

An Analysis of Metaphorical Expressions of Game and Symbiosis in Paddington Bear I and II

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Abstract. In Paddington Bear series, the director uses metaphorical narrative techniques to describe the experiences of Paddington Bear after he immigrated to the UK. The abundant expressions of metaphors, symbols, contrasts and other rhetorical devices have greatly enriched the connotations of the two films. They also trigger laughters as well as ponderings from the viewers over the director's ingenuity and his intended humanistic feelings. This paper explores how metaphorical techniques have been employed to help to realize the main theme of game and symbiosis in Paddington Bear series, namely the game and symbiosis of immigrant and local cultures, the game and symbiosis of dream and reality, and the game and symbiosis of good and evil.

Keywords: Paddington Bear; metaphorical narrative techniques; the immigrant and local cultures; dream and reality; good and evil.

1. Introduction

Paul King, the British writer and director, specializing in comedy, released the film *Paddington Bear* at the end of 2014, the prototype of which, a cute and good-natured little bear, comes from the 14 series of Paddington stories written by Michael Bond. The stories have been in great popularity for 60 years, accompanying the childhood and growth of countless British people. The film, therefore, ever since its release, has conquered the audience with its typical British humor and warmth, winning the 68th British Film Academy Award and the 41st Saturn Award. Its great success contributes to the strong return of *Paddington Bear II* three years later, at the end of 2017, which turned out to be more welcomed and enjoyed a higher box office record than the first one. *Paddington Bear I* tells the story of how a bear from Peru overcame various obstacles in the process of settling down in London. *Paddington Bear II* develops its plot around how the bear was framed by an outdated actor when he worked hard to make money to buy Lucy, his aunt, a birthday gift, how he was put into jail and then cleared with the help of the Brown family. The two films are by no means a mere adventure of the animated cartoon bear and the bear version of *The Shawshank Redemption*. The director uses metaphorical narrative techniques to illustrate the harsh experience of Paddington Bear after he immigrated to the UK. The rhetorical devices of metaphors, symbols, and contrasts have greatly enriched the connotations of the two films, allowing the viewers to think deeper and appreciate more the director's ingenuity and intention to convey the humanistic feelings. This paper explores how the theme of *Paddington Bear* series is realized through the metaphorical techniques, mainly from the aspects of the game and symbiosis of immigrant and local cultures, the game and symbiosis of dream and reality, and the game and symbiosis of good and evil.

2. The Metaphor Reflecting Game and Symbiosis of Immigrant and Local Cultures

Metaphor was originally considered as a rhetorical device, whose study was confined to linguistic research. In 1980, Lakoff and Johnson expanded the concept of metaphor to be a way of thinking and cognitive means in their book *The Metaphor We Live by*. They believe metaphor is a mapping from a specific source domain to an abstract target domain. It is not only a rhetorical device but also a cognitive means embedded in everyone's mind to help people to be more visual and specific in the cognitive world [1]. Since then, the study of metaphor has been extended to many non-verbal fields. The study of multimodal metaphor in advertising and film industry is in the ascendant [2, 3]. It is an

important method to interpret in depth the connotations of films and interpret the intention and implied meaning of the directors.

The metaphorical narrative mechanism is usually employed in film industry to map a daily, vivid or easy to understand image onto an obscure, abstract or hard to understand image or concept via the similarity between the two. In this way, the audience are invited to use their imagination to participate in interpreting the connotations embedded in the film. In the process, only when the audience work hard enough to reach a consensus with the director can they successfully interpret the main theme of the film, thus achieving greater satisfaction and obtaining more exciting viewing experience. So metaphor is “the way to interact with the audience.” [4]

As an immigrant country, the UK has adopted an immigration policy characterized by “multiculturalism” since the 1960s. The relatively loose immigration policy has led to a dramatic increase in the total number of immigrants. According to official British statistics, by September 2017, the number of immigrants to the UK in that year had reached 578,000. “When immigrants enter a new environment, they are faced not only with the basic needs of survival such as food, clothing, housing and transportation, but also challenged with a more important issue – how to integrate into the new environment.” “The process of immigration integration is a process to achieve an economic integration, cultural adaptation, social integration and eventually identity recognition via more social contacts, interaction and communication with local people, and more mutual penetration and acceptance” [5]. Many scenes in the films, i.e. the bear learned English through a phonograph when he was in Peru; he stealthily got to the UK by hiding in a container at the bottom of a ship; and the thunderstorm on his first day in the United Kingdom are all vivid metaphors to reflect the reality of how the illegal immigrants are trafficked to a remote country. The bear’s trying his best to use the standard and respectful English is a metaphor to show the immigrant group’s effort to imitate the local people and their eagerness to be accepted by the local culture. The bear was ignorant and clumsy when using toothbrushes, toilets, bathtubs, mouthwashes, elevators etc. products of modern civilization which he hasn’t seen in his original country. This metaphorizes the struggles and awkward situations when the immigrants first set their feet on exotic countries.

At the beginning of *Paddington Bear I*, after the geographer visited Aunt Lucy’s home, their lives have undergone tremendous changes, which is a metaphor to reflect British’s attitude towards their colonial countries. They believe that it is they who have brought advanced concepts and lifestyle to the backward colonial cultures, helping to promote local progress and civilization. The geographer sent the Lucy family a goodwill invitation when he left, which also metaphorizes the British immigration policy towards the Commonwealth countries, showing the director’s pride in British colonial history. Even today, when Britain’s national strength is declining, and its grandeur is a past, British people still put on an air of being a great power, protecting and tolerating the immigrants from their former colonies. In fact, on the one hand, the influx of large numbers of immigrants and the proliferation of aliens of different colors, bring cheap labors to the UK, who take up most dirty and dangerous low-paid jobs, especially in the service industry. Just as metaphorized in *Paddington Bear II*, to buy a birthday gift for Aunt Lucy, the bear worked as a glass cleaner, the dangerous work local people were reluctant to do. Immigrants in the UK bring unprecedented convenience to the local people. That is why some British people treat immigrants with an open attitude. But on the other hand, the existence of these “other” people also make some Britons restless. They regard foreign immigrants as flood or beasts, insisting expelling them and closing the door of immigration. As a metaphorical representative of “the other”, when the bear first appeared in the streets of London, he was rude in words as well as in deeds, quite incompatible with the surroundings. Therefore, he was sneered at and despised by Henry, even considered to be a potential threat. “For some host countries, foreign populations, foreign cultures, etc. will not be valued and will not be treated equally or even will be marginalized. The disintegration of ‘the other’ is the dissolution of this inequality and discrimination, which means to make ‘the other’ gain identity in the society, safeguarding their interests, building their initiative and making their voices heard.” [6]

The different attitudes held by Henry and Mary towards the bear also symbolize the game and symbiosis of the two camps of British society concerning immigration. Mary was kