Research on Three-Dimensional Interactive Deductive Novels Based on Flow Experience: A Case Study of *the Underground Game*

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Abstract: *This paper selects Wu Fei's novel the Underground Game as a representation of three-dimensional interactive detective novels and analyzes how it creates an interactive reading experience through the book itself, props, and online systems, thus enabling readers to achieve a state of "flow" during the reading process. Drawing on flow theory, this paper explains and analyzes the reasons for the success of this work, pointing out that it fully leverages the reader's subjectivity and exploratory nature, allowing them to understand the essence of the novel through an immersive reading experience, and gaining deeper insights into human nature and society. This novel also provides valuable inspiration for creators of literary works.*

Keywords: *flow theory, the Underground Game, interactive reading, immersion*

1. Introduction to flow experience

"Flow experience" is a concept in positive psychology proposed by the Hungarian American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihlhi. It describes a state when a person devotes all of his attention and concentration into one interactive activity, "These exceptional moments are what I have called 'flow' experiences. The metaphor of flow is one that many people have used to describe the sense of effortless action they feel in moments that stand out as the best in their lives. Athletes refer to it as 'being in the zone', religious mystics as being in 'ecstasy', artists and musicians as 'aesthetic rapture'".[1].

Similar to the highly "selfless" psychological state exhibited by artists during the creative process, individuals in this state typically resist interruptions while experiencing a high level of excitement and fulfillment, accompanied by highly valuable interactive outcomes.

In 1975, Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi introduced the concept of flow experience in his book *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life* which has since become one of the main theories in the study of consumer psychology. Dr. Csikszentmihalyi found that the characteristics of flow experience were remarkably similar across different cultural backgrounds, which can be summarized into the following nine features: clear goals, immediate feedback, matching challenges and skills, merging of action and awareness, deep concentration on the task at hand, a sense of control, temporary loss of self-consciousness, distorted sense of time passing quickly, and a purposeful experience of the whole process.

In the review part of the book, Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi wrote "The happiness that follows flow is of our own making, and it leads to increasing complexity and growth in consciousness"[1].From this we can see the transformative power and agency that individuals possess in cultivating their own happiness and personal development through engaging in activities that induce flow. Flow enables individuals to transcend their ordinary sense of self and become fully absorbed in the present moment. This state of deep engagement not only brings about a sense of joy and contentment but also serves as a catalyst for personal growth and the expansion of consciousness.

By emphasizing that happiness derived from flow is "of our own making", the author stresses the role of personal agency in actively seeking out and creating conditions that foster flow experiences. Rather than relying on external factors for happiness, individuals have the power to shape their own well-being through intentional involvement in activities that align with their skills, interests, and challenges.

It also suggests that flow not only generates happiness but also cultivates complexity and growth in consciousness. When individuals are fully immersed in a flow state, they push the boundaries of their abilities, engaging in activities that match their skill level and simultaneously have opportunities for

growth. This dynamic interplay between challenge and skill creates a state of "optimal experience" where individuals continuously expand their capabilities and deepen their understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Regarding where to find flow, Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi wrote: "Flow tends to occur when a person faces a clear set of goals that require appropriate responses" [1]. and he further provided examples of engaging in games such as chess, tennis or poker, which have goals and rules that make it possible for the player to act without questioning what should be done, and how.Here he highlighted the significance of clear goals and appropriate responses as catalysts for experiencing flow. Engaging in activities with well-defined objectives and established rules can facilitate the emergence of flow by allowing individuals to act without hesitation or uncertainty. The concept of clear goals in relation to flow experience is crucial. When individuals have a clear understanding of what needs to be achieved or accomplished, it provides them with a sense of purpose and direction. This clarity allows individuals to focus their attention and mobilize their skills and resources towards the task at hand, increasing the likelihood of entering a flow state. Additionally, the presence of appropriate responses is emphasized. With a well-defined set of rules and guidelines, individuals can navigate the activity with confidence and a sense of competence. This framework of rules provides a structurer that eliminates the need for constant decision making or questioning of what should be done. Instead, individuals can focus their energy on carrying out appropriate response within the established framework, thus enhancing their immersion and flow experience.

