

Research Progress Report: How Animation Style Shapes Genre: A Comparative Study of Comedy vs Horror Animation

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Abstract:

This study explores the critical role of animation style in shaping genre-specific audience experiences, focusing on a comparative analysis of comedy and horror animation. Through qualitative case studies—Despicable Me and Looney Tunes for comedy, and Coraline and The Witness for horror—the research examines how core animation principles such as timing, exaggeration, color palette, lighting, character design, and visual composition contribute to genre identity and emotional impact. Comedy animations employ rapid timing, exaggerated motion, and vibrant colors to elicit laughter and delight, while horror animations utilize subdued palettes, low-key lighting, uncanny design, and slower pacing to generate fear and tension. Findings highlight that similar animation tools can produce opposing effects depending on their application within a genre framework. The study concludes that animation style is not merely decorative but genre-defining—guiding audience perception and emotional response through deliberate formal choices. These insights affirm the necessity of aligning visual style with narrative intention in animation storytelling.

1. Introduction

This research aims to explore how animation styles influence and define specific genres, particularly focusing on comedy and horror. By comparing visual elements, timing, color, and character design, this study investigates how style supports genre-specific storytelling and emotional engagement.

2. Objectives

- To understand the visual and stylistic features of comedy and horror animation.
- To analyse how animation elements (timing, exaggeration, colour, etc.) support genre-specific tones.
- To compare selected examples of animated works in both genres.
- To evaluate the psychological and emotional impact of animation style on audiences.

3. Methodology

- **Literature Review:** Studying academic articles, books, and journals on animation principles and genre theory.
- **Case Studies:** Analysing selected animations:

- *Comedy: Despicable Me, Looney Tunes*
- *Horror: Coraline, Love, Death + Robots* (epi 8 volume 1 “The Witness”)
- **Visual Analysis:** Comparing character design, timing, lighting, and colour schemes.
- **Audience Impact:** Observing how animation style influences mood and perception in each genre.

4. Work Completed So Far

- Topic finalized and approved.
- Initial literature review started.
- Shortlisted animated works for case studies.
- Draft outline of research paper created.
- Notes on visual analysis in progress.

5. Upcoming Tasks

- Complete in-depth analysis of chosen animations.
- Write main body sections of the paper.
- Gather references and citations.
- Draft conclusion and finalize formatting.

6. Challenges Faced

- Interpreting visual elements and emotional impact is subjective.
- Selecting suitable episodes and maintaining analysis depth within limits.

7. Expected Outcome

The research will provide insight into how animation techniques uniquely serve genre storytelling, helping future creators understand how to better align style with narrative intent.