

The Research on the Portrayal of Non-Main Characters in Films -- Taking Harry Potter as an Example

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Abstract. Harry Potter, as one of the most popular IPs in recent years, has taken the world by storm. The movie tells the story of the main group while also completing the theme of the movie with many supporting characters with distinctive images. Therefore, the image of the supporting characters in the show and their role in promoting the theme of the movie is of certain research significance. This study takes the supporting characters Severus Snape, Albus Dumbledore and Cedric Diggory in the film Harry Potter to further investigate the innovation in character diversity and the revelation of characterization by analyzing their personalities, their influence on the main characters and their contribution to the content of the film. Through the results of the study, it was found that in terms of the portrayal of supporting characters, each supporting character needs to show different points of personality. In terms of character diversity innovation, it was found that character innovation relies on breaking away from the single positive and negative plot model and breaking the "aura of the protagonist". In terms of characterization revelation, character diversity and position diversity can help today's films find a foothold in the changing aesthetic trend. Through this study, the author hopes to provide a partial contribution to future scholars in this field.

Keywords: Characterization, Non-main characters, Innovation, Harry Potter.

1. Introduction

In most literary works, the "character" plays an important role in the narration of the story, the advancement of the plot and the sublimation of emotions, and for films, the character is an integral part. There are many characters in a film, and if they are all defined by the main character, each given the same amount of scenes, then the audience will be confused about the central idea that the film is trying to convey, and this is where the creator needs to divide the main character from the supporting characters. Supporting characters, as the name implies, are characters who work in tandem with the main characters in a production, highlighting some aspect of the protagonist's qualities, and on whom the story does not focus. Therefore, most authors and screenwriters do not use a lot of space to describe supporting characters, and they are rarely mentioned as the main object of study in the past literature. This paper takes supporting characters and their portrayal as the object of study, adding inspiration about innovation from another perspective to film and television works, making the image of supporting characters, which is not often noticed by the public, more three-dimensional, so that the audience's eyes do not only focus on the bright and shiny protagonist when watching the film, but also consider the different personalities and different backgrounds of the supporting characters to inject new charm into the film. The author gives the supporting characters Dumbledore, Snape and others different personalities and beliefs, so that their appearance enriches the background of the work and plays a vital role in promoting the plot and sublimating the intention of the movie.

The movie follows Harry Potter, a boy who has survived a great disaster, as he enters Hogwarts to study magic and becomes close friends with Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley, spending time together at boarding school. The trio befriends Professor Snape, who seems to be against them at every turn, but actually has his own stance and stands firm in his beliefs. This movie also has the kind yet powerful and respected Headmaster Dumbledore, and many classmates who have their own sparkle. Harry Potter with Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley grow up in their fight against the villain Voldemort, gaining friendship, learning perseverance, and understanding the meaning of love and courage. This paper is divided into two chapters. In the first chapter, the author briefly explains "characterization" and introduces the three classic supporting characters in the Harry Potter films and

briefly analyzes their role in driving the plot; in the second chapter, the author analyzes the important role played by the supporting characters in Harry Potter and draws thoughts on the innovation and inspiration of the films.

2. The Classic Supporting Characters in Harry Potter

2.1 Characterization

Character is an indispensable and crucial element in a film, and the success of characterization affects the quality of the film. In the information age, people are able to look at the world, and their demand for movies is not only good plot or quality pictures, but also the need to find emotional identity in art works. Character is the carrier of emotion, and a good character is a leap forward for the quality of a film. The new generation of cinema is no longer satisfied with flat plots and characterization. In the ever-innovative twenty-first century, prominent films need characters with more diverse personalities and backgrounds, and use such characters as the basis for creating a more unique and novel film world. Playwright Takao Noda once said: "The character of a character in a work is also 'shaped' by the author. Character is not expressed with the help of a single part of the work, but is accumulated bit by bit through all the actions and lines of the characters [1]". While portraying the main group of characters, the Harry Potter film series also meticulously narrates the growth of some of the non-main characters, showing the personalities of these supporting characters through the plot about them, so that the audience's eyes no longer focus on the main group alone, but begin to notice other vivid characters in the films, bringing new perspectives to the viewing and new thoughts and perceptions to the audience. The following three supporting characters produced many interactions with the protagonist in the movie "Harry Potter", either in a positive image or in a negative image. As mentors and friends of the protagonist, they not only enrich the storyline, but also have a certain influence on the shaping of the protagonist's views and contribute to the storyline. The analysis and study of these three supporting characters can show how to create characters from multiple dimensions.