The example of chess, tennis or poker can be extended to a broader range of games. Early on, the flow theory provided theoretical support for improving interactive experiences in the gaming field. Game designers achieve the state of flow by setting clear goals, providing immediate feedback, capturing user attention, and implementing appropriate difficulty levels. This allows players of different types to continually face challenges that match their skill levels during the immersive process, resulting in ultimate experiences and sensations, and ultimately reaching a state of flow. It is important to note that flow experiences are not limited to specific activities or domains. While games provide clear examples, flow can be found in a wide range of contexts, including creative pursuits, sports, work, or even everyday tasks. The key factor is the presence of clear goals and appropriate responses that match an individual's skill level, allowing them to fully immerse themselves in the activity and experience the state of flow.

Below will be an analysis of the three dimensional interactive novel *the Underground Game*, to see how the writer has assiduously created all the story and props, to help the readers achieve a flow experience.

2. *The Underground Game* and the Flow Experience

The Underground Game is one of the suspenseful detective novels by author Wu Fei, and it serves as the second installment in the "Winner Takes All" series. The story is set in the context of Beijing's Subway Line 10. The main plot revolves around several seemingly coincidental encounters of passengers who are forced to participate in a mysterious game on the subway. Their task is to identify the culprit who has planted a bomb on the subway, while the authorities above ground are urgently investigating multiple imminent explosion incidents in the city. A secondary plotline involves the intricate relationship between the perpetrator and the victims in the story. This secondary storyline unveils the underlying character dynamics and motivations behind the explosions, shedding light on the fundamental reasons why the criminal carried out such acts. It also prompts readers to contemplate human nature and societal issues from a psychological perspective.

If *the Underground Game* were merely a detective novel about a subway bombing case, it might not have garnered thousands of readers. What sets this book apart is its design of "three-dimensional interaction". The book itself is designed with adhesive pages that require readers to use a knife to separate and continue reading the glued sections. This form of interaction provides the initial layer of engagement in reading. This form of interaction adds a tangible and immersive experience to the reading process. It brings out more curiosity and engages readers on a sensory level, making them active participants in the unfolding story. By physically manipulating the book, readers become more connected to the narrative, fostering a deeper sense of involvement and investment in the plot.

There are further interactive experiences related to the book, including puzzles and props such as medical examination forms, report cards, and posters that are distributed throughout the corresponding chapters. These three-dimensional props allow readers to encounter items that are typically only accessible to the characters in the story, deepening their sense of involvement and experiential immersion

while reading the text. However, the interactive experience is not limited to physical props. During the reading process, readers can input passwords through the book's corresponding Weixin public account to receive hints and further clues about the case. This interactive online experience adds an additional layer of interactivity to the traditional paper-based reading experience.

Throughout the entire reading process, readers feel as if they are participating in an immersive detective game. With clear goals set by the book, timely feedback from both online and offline systems, challenging tasks, and heightened concentration, readers are able to achieve an ultimate experience and sensation within the immersive gaming experience, reaching a state of flow.

The author will then analyze how the book achieves flow experience in readers by incorporating the elements in flow.

1) Clear and specific goals: When individuals have clear goals and activities have explicit guidelines, they naturally adopt specific ways and means to achieve their aspirations, making it easier to attain the immersive experience triggered by flow. On the book's cover and preliminary pages, readers are immediately presented with a QR code and accompanying text that reads, "Scan the code to enter the online system and [start the game]." The prominent QR code catches the reader's attention, leading them to unconsciously scan it and then read the "game instructions" provided at the bottom. These instructions establish clear and specific goals for the readers: "Why did the hijackers seize the subway? Why did they choose Line 10? What secrets do the passengers on the train have? Is there a conspiracy behind the explosions? Who is the person the hijackers are seeking? And how does it all relate?" Before officially starting to read the book, readers' minds are already occupied by the prompts in the online system, setting forth the questions they need to answer. These clear and specific goals transform the passive absorption of the reading experience into an active exploration process of seeking answers to the questions, thereby laying the foundation for the flow experience.

In addition to the initial goals set by the game instructions, the book continues to provide clear and specific objectives throughout the reading experience. Each chapter presents new clues, puzzles, and challenges that readers must engage with to progress in the story and solve the mystery. These goals are often tied to the interactive props and online system mentioned earlier.For example, as readers encounter a medical examination form or a report card prop within a chapter, they are prompted to examine the details and search for relevant information. This prop becomes a goal in itself, requiring readers to analyze the provided information and connect it to the broader narrative. By actively seeking answers and piecing together the puzzle, readers become deeply engaged in the story and experience a sense of accomplishment when they successfully unravel a clue or solve a particular challenge.

The online system further enhances the goal-oriented experience. By inputting specific commands or passwords through the corresponding Weixin public account, readers receive additional hints, clues, or further story developments. This integration of an online interactive component adds a layer of engagement, as readers must actively participate beyond the physical book to progress in the investigation. The timely feedback and responsiveness of the online system contribute to a sense of progress, fueling the flow experience and maintaining the reader's motivation and focus.

2)Immediate and multidimensional feedback mechanism: An indispensable aspect of flow activities is an immediate and multidimensional feedback mechanism. Like throwing a stone to get directions, when a user performs an action, the mechanism must provide the user with a correct or incorrect judgment, or even guidance. Only in this way can users generate psychological feedback to their actions and spontaneously advance the process. In *the Underground Game*, feedback is mainly provided through instructive text within the book and the online system, including prompts from the Wexin public account and the author's contact information.

At the end of the first chapter, titled "December 24, 2018, 21:58 Underground Clues", what immediately follows is an intriguing ending sentence that captures readers' curiosity, "His intuition told him that something unusual was quietly brewing on Line 10. Ignoring personal grooming, he grabbed his camera and coat, rushing into this destined restless morning"[2].And there is a line of prompt, "To obtain the online prop for this chapter, please input '1225 photo' in the online system." Readers can input "photo 1225" as instructed in the dialogue box of the Wexin public account and receive a subway map in the reply area that plays a crucial role in deducing the plot. The novel's setting on Beijing Subway Line 10 was personally investigated by the author, so the images appearing in the prompts are authentic photographs taken by the author, creating a realistic feeling that immerses readers in the scene. What further engages readers is the voice prompt that pops up in the Weixin public account messages, a deep and sinister male voice that seems to come from the subway's broadcast system, softly saying, "Welcome aboard Beijing Subway Line 10. From now on, you have entered a 90-minute game. If you fail the

challenge, your secrets will be exposed by me. Below are the game rules. A murder occurred at Guomao Station. You need to deduce the identity of the victim, and the clue is in the envelope on the chair. The train will return to Guomao before an hour and a half passes, and you must solve the mystery before then." Hearing this information, readers feel as if they have become detectives silently observing the development of the case and participating in the deduction process on Line 10, naturally experiencing the flow state as they gradually solve the case.

Although interactive prompts through the Weixin public account occasionally appear in the book, they are not the primary medium due to the limitations of the book as a physical medium. Instead, more immediate feedback is hidden within the text of the book itself. At the end of each chapter, you will find the following prompts: "If you believe this chapter contains important clues, please fill in the Cluefinder form on the back of the Beijing subway map with the page number and a brief description. If there are physical props or online props in this chapter, please also fill in the prop name and number (found on the back cover). To avoid confusion, you can use P1 and #1 to represent the page number and prop number, respectively"[2]. With the help of this Cluefinder form, each chapter's reading becomes a deeply engaging process for the readers. They can fill in the discovered clues in the form and continuously test the correctness of their previous assumptions as they delve deeper into the reading.

