expectations Expected Vision and aesthetic distance in reception aesthetics. When watching "*A Dog Under Bridge*," the audience may interpret the film differently based on their personal experiences and emotional states. For example, some viewers may recall their own pets they have had before, generating resonance. While others may be particularly sensitive to certain plot points in the film due to their own life experiences. Additionally, the cultural background of the audience will influence their understanding of the film. For instance, in some cultures, dogs are seen as symbols of loyalty, while in others, they may be regarded as unclean. Therefore, different audiences may have different emotional responses to the same film. In summary, reception aesthetics holds that the audience plays a crucial role in interpreting artworks. They not only passively receive information but actively participate, integrating their own experiences and feelings into their understanding of the work. This makes each work unique, as its meaning is given by each specific audience member.

#### 3.2. Poetic Metaphor and Audience Expectation

Robert McKee mentioned in his book "Story" [12] that a successful narrative should enhance the audience's perception. In "*A Dog Under Bridge*," the dog directly interacts with the audience through dialogue, breaking the traditional narrative boundaries and guiding the audience to form personal interpretations through direct interaction. For example, the statement "I actually forgot him" implies emotional estrangement from humans, prompting people to reflect on human emotions and allowing the audience to interpret the emotions and characters in the film based on their own experiences and understanding. This method transforms the audience from passive receivers to active participants in the narrative. Direct dialogue encourages the audience to consciously reflect on the plot and characters, thereby forming deeper connections with the story and emotions, and influencing their perception and aesthetic experience. Ziyu Zhou mentioned in the article "The Image Narrative Paradigm of Mirror Twins: Photography and French Poetic Realism Film" [13] that the French poetic realism film movement in the 1930s often focused on lower-class social life, conveying a poetry that balanced romanticism and realism through documentary and lyrical expression. This concept can be applied to the perspective of the dog in animation, as it represents the continuation and innovation of poetic realism. The dog's viewpoint not only reveals the surface of urban life but also shifts the audience's expected field of vision to focus on social phenomena, character behavior, and potential social issues, thereby enhancing the depth and complexity of the narrative. Additionally, through



the dog's unique observation and feelings, the film triggers deeper reflections on reality and aesthetic experience in the contemporary context, reshaping the relationship between poetry and reality. Under this narrative method, the audience's expected field of vision is expanded, allowing them to see a broader social background and more diverse interpersonal relationships. The interaction between the actual textual experience and the audience's expectations creates an aesthetic distance that gradually focuses on an emotion expressed by the director. The interaction between the audience's expected field of vision and the actual viewing experience reveals the core role of personal interpretation in the textual experience. This process also reflects the reception aesthetic viewpoint discussed by Yous. Through this way, "*A Dog Under Bridge*" transforms the audience from passive receivers to active participants in the narrative, enabling them to see a broader social background and more diverse interpersonal relationships. The interaction between the actual textual experience and the audience's expectations creates an aesthetic distance that gradually focuses on an emotion expressed by the director. The interaction between the audience's expected field of vision and the actual viewing experience reveals the core role of personal interpretation in the textual experience. This process also reflects the reception aesthetic viewpoint discussed by Yous. Through this way, "*A Dog Under Bridge*" transforms the audience from passive receivers to active participants in the narrative, enabling them to see a broader social background and more diverse interpersonal relationships.

"Dog Under Bridge" is not just a simple animated short film, but a multi-layered and multi-dimensional artistic creation. It challenges the traditional narrative structure and stimulates the audience's imagination and critical thinking. The metaphors and symbols in the film enrich the story's innermost meaning, making it go beyond the surface plot and touch on deeper levels of civilization and personal emotions. In addition, the visual style and music choices in the film further enhance its artistic effect. The unique visual design

and carefully selected soundtrack together create a specific atmosphere, allowing the audience to immerse themselves more in the story and experience the inner world of the characters. This combination of visuals and sound not only enhances the story's expressiveness but also allows the audience to interact with the work on multiple sensory levels.

In conclusion, "*A Dog Under Bridge*" is a creative and profound work. Through its unique narrative techniques and technical means, it successfully triggers the emotional resonance and reflection of the audience, becoming a highlight in contemporary animated films.

#### 4. Blank Text and Summon Structure

Wei Dongren believes that the blanks and uncertainties in literary works prompt readers to seek definite meanings, thereby giving them the right to participate in the construction of the meaning of the works [14]. As an audio-visual art form, animated films also contain blanks and uncertainties, including the imagery of scenes, character symbols, and sounds. These blank or unexpressed elements require the audience to fill in, prompting them to actively interpret. This participation attracts the audience and enables them to contribute to the construction of the meaning of the text.

In the work "*A Dog Under Bridge*," the director ingeniously chose a park beside a bridge in Hangzhou as the real-life textual scene. This choice not only provided a vivid background for the story but also created a serene and profound atmosphere through the low-saturation color photography style. This color application, combined with concise imagery, jointly created a relatively real spatial domain, allowing the audience to feel as if they could step into the scene full of stories themselves. However, within this seemingly ordinary scene, there are hidden rich elements, the most notable of which are the graffiti (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Screenshot of the film.

