

Hidden Segment: The "Reality" of Historical Films

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Abstract

Fictional and factual narratives are the two basic types in the history of human narrative, as well as the standard of genre distinction between documentary and fictional films. Among many films, historical films are attractable type of film that people love. The creators take history as the background of film to shape historical figures and retell historical events. The "authenticity" of historical films is of great concern to academics. This paper aims to analyze the "authenticity" of historical films from the narrative theory of the segment framework.

Keywords

segment framework; historical film; reality.

1. Introduction

Fictional and factual narratives are the two basic types in the history of human narrative, as well as the standard of genre distinction between documentary and fictional films. Among many films, historical films are attractable type of film that people love. The creators take history as the background of film to shape historical figures and retell historical events. The "authenticity" of historical films is of great concern to academics. This paper aims to analyze the "authenticity" of historical films from the narrative theory of the segment framework. In fact, the essential question is that in what sense the historical films can be "real" as a fictional genre? This is also the problem needed to be solved in this article.

2. Segment between Narrative and Fact

2.1. Segment Framework

Segment framework is the basic theory for analyzing the "authenticity" of historical films. Segment means distinguishing and separation; framework is a space-based window-like metaphor. Establishing a segment framework means establishing a sense of borders between events in real world and narratives in textual world. By reminding the segment framework, the narrative world is distinguished from the real world. The event segment experiment conducted by Newston, "In a typical event segment paradigm, participants watch a movie of an everyday event, and are asked to segment the activity in the movie by pressing a button when they believe one meaningful unit of activity ends and another begins"(Newtson, 1973, p. 30), in the article Narrative Event Adaptation in Virtual Environments, authors believe that, "This segment procedure has been shown to reliably measure perceptual event boundaries in movies of everyday events". (Speer, & Zacks, 2005, p. 128)

Searle more clearly expressed readers' awareness about the framework built during reading: "When we read the passage from Galsworthy we visualize a stage, the curtain rises, the stage is furnished like a dining room, and so on".(Searle, 1975, pp. 319-332)Theatrical stage is the clearest example of the relationship between narrative world and real world. Searle intends to point out that "That is, it seems to me the illocutionary force of the text of a play is like the illocutionary force of a recipe for baking a cake. It is a set of instructions for how to do something, namely, how to perform the play. The element of pretense enters at the level of the

performance: the actors pretend to be the members of the Barthwick family doing such-and-such things and having such-and-such feelings". (Searle, 1975) Searle clearly saw the world above the stage, the interaction of performances and events in this performing game. The concept of a textual framework was formally proposed by Mark Turner. He believes that when learners "look at the world, it is impossible to not distinguish the stories that are worth saying from the background that is not worth saying". (Turner, 1998, p. 145) Like biographical novels have a large factual background, but stories based on facts are distinguished from facts. In historical films, the creator narrates the text through the accumulation of materials in the experience world, telling the story in the textual world rather than other worlds, which is the necessary creative path. The segment framework is the boundary between the empirical world and the textual world.

Therefore, "segment" is defined as a concept to differentiate factual and fictional narratives. Factual and fictional narratives are segmented by a wall-the segment framework, each having its own textual space. The segment framework exists as a genre normative model, which means "dividing a framework inner layer and carrying a claim of authenticity". (Zhao, 2014, p. 99) The empirical fact carries the signs perceived by the subject (creator of narrative) through the media (such as records and reports), and are perceived by the audience. After the empirical world is segmented as the symbolic world exists in the textual world through media, the factual narrative is the symbolic representation segmented by the media.

The segment framework first determines the underlying semantic domain of the text after the segment; secondly, "transparentizes" the distance between the reader and the symbolic text. The segment framework is essentially an abstract concept. It implicitly acts as a wall for the symbolic world and the empirical world. This wall is "transparent" in the construction of the segment framework, which can be used to determine the true nature of the documentary text after once segmenting, but also keep the distance between readers and reality through the second segmenting.