In addition to the book and online prompts, the Weixin public account also provides the personal Weixin account of the author, Wu Fei, making it easy for readers to connect with the author directly. By providing the personal Weixin account of the author, Wu Fei,readers are granted direct access to the author's virtual presence. This accessibility allows readers to establish a direct and personal connection with the author, creating a sense of intimacy and closeness. It provides an avenue for readers to share their thoughts, ask questions, and engage in meaningful conversations about the book's content.

On a popular Chinese population platform Xiaohongshu, an individual known by the pseudonym "Yunaitou" , asked a question about the book's content and receive professional answers from the author himself. The approachability of the author helps to close the gap between readers and the original book, as well as between readers and the author. Readers with a deeper understanding of literature may even have the opportunity to engage in in-depth communication with the author, collaborating on the development of chapters or the conclusion of the series. This interactive form of reading breaks down the boundaries between readers and the author. It not only reinforces the author-reader relationship but also adds a layer of authenticity and credibility to the reading experience. Readers can gain a deeper understanding of the author's intentions, writing process, and thematic elements, fostering a more profound appreciation for the work.

As explained in the book *The Author* ,that "After the completion of the work, the author's role, state, and mission as the creator are fulfilled. They then transition into the role of a reader, engaging with the work in a manner similar to other readers. They reflect upon the work, perceive it as an object, and exercise the subjectivity of a reader. This is the fusion of the author and the reader. Therefore, in the practice of creation, the completion of a work does not imply the death of the author; instead, it signifies the termination of the role of the inspired and creative author. The author and the work are intertwined in the creative process. The work contains the author's life will and experiences, their passionate dedication, and the inspiration, bestowed or self-acquired, of the individual, subjective author in the act of writing" [3].

The fusion of the author and the reader occurs when the author embraces their role as a reader and engages with the work as a subjective and active participant in the reading experience. They bring their unique perspective, life experiences, and intentions as the creator into their interpretation and analysis. This fusion enriches the reading experience and adds layers of complexity to the understanding of the work. Thus, the completion of a work does not signify the literal death or end of the author. Instead, it marks the termination of the specific role of the inspired and creative author during the act of writing. The author's identity and existence extend beyond the completion of a single work. They continue to carry their creative essence, experiences, and insights into subsequent works and future endeavors.

3)Whether the difficulty level of the task matches the individual's ability. Flow also happens when a person's skills are fully involved in overcoming a challenge that is just about manageable, so it acts as a magnet for learning new skills and increasing challenges. Aligning the difficulty level of a task with an individual's personal abilities is important as seen from the quote here.

When an individual engages in a task that exceeds their skill level and presents a significant challenge, they may experience a sense of detachment and anxiety. Conversely, if the skill level surpasses the challenge, the individual may feel a sense of relaxation that can evolve into boredom. By appropriately balancing the challenge level with the user's skills and employing self-exploration techniques, an

immersive experience can be created that leads to a sense of satisfaction and tangible achievements.

This concept is reflected in each chapter of the book, which consists of relatively short and concise content, averaging around 10-20 pages. This compact format ensures that readers do not feel overwhelmed by excessive reasoning challenges, avoiding intimidation. The specific language used in each chapter is also vivid and descriptive. For example, in the second chapter, there is a description of an "elegant middle-aged man" as follows: "The most handsome middle-aged man sat on the six-seater closest to the third carriage, facing away from the platform. His deep blue wool suit, free of any wrinkles, revealed its high quality. The well-polished leather shoes and the Vacheron Constantin watch on his wrist sparkled under the lights. The only relatively inexpensive item on him was perhaps the outdoor fleece hat, which added a touch of sharpness to his luxurious attire. A man like him should appear at an upscale gala or in a private room of an exclusive club, rather than on a subway prepared for a murderer. He might be the most out-of-place person in this carriage at this moment"[2]. This vivid description creates a visual image in the reader's mind, making them wonder."Could someone dressed like this be the culprit?" As readers progress through the story, with the provision of clues and the revelation of the solution, they constantly affirm or refute their own ideas, gradually approaching the final truth.