2.2 Severus Snape

In the film, Severus spends most of his time as a brooding antagonist, targeting Harry and Gryffindor House in school life and in class, causing much discomfort to Harry's early school life. The portrayal of his appearance in the books and films as "a teacher with greasy black hair, a hawkish nose, and waxy skin [2]" creates an intimidating and offensive image of Severus, which is why Harry has always had a grudge against the teacher. Yet such a character also has an unknowable identity. Ostensibly a member of the Death Eaters loyal to Voldemort with orders to keep an eye on the Hogwarts campus, he was actually a pawn planted by Headmaster Albus Dumbledore to keep an eye on Voldemort, seemingly going toe-to-toe with Harry but actually keeping a stealthy eye on him, saving him in time when Professor Kilo recited a poison spell and Professor Lupin turned into a werewolf. It all started with his first love as a teenager: Lily Potter, Harry's mother. His love for Lily transcends life, death and hatred, and even at the end of his life he wants Harry to gaze upon himself with those same green eyes as his mother. He is a character who is both good and evil, wandering the border between black and white, as his name, "Severus", cuts himself [3]. For the character of Severus, death is not the end of him, but rather makes him more fleshed out and reveals "the most moral and civilized part of his personality structure [4]". Harry learns that Severus was a great man of faith and courage, and his idea of "bravery" is formed, and after the war he hangs a portrait of Severus in the headmaster's office as a sign of respect.

2.3 Albus Dumbledore

Dumbledore is a kindly old man with a white beard who helps Harry in many ways in the movies. He is known as "The Great Wizard" and is one of the most beloved of the many headmasters at Hogwarts, and carries a great deal of weight with the students. In the film, he is often smiling, and is

calm and collected when dealing with problems, showing his rich life experience and calmness of mind. At the same time, J.K. Rowling cleverly used the sense of contrast on Dumbledore, he has a sweet tooth, even set "sour pop" as the password to enter the office [5], as a pure-blood wizard but willing to learn about the Muggle world, so that the image of a calm and elegant but funny, with the times of the old man vividly. Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince is the tragic fall of Dumbledore's life, as he trades his sacrifice for Harry's chance to retrieve his Horcruxes. As Harry's mentor, and knowing his situation well, Dumbledore allows Harry to do things he would not allow other students to do [6]. Because of the early death of his parents, Dumbledore was a father figure to Harry in general, and he guided Harry's gradual growth into a proper Gryffindor - full of courage and wisdom - and he was protecting Harry with his strength in equal measure.

2.4 Cedric Diggory

He is a character who breaks away from the usual "main character aura" and is a handsome contrast to Harry, who also likes Chewie Chang, in the movie, and is known to be a good, decent person through the opinions of other students on campus. He becomes a rival to Harry during the Triwizard Tournament held at the college, and also returns the favor by giving him clues about the second tournament after Harry reveals to him information about the first one [7]. He became an innocent victim at the hands of Voldemort during the final tournament of the Triwizard Tournament. Cedric's death is the first time Harry is confronted with the damage Voldemort has done to those around him, and from this he is even more determined to fight Voldemort.

3. Innovations and Inspiration in Characterization

With the improvement of people's quality of life, movies have gradually become a daily entertainment activity for people. In this new era of the 21st century, technology and industry are developing rapidly, people's education level has improved significantly, and their appreciation of artworks is also changing with the trend of the times. As an art form to express human emotions and tell stories, film also needs to keep up with the times in order to let the audience hear what the director has in mind and see what he wants.