2.2. Factual Narrative: One-time Segmented Text from Real World

In the "segment framework" theory, the real world segmented by the media and perceived by subject is the textual world then represents facts from the real world; the textual world cannot be directly equal to the real world, and the text in the one-time segmented world is only related to and point to the real world. The text genre requires represent the real world without fiction, and the real world within the one-time segmented zone confirms the authenticity of the text world through documentary way. "All factual narratives, whether or not this narrative tells 'real', can claim (and also require the recipient to think) that the text of the factual fictional narrative does not point to the external 'empirical facts', but they are not like what Searle called 'fake as real claims', instead, using an double-layered segment framework to cut out an inner layer and creating a narrative world with only 'internal reality' within the boundaries of the segment. This is the principle of double-layer segment." (Zhao, 2013, p. 73).

The basic semantic domain of documentary text is the real world, a world full of empirical facts, and the symbolic world displayed by video media, replacing the empirical world. Readers can interpret this as a reality for the time being, one-time segment means copying the reality. The creator deliberately integrated stories linked to the reality, enabling the textual world to contain more details from the real world. It shows the facts that people perceive in real life, so the audience bring the idea of "I have perceived in life" to affirm the "authenticity" of the text. The Chinese New Year made by BBC uses the way of recording things through virtual media to mediate the facts of the real world into symbolic texts by one-time segmenting. The recipients of this text, through the perception of life, affirm the authenticity of the text.

Factual narratives are dependent and only needed to be segmented once, that is, the facts are represented by symbolic representations. The empirical world are mediated, for example, through the photographic equipment to become a film and television symbol, which is the symbolic reproduction of the facts. The text that was once segmented is a "factual text" that reproduces the experience in the real world through the medium and points to the empirical facts. The introduction of the principle of segment defines a factual narrative. Taking the documentary as an example, a documentary needs a creator who pushes a camera to take pictures of events or documents in life; the recording device is the "weapon" of the creator in the narrative, and also creates the medium of the documentary, making the facts visualized. The transparent segment is only to express the real people and events in the artistic medium. The segment framework is just like a "landing window", cutting out life and factual narratives.

2.3. Fictional Narrative: The Fictional Textual World after the Second Segment

Fiction is not just a fictional narrative without facts or with a fact that cannot be perceived. Fiction can also tell the facts that can be a definite real events or people, like the historical films or movies based on the reality. The creator lures readers to treat those kinds of fictional narratives as reality with the help of it the facts introduced from real world. As Yiheng Zhao argues, the ability to clearly discern the fact and fiction is not a matter of reference. While it is rather better to use the construction of the segment framework to see how the creator jumps to fiction.

It is completely different from the fictional narrative after the second segmentation, that is, between which and the facts there is a separation. The fictional narrative needs to be segmented again on the basis of the one-time segment. The second-mediated world is segmented from the empirical world by two doors. This "blocked" effect makes the fictional narrative completely different from the factual narrative.

When the empirical facts are secondarily mediated, no longer a recordive mediation, they reach the fictional text world. The film *Maos Last Dancer* is about the life of the ballet dancer Li Cunxin adapted from the qutobiographical text Maoist period, which is a factual text that was once segmented. It is the factual narrative where Li Cunxin is the author and the most reliable voice tells how he changed from a rural child to a world-renowned dancer. Mediating the empirical world to the audience; and in the movie *Maos Last Dancer*, the actors in real life make up Li Cunxin in the movie text, fading away the identity created by one-time segment and also not performing themselves in the documentary world, but to perform the life of young Li Cunxin through the second segment framework.

Stalingrad: Enemy at the Gates describes that during the Second World War, the sharpshooter Wah Sili participated in a decisive battle in the Battle of Stalingrad. He was involved with the political commissar, Lisa and Nata, and fought against the sniper of the German fascist Major. The fictional narrative can be related to the facts, but the fictional narrative has a two-layered framework segmented from the audience. For the audience, they accepts the love, friendship, and affectionate life of Wah Sili in World War II. Tang Wei and Feng Shaofeng starred in *The Golden Era*, who enter the textual world after second segmented performing Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun separately. The film finally rolled back the subtitles and returned to one-time segment to show the audience of Tang Wei and Feng Shaofeng, the actors' names.