While reading each chapter, readers make their own judgments based on the clues provided in the book and record them in the cluefinder. It is not crucial whether the reader's judgments at the end of each chapter are correct or not because the ultimate solution is only revealed at the end of the book. The correctness of the reader's early judgments does not affect the development of the story itself or its final outcome. Therefore, readers of all reading levels, including elementary school students, can derive enjoyment from the reading experience because the difficulty level of the reading goals matches their own abilities.

4) Consistency between cognition and action: Traditional reasoning books or movies often provide one-sided input, where readers need to follow the author's thinking while their own thoughts serve as auxiliary activities. The ultimate goal is to understand the author's meaning, maintaining an "author-centric" perspective. In contrast, the reading experience of this book is reader-centered. Firstly, the author uses a very accessible writing style without complex or obscure words or sentences. Sometimes, the language even becomes colloquial. For example, on page 71, when explaining a character's identity, one character says, "I don't understand all this talk about codes. Earlier, someone mentioned checking recent news related to the World Trade Center. I've been trying to do it, but I can't get online!"[2] The colloquial expressions like "talk about," "I don't understand," and "I've been trying to do it" make readers feel grounded and authentic, aligning with the character's identity.

Additionally, to facilitate reader understanding, the book provides numerous visuals, including illustrations of train carriages and character positions on page 38, as well as props such as color-printed posters, medical records, and report cards inserted throughout the book.

Importantly, the use of props and interactive elements allows readers to progress at their own pace and engage in hands-on activities. Each reader may have a different level of interest and proficiency in utilizing the props. Some readers may quickly assemble a puzzle or examine a prop to extract valuable information, while others may require assistance or more time. This individualized approach to reading not only accommodates readers of varying abilities but also enhances the sense of agency and personal investment in the story.

When readers come across corresponding chapters and compare the props, they enter their own rhythm of reading and contemplation. Some readers may even extract information not present in the text from these props. This makes the readers the center of the reading experience, as if they have entered a detective game that requires them to fully engage with multimodal information online, offline, and within the book. Since each reader has different levels of interest in and time spent on the props, such as some readers quickly assembling a puzzle to obtain a clue while others may need assistance from others, the reading speed varies greatly among individuals. This brings a different experience compared to traditional book reading or movie watching. The readers' hands-on and mental activities occur simultaneously, achieving consistency between cognition and action, which is an indispensable aspect of the state of flow.

By emphasizing the reader's active role in the reading experience, the book achieves a consistency between cognition and action. Rather than being passive recipients of information, readers become active participants, making decisions, forming theories, and taking actions based on the clues presented. This alignment between thinking and doing contributes to a state of flow, where readers are fully absorbed in the reading process and experience a sense of deep engagement and satisfaction.

5)Immersion in the task at hand. Traditional reading or movie-watching experiences can easily be disrupted by the intrusion of smartphones in this digital age. Sudden incoming messages or pop-up advertisements can serve as distractions, interrupting the reading or viewing process. This is particularly noticeable for younger readers who may lack self-control. In the case of detective novels or other plot-driven genres where every detail matters and missing one can hinder subsequent reading, frequent interruptions can lead to a complete disruption of the reading experience. However, in the case of reading this novel, the smartphone ceases to be a distraction and instead becomes a tool that readers need to utilize. By continuously inputting prompts in the dialogue box and receiving responses, the reader's thought process is stimulated. This human-machine interaction allows readers to achieve a state of complete focus and wholehearted engagement. Moreover, the textual clues and various physical props mentioned earlier make it challenging for readers to divert their attention and think about other things. Even if brief moments of mental wandering occur, the emergence of new clues or timely feedback in the form of new prompts reignites curiosity and draws the readers back into the reading process.

The interactive nature of the smartphone interaction in the novel plays a significant role in maintaining reader engagement. As readers input prompts and receive responses, they experience a sense of agency and involvement in the story. This real-time interaction creates a dynamic feedback loop, where readers actively contribute to the progression of the narrative. The ability to participate in the unfolding events and shape the direction of the story further deepens the reader's investment and commitment to the reading experience.