These graffiti are not random but showcase the works of the renowned street artist Banksy. Banksy is renowned worldwide for his unique artistic style and profound social critique, and his works often evoke deep thought and resonance in the audience. When the audience deciphers this latent text during the film-watching process, they may be guided to recall Marco Proserpio's 2018 documentary "Stealing Banksy" [15]. This film elaborately discusses the situation where Banks' graffiti murals were cut and stolen. This is not only A shocking art event also reflects some deep-seated problems in the contemporary art world and society. By integrating this event into the film, the director ingeniously constructs a surreal and uncertain text, inviting the audience to engage in in-depth decoding and reflection. In this process, the cultural awareness of the audience plays a crucial role. They need to bridge the cultural differences between the East and the West to fully understand and appreciate the profound meaning contained in this scene. This cross-cultural understanding not only enriches the film's content but also promotes communication and integration among different cultures. The reinterpretation of this scene helps reshape the meaning of the work and expand the interpretation. The diversity of interpretation. It is no longer a simple background or decoration, but an important element that drives the development of the storyline and deepens the expression of the theme. In this way, "*A Dog Under Bridge*" successfully integrates various elements such as reality and art, the East and the West, tradition and modernity, presenting a colorful and thought-provoking artistic world. Anthropologist Edward Hall introduced the concepts of "high-context" and "low-context" cultures in his cultural research [16], describing the ways of information transmission and communication in different cultures. The audience's decoding of the director's blank text also depends on these cultural differences. For example, a character metaphor in "*A Dog Under Bridge*" - "A Disappointed fat person's fatness", may remind people of the legendary Hong Kong actor Lam Xue, whose clumsy but lovable film and television roles often carry a touch of melancholy. This direct connection helps the audience quickly understand the emotional state of the character, which conforms to the perceptual characteristics of low-context culture. From the dynamic behavioral process of the marginalized little character "A Disappointed fat person" in real life in the story, we see the changes in social and economic conditions and cultural forms in a specific historical period as Williams said. Through the arc changes of the characters, the audience decodes the "Structure of feeling" in the film and can perceive the specific historical period reflected in the film. The emotional structure of the characters not only calls on the audience to perceive the changes in society and the flow of culture, but more importantly, calls on the audience to understand cultural phenomena in a high-context way. In the final scene of the film (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Screenshot of the film.

When the dog stands on the rock by the sea, the hidden symbol "A Disappointed Fat Person" reappears in the outline of the rock, forming a visual correspondence between reality and poetic metaphor. This character symbol, as a metaphor, requires the audience to go beyond the superficial similarities and interpret the cultural and emotional significance behind it. In "*A Dog Under Bridge*," the interaction between these layers invites the audience to engage in rich multi-dimensional interpretation and profound reflection. In terms of voiceover, the dog speaks Mandarin, while the surrounding people use Hangzhou dialect, creating a linguistic "alienation" that reflects broader cultural and social contrasts. This combination of standard language and local language forms a dual symbol system, encouraging the audience to explore the inner world of the character and their connection with the environment. This language interaction triggers thoughts on themes such as cultural belonging and social identity. At this level, the invocation of the sound text rises from realism to secluded philosophical thinking. "*A Dog Under Bridge*" focuses on personal emotions and universal humanity, promoting mutual understanding through open text and invocation structure. This approach creates an interpretive space, allowing the audience to personalize their experience. By encouraging the audience to fill in these gaps, the film stimulates multi-dimensional interpretation and profound emotional resonance.

In the animated short film "*A Dog Under Bridge*," the director triggers profound thoughts in the audience through character metaphors and cultural differences. The character metaphor of "A Disappointed Fat Person" in the film not only enables the audience to quickly understand the emotional state of the character but also reflects the changes in social and economic conditions and cultural forms during a specific historical period. Through the arc of the character's transformation, the audience can perceive the social changes and cultural flows reflected by the film. In the final scene of the film, the metaphorical symbol appears again.

Its emergence has formed a visual correspondence between reality and seclusion, requiring the audience to go beyond the

superficial similarities and interpret the cultural and emotional significance behind it. The interaction among these layers invites the audience to conduct rich multi-dimensional interpretations and profound reflections. Through personal interpretation and the emphasis on cultural background, "*A Dog Under Bridge*" not only enriches the artistic value of the film, but also provides a new perspective for narrative and emotional expression in modern animated films, and offers effective strategies and insights for telling Chinese stories well to global audiences.