3. "Factual Narrative" within the Fictional Segment Framework

To figure out how the historical films become "real" depends first on the creator or author. When Hegel mentions historical films, he defines it as a work of "taking the materials from the past", in which the subject-author who draws on and maintains the authenticity of the work is an important element in considering historical film. The fictional world after the second

segment is the narrative world of historical film. In the narrative of historical films, the first step for the creators is to clearly know the boundaries of the play of communication, to understand the existence of the segment framework, but to factually narrate in the framework of the fictitious segment. The creators deliberately ignore the fictitious segment framework, emphasizing the fusion of events and fiction and highlights the historical background. Searle emphasizes in *The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse*: "Theorists of literature are prone to make vague remarks about how the author creates a fictional world, a world of the novel, or some such. I think we are now in a position to make sense of those remarks. By pretending to refer to people and to recount events about them, the author creates fictional characters and events. In the case of realistic or naturalistic fiction, the author will refer to real places and events intermingling these references with the fictional references, thus making it possible to treat the fictional story as an extension of our existing knowledge".(Searle, 1975, pp. 331-332)

The creator establishes an inner real world within the second segment framework that within this fictional text is triggered by events. That is, within the fictional framework, which the text is telling the actual events since the creator uses the existence of the event (the "core" of the historical film) to engrave the details of the real world. Barth believes that "Events can be classified into two main kinds: those that advance the action by opening an alternative ('kernels') and those that expand, amplify, maintain or delay the former ('catalysts') "(Barthes, 1977, p. 245)(Chatman 1978 Called the second type of 'satellite'.)(Chatman, 1969, p. 13) If a telephone rings, a character can either answer it or not; an alternative is opened and the event is therefore a kernel. But between the ringing of the phone and the answer (or the decision not to answer), the character may scratch his head, light a cigarette, curse, etc. These are catalysts---they do not open an alternative but 'accompany' the kernel in various ways. (Rimmon-kenan, 2003, p. 16)The event kernel and a myriad of possible alternatives are pieced together, and the creators choose one by aggregation and combine them into a harmonious documentary text. This means that, the space within the second segment framework is a textual world of fictional narratives. However, the creators of historical films introduce one or a set of facts into the narrative of fictional narratives, and use this as the core to generate story space and story context. The relationship between narrative stories and events has always been the focus of scholars. This discussion of emphasizing the narrative structure is based on the consequences that the creators deliberately made. Through the introduction of the theory of the segment framework, it can be clearly perceived that this is the creator's intention to ignore the segment framework, borrowing empirical facts from the real world, and deliberately emphasizing the authenticity within the story.

In fact, In the framework of fictitious segment, "factual narrative" is not just a patent for historical films. Related to novels, Smith has already done analysis. In *On the Margins of Discourse*, Smith refers to the fictional deception of fictional narratives: "Certain medieval novels offer the highly ambiguous case of formulations such as, "The tale says that ...," which could be read either as a sketchy hypertextual alibi ("I am reporting a narrative which is not of my invention"), or as an amusingly hypocritical denial ("I'm not the one who's saying this, it's my story"-much as one would say nowadays, "C'est pas moi, c'est ma tete"). "The essential fictiveness of novels is not to be discovered in the unreality of the characters, objects, and events alluded to, but in the unreality of the alluding themselves. In other words, in a novel or tale, it is the act of reporting events, the act of describing persons and referring to places, that is fictive".(Smith, 1978, p. 29) Genette said that be a fictional narrative is purely and simply a pretence or simulate a factual narrative, where the novelist just makes believe or pretend that he is telling a true story without seriously asking the reader believe in it, but also without leaving in the text the slightest trace its non-serious, simulated character. However, this opinion is not versally shared, to say the least.(Genette, 1990, p. 757).

The creator's intention is obvious since he already understands that he is engaged in a fictitious text creation, but through his own claims and the creation of real space, he attempts to convince the readers to believe that is a true story. The creator's narrative strategy is what Richard Walsh points out: let the work read like "knowing things" rather than "imaginary things"; like "factual reports" rather than "fictional narratives".(Walsh, 1997, p. 34)

Because the second segment is farther away from the real world, the creators are pursuing the reality in the fictional genre. In fact, as long as the "documentary" form in the second segment framework is designed, the factual effect is achieved. The difference between historical film, historical novel and history is also here. It is only the existence of "internal reality", and the foundation of the existence of "internal reality" is the fictional genre. The stipulation of the genre prompted the author to declare "adapted according to historical facts" to maintain the authenticity of the text. It is precisely because the creator carries out a factual narrative within the framework of the fictitious segment, the recipient accepted.