Moreover, the integration of smartphone technology into the reading process provides a seamless and convenient way for readers to access additional information and resources. While traditional books or movies may require external research or reference materials to enhance understanding, this novel leverages the digital capabilities of the smartphone to provide instant access to relevant content. When encountering unfamiliar terms or concepts, readers can simply search for definitions or explanations online. This accessibility not only enriches the reading experience but also eliminates potential disruptions that would arise from having to switch between different mediums or devices.

6) Sense of control throughout; Reading a novel differs from watching a movie in a cinema. In the latter, viewers have no control over the pace of the movie; they cannot fast forward, rewind, or adjust the playback speed. They can only progress according to the rhythm set by the movie itself. This difference stems from the inherent nature of the two mediums. Reading this novel shares commonalities with reading regular books, such as the visible thickness and the ability to control the reading process. However, unlike other books, this novel lacks a table of contents, preventing readers from gaining an overview of the main content. This creates sufficient curiosity about the book's contents. Additionally, during the first read, readers cannot skip ahead to the next chapter since the book's pages are glued together, requiring them to unravel and read simultaneously. Thus, readers need to be in an exploratory state of curiosity when reading. As the book is unraveled incrementally, the author's control over the pace of "unraveling" ensures a consistent sense of control. The point at which the book is unraveled represents what has been read, while the sections that remain sealed signify unread portions. Therefore, the progress of unraveling naturally becomes a means of tracking progress, enabling readers to maintain control during the reading process.

7) Temporary forgetting of self, lack of self-awareness

For this point, some people might misinterpret it as people are out of self-control. However, this is not the case. The lack of self-awareness does not indicate that people under a status of flow cannot control their own spiritual power, or they are unaware of the change undergone within their bodies and minds. On the other hand, "those who experience flow for the first time often mistakenly believe that the disappearance of self-awareness is associated with a negative surrendering of the self, as if they were becoming passive and going with the flow"[4]. And then the author cited several examples to prove the importance of "self"as in the optimal experience, such as an excellent pianist, athlete or a chess player.

The temporary state of self-forgetfulness is in fact a pleasant experience, as we no longer solely focus on ourselves, allowing for the expansion of our concept of self. Within the flow state, individuals often report a sense of being fully immersed in the present moment, completely absorbed in the task at hand. This intense focus on the activity creates a sense of effortless involvement, where individuals feel a cohesion between their actions, thoughts, and the overall experience.

During this state, the usual self-reflective thoughts, concerns, and evaluations that typically occupy our minds tend to fade into the background. The constant chatter of the inner voice that usually narrates our experiences diminishes, allowing individuals to be fully engaged in the task without being preoccupied with self-judgment or self-doubt. And the elimination of self-judgment and self-doubt will

contribute to the overall happiness of the individual.

Despite the absence of explicit self-awareness, it is important to note that individuals in the flow state still possess a level of awareness and control over their mental and physical processes. They remain fully conscious of their actions and exhibit a high degree of skill and responsiveness to the demands of the task. It is not a state of mindless automatism but rather a heightened state of focused attention and absorption.

The loss of self-awareness in the flow experience is not a negative outcome leading to a complete dissolution of identity. Instead, it can be seen as a temporary suspension of self-related thoughts and concerns, allowing individuals to transcend their usual self-boundaries. By momentarily letting go of self-consciousness, individuals open themselves up to expanded possibilities, heightened creativity, and a deep sense of fulfillment.

8) Clear sense of time flying by, quickly passing; Purposeful experience of complete focus. These points can be summarized as an experience of focused immersion and self-forgetfulness. Due to the game-like design of the book mentioned earlier, readers can feel a sense of control over their reading experience and a temporary detachment from self-awareness. They may perceive a separation between psychological time and actual time, where, for example, two hours may pass in reality, but it feels like only five minutes have gone by. The entire process of focused immersion is purposeful in nature.