3.1 Innovations in Characterization

3.1.1 Moving Away From a Single Plot Model

The success of the Harry Potter films lies not only in the beautiful graphics and the more streamlined, yet narrative and interesting, adaptation of the plot, but also in the way the films portray their supporting characters. While most of the previous films and movies have shown the characters in a purely positive or negative light, Harry Potter is a bold breakthrough, giving the character Snape both good and evil qualities. The contrast between Snape's mean-spiritedness and indifference in the early part of the film and his great courage in dedicating himself to the peace of the wizarding world in the later part of the film is stark, and the blurred border between black and white enriches the layers of the film and leaves the audience with room to think about whether good and evil are only a thought away. When portraying characters with an evil stance, films often choose to depict a series of negative scenes such as the character's unfortunate encounter in order to highlight the character's twisted and madness. However, since Snape is not a pure villain, the movie also gives him a warm and fuzzy clip when explaining the background of his identity. The film changes its gloomy and low style in the clip, opting for a softer filter to tell the story of teenage Snape's friendship with teenage Lily, giving the audience a break from the tense and exciting drama, while also portraying Snape as a flesh-and-blood man who understands love and affection. In life, only a few people are like Harry Potter or Voldemort in the movies, possessing pure good or pure evil, while more people are closer to Snape, having had good thoughts and evil thoughts, and in the end standing up for what is right for them. In 2011, The Harry Potter World Cup launched a poll in which 7.5 million people participated, and Snape won the title of "Most Popular Character of All Time [8]". This is more reflective of the diversity of the

character's backgrounds and personalities, and this reflects the impact of the diversity of characters' backgrounds and personalities on the film market.

3.1.2 Role Innovation That Breaks the "Halo" of the Protagonist

Most films always create their main characters with superior abilities, and in order not to overshadow the main character's aura, the supporting characters come off as mediocre, and sometimes even a drag. Harry Potter, on the other hand, doesn't skimp on giving its supporting characters' outstanding abilities. Cedric is a handsome looking windbag both in the books and the films, and has a huge following when he becomes rival to Harry in the fourth Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, shattering the stereotypes of supporting characters in the popular perception. There are many supporting characters in the film who are better than the main characters in various aspects, and their presence gives the audience a clear understanding - even the main characters have shortcomings and need to seek advice. As a series of films for a wide audience, Harry Potter's characterization also takes into account the educational needs of young people. Watching a quality movie plays an important role in the quality education of adolescents, who in the process of watching the movie will form a reflection on the character's position, personality, and through this form their own values [9]. When watching movies, adolescents will put themselves in the shoes of the protagonist, and when they find out that the protagonist is excellent in every aspect, it will cause a psychological gap. As adolescents are at an important stage of forming their worldview, this gap will cause them to negate themselves and form bad ideas in their growth, which will have a negative impact on them. When teenagers see the protagonist in the movie lose to other people or make mistakes, they will realize that even the "savior" in the movie has shortcomings and become more emotionally identified with the character, and realize that it is important to be your own "protagonist" with a normal heart.

3.2 Insights into Characterization

In a movie with a complete worldview, having many characters is an essential part, and the diversity of characters is an important element to enrich the film and make the world presented in the film more realistic. In 3.1.1, the author mentions that a single character will easily make the audience lose interest in watching the movie due to aesthetic fatigue, and the narrative will inevitably be bland. In addition, once the characterization falls into the circle of "good versus evil", the theme of the story will become simply "good over evil", thus losing creativity and entertainment. When creating new generation films, directors and screenwriters should pay attention to adding novel settings such as "good and evil", "double agent", etc., which will enrich the movies, for example in 3.1.2, the author talks about the influence of the "aura of the protagonist" on teenagers. Teenagers are one of the mainstream groups of movie-goers today, and since there is no clear definition of what kind of movies are suitable for teenagers and what are not, the creation of movies should also take into account whether the content has a positive value orientation for teenagers. In the era of rapid development of the entertainment industry, audiences have long been dissatisfied with the traditional movie model and are more eager to see innovation or find a sense of identity in movies. The audience can trigger different thoughts when watching the film from the perspective of the supporting characters [10], so today's movie films need to create more characters with diversified personalities and positions to satisfy audiences of different identities, ages and hobbies, make bold breakthroughs in characterization in movies with complete basic elements, and try to create characters from different positions in order to find a foothold in today's ever-changing aesthetic trends of the audience.

4. Conclusion

The success of the movie depends partly on the shaping of the character image, a good movie not only needs a quality image of the main character, but also needs outstanding and diverse supporting characters to enrich the theme of the story, as well as to meet the viewer's need to find emotional identity in the role. Harry Potter" is loved by the audience, not only because of the world view and

the shape of the main characters, but also because of the diversity of supporting characters created, many viewers can find characters with the same personality in the film, to create an emotional connection, and a sense of immersion when watching. Therefore, while focusing on shaping the main group of characters, films should not ignore the images presented to the audience by the supporting characters, and the two should go hand in hand in order to create a brilliant film. The text lacks certain qualitative research to get people's understanding of the importance of supporting characters and character images, and a study based on this paper should distribute questionnaires to the general public to get a more general and objective conclusion.

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