## 5. Reception Aesthetics and Emotional Experience

American economists Joseph Pine and James Gilmore proposed in their "The Experience Economy" [17] that "physical objects" are transforming into "experiences". The transformation of "god" marks the rise of the experiential consumption economy. The narrative of modern animated shorts is no longer merely an audio-visual and sensory entertainment tool; it has become a carrier of emotional and spiritual experiences. This change is further reflected in the perspective of the reception aesthetic theory. Through the anticipation horizon and the call structure, reception aesthetics enables the audience to fully immerse themselves in the presented world and emotions within a short period of time, experiencing deep emotional resonance and cognitive experiences. The "story triangle" theory proposed by McKee in "Story" [12] includes three narrative strategies: "classic design," "minimalism," and "anti-structure." Classic design focuses on stories constructed around an active protagonist, who confronts the outside world to pursue personal desires and achieves a closed ending with irreversible changes through coherent time and causal connections. However, the film "*A Dog Under Bridge*" breaks through this traditional narrative pattern. In "*A Dog Under Bridge*," the protagonist is a dog without a clear desire, which shifts the narrative focus of the film to the essence of life and the state of existence. The director ingeniously uses linear time and causal relationships as the basis of the narrative, and through the dog's monologue and realistic metaphorical visual rhythms, constructs a complete narrative sequence throughout the film.

This technique not only allows the audience to deeply experience the perspective and emotional world of the dog, but also creates a real and secluded experience at the visual and emotional level. The film further emphasizes the often overlooked details in life by weakening dramatic conflicts and adopting a "minimalist" "non-narrative" strategy. This narrative style does not pursue traditional climaxes and conflicts, but rather focuses more on the ordinary and depth of daily life. During the viewing process, the audience may experience an anticipatory field of acceptance aesthetics, that is, through the real and peaceful life scenes presented in the film, it triggers reflection and resonance on the meaning of life deep in their hearts. The Sum-

mon Structure is reflected in the director's conscious call for the audience to resonate and dialogue with the situations, emotions, and themes presented in the film. The audience is invited to experience the delicate emotional flow and subtle changes in life in the film, rather than passively accepting the tension and climax of traditional plots. Shen Yadan mentioned in "No One Can Sustain Themselves Alone: On the Non-Narrative Nature of Chinese Landscape Space" [18] that "non-narrativity" not only permeates Chinese landscape paintings but also influences other art forms, such as episodic novels (whose basic framework is "coming from afar - floating away - unknown end"). "*A Dog Under Bridge*" precisely showcases a secluded Chinese aesthetic narrative within this non-narrative framework. The film observes the world around it through the dog's perspective, showcasing the dog's loneliness after losing its girlfriend. The dog's only friend is a disappointed fat person. After the fat person leaves, the dog's loneliness resonates with the audience in a low-cultural context. This loneliness is not only a shared emotional attribute of humans but also gets elevated in the high-cultural context of the film's ending through the dog's longing for the fat person. The audience is guided to fill these emotional gaps, enhancing the depth of emotional experience. The director leaves a large number of uninterpreted symbols for the audience through ambiguous narrative tension, realistic visual pictures, condensed scene spaces, and simple character settings. This narrative approach not only provides a metaphorical realistic emotional experience but also expands the audience's cultural perception and cognitive thinking, making the entire film a unique form of artistic expression. Acceptance aesthetics emphasizes the audience's initiative in interpreting and experiencing the text. The audience is not only a passive recipient but also actively interprets and participates based on their personal background, culture, and emotions. This emotional resonance is not only a reaction to the storyline but also a projection of personal emotions and experiences. The audience's emotional experience is deeply integrated with the content of the short film, making the film's consumption experience at the "spiritual" level rich and meaningful.

## 6. Conclusions

"*A Dog Under Bridge*" is an animated work that transcends the boundaries of world cultures. On this basis, through the interpretation of "coding - negotiation" proposed by Stuart Hall, the construction of real social and cultural emotions by Raymond Williams, and the philosophical reflection on "seclusion" by Yun He, and by adopting research methods in multiple fields, it analyzes the narrative techniques of the film and the emotional feelings it generates for the audience. Through the re-understanding of the canine characters, it questions the traditional narrative mode and incorporates the audience's expected horizons and cultural contexts into the interpretation of the work. The metaphors, blanks, and uncertainties in the film allow viewers to be proactive in an active state. The interaction of expected vision and calling



framework has contributed to the continuous evolution of this theme. In this process, the interaction between latent text and open text has increased the engagement and emotional resonance of the audience, thereby generating a sense of seclusion and true assimilation. Paying attention to individual interpretation and cultural context makes it have a higher artistic level, and at the same time opens up a new perspective for the narration and emotional expression of contemporary animation. At the same time, it also proposes an effective strategic idea and profound insight for presenting Chinese stories to international audiences.

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Xiao Chen is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

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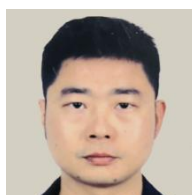
## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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## Biography



**Xiao Chen** is a lecturer at the School of Art at Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology and has been teaching there to date. He obtained his Master of Arts degree from Nanjing University of the Arts in 2013. Due to his outstanding contributions to teaching, guidance, and academic competitions, Xiao Chen was honored with the "Outstanding Teacher" title by the National Radio and Television Administration of China. Additionally, he won first prize in the China Digital Creativity Teaching Skills Competition and published "Animation Association - Paperless Animation Software" (sole author), contributing to the development of talent cultivation in animation. In recent years, he has participated in multiple interdisciplinary research collaboration projects and published several academic papers. Currently, he also serves on the editorial boards of various publications and has been invited to join the Society for Animation Studies as a member.