However, the arbitrator of the historical "reality" is the audience. Therefore, historical narratives can only be considered as truth when they are changed from "like-like" to "real" in the process of acceptance. This depends on the neglect of the double-layer segment between fictitious narrative and the real world's by the subjects, both sender and recipients of the symbolic text.

4. "Reality" in Acceptance

The existence of the segment framework is for both the creator and the recipient. Whether he reality of the historical film is exist or not, it is decided by the recipient. That means the audience has the right to judge the "authenticity" while facing the historical film--"real" historical film works rely on the audience. When the audience say that a historical film is a good work, they will not question the fictional constituents but believe in the factual component of it. The main reason is that the audience chooses to ignore the segment in the acceptance process. As the audience chooses to ignore the second segment between fictional world and real world, ignoring the relationship between fiction and historical facts, the audience will be more sure that the historical film they like is "real."

The prediction that readers should explicitly structure text such that the boundaries of narrated events correspond to the boundaries of real-world events is consistent with a number of current models of text comprehension. However, the claim that readers should explicitly perceive boundaries in narrated events is entailed by only two of these theories: the event-indexing model, and the immersed experiencer model. Both of these models rely on the assumptions that readers parse text into a series of discrete events in order to construct a coherent representation of the activities described by the text, and that this parsing of activity is dependent on real-world experience with and general knowledge about the structure of events.(Speer, Swallow, & Zacks, 2003, p. 338) This experiment points to the audience's experience of the world and the right to control the boundaries of the textual world and the empirical world, emphasizing that the audience brings relevant experience and knowledge into the text comprehension when receiving information. This is actually the most basic reading pattern for historical film viewers.

"A number of researchers have now suggested that situation changes should modulate readers' memories for the objects, locations, etc. in narrative texts. That is, when readers encounter a break in any of the various dimensions of a situation model, they may form a new situation model, or shift the focus of the model to a new aspect of the situation. If readers construct new situation models when the narrated events move beyond the boundaries of real-world events during reading, then encountering an event boundary should reduce the speed and accuracy with which previously presented information is accessed from

memory".(Zwaan, & Radvansky, 1998, p. 167) Relating to this situational shift and understanding, as long as the author is not overly exaggerated in the narrative, the reader's information understanding will be fairly smooth. Although the speed and accuracy of the viewer's information is reduced when the narrative event exceeds the boundary of the actual event, the original intention of narrating as factual narrative the author's made in the fictional framework makes the historical film text have a "factual" character. Therefore, in this foundation, the knowledge acquired by the audience is supplemented and transformed into a narrative event of empirical facts that they thought they are lacking.

When the audience is watching historical films and learning the text, they are thinking with their own experience. The fact that the creator is interested in contacting has caused a strong emotional resonance in the audience when they believe or experience it. Thus, the text deepens the audience's approval. If authenticity is questioned, then the meaning of historical film borrowing history does not exist. The historical films tend to narrate history, also arouse the emotional response of the audience and emphasize the positive "real" value. As Yiheng Zhao said: "The most important reason for the generation of 'authenticity' is the powerful strength of moral emotions. It will erase the fictitious frame separation like an eraser and restore everything to 'real'". (2013, p.85)

5. Conclusion

The creation of "authenticity" in the historical films is based on the fact that the creator creates a "factual narrative" within the framework of fictitious segment, creating a space to make "reality". The creator of historical films ignores the framework of fictitious segment deliberately, introducing real people and constructing historical narrative backgrounds, and incorporates the facts of human sharing. On the other hand, when the audience watched the historical film, the expectation started by the genre was immersed in the influence of the "factual" narrative. When the recipient also ignores the segment framework and affirm the true meaning of the historical film, the "authenticity" of the historical film was already stable, finally the audience identified it as "real." This "factual" game in the fictional genre has been tried and tested in novels and movies "based on the true stories". The authenticity is no longer the ending that the audience wants, but whether it can express the "authenticity" that impresses the audience. The true meaning of the historical film is not the work of material collection, arrangement, but discovering the value of history after the facts integrated into the fictional narrative.

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