Here it is demonstrated by a reader's reading experience: the book consists of a total of 370 pages, and it took her about four hours to reach page 132. At the beginning, she wasn't particularly accustomed to the process of unraveling and reading simultaneously, as well as the need to utilize various props and auxiliary tools for the reading experience. She spent time figuring out how to approach reading the book. However, as she gradually adapted and immersed myself in the context, her reading speed slightly increased while still ensuring comprehension. In such cases, the actual time that passed was significantly different from her perception of time while in an immersed state.

The relationship between the author and the reader has always been quite complex. The author is destined to consider the reader during the creative process, establishing a connection between the work and the reader. Here, another term is introduced: "creative expectations" or "author's expectations", which contrast with the reader's expectations based on aesthetic theories. According to communication with the author, his expectation for this book is to make the reader not just an observer of the story but a participant who can experience the feeling of influencing the story's characters as a detective. Through the game-like reading experience created through various props and online interactive systems, the author has crafted an atmosphere of task involvement for the reader. The author completes challenging tasks within a limited time, gradually becoming addictive and even creating dependency, leading to an experience akin to "flow".

In an era of information overload, excessive information and news can pose a threat to the goals and structure in people's consciousness. "Whenever information threatens the goals of consciousness, an internal disorder phenomenon occurs, known as 'psychic entropy'. It can lead to self-disintegration and greatly reduce efficiency" [4]. However, in the reading experience of this novel, the online Weixin public account clues and the props in the book not only do not pose such threats to the goals and structure in people's consciousness, but they actually serve as tools that promote interactive reading experiences, stabilizing the reader's inner order and increasing engagement in reading. During the reading process, readers experience a profound joy that comes from focused attention.

Attention is a scarce resource. "Besides determining whether certain things enter consciousness, attention also drives other mental activities—memory, thinking, feeling, decision-making—so attention should be regarded as a 'mental energy'. It is an indispensable energy for completing tasks and is depleted during work. We create ourselves through the application of this energy, shape memories, thoughts, and feelings through its application. Attention is a form of energy that we control and that changes in response to how we use it. It is also the most important tool for improving the quality of experience" [4]. In the unique reading experience of this book, the burden and depletion of the reader's attention are alleviated through various interactive methods. The pleasurable reading process allows us to enhance our control over attention, and the depleted attention can be replenished in a timely manner, thereby enhancing our mental energy. Whether the time distortion characteristic of the flow state is merely an incidental byproduct of extreme concentration or an inherent feature in itself, we cannot make hasty conclusions. Although disregarding the passage of time is not necessarily a prerequisite for experiencing enjoyment, freeing ourselves from the constraints of time enhances our interest and engagement in the process of deep concentration.

3. Conclusion

Wu Fei's *the Underground Game* as a representative of interactive three-dimensional detective novels stands out by fully leveraging the reader's subjectivity and exploratory nature. This innovative design gradually immerses readers into a state of flow during the reading process while deepening their understanding of the essence of the novel. With the help of online systems, props, and the book itself, readers engage in interactions through the online system and props, gaining not only an understanding of the novel's storyline but also actively participating in the development of the plot, making the reading experience more diverse and enriching. This experiential reading mode allows readers to gain deeper insights into human nature and society.

This article, using the theory of flow, interprets how *the Underground Game* successfully captivates readers and helps them further comprehend the essence of the novel through an interactive reading experience. This successful experience provides a valuable reference for other literary creators. In future literary creations, more attention should be given to the reader's reading experience, tapping into their subjectivity, and enabling them to achieve an immersive state during the reading process, thereby better understanding the inherent meaning of the work and gaining insights into human nature and society.

As authors or creators, we should contemplate how to utilize modern technology and psychological theories to create more immersive and captivating reading experiences. How can we innovate and experiment with our works to make literature not only provide intellectual nourishment but also become a completely new experience? This is a new direction that we need to explore, as well as a new challenge for our creations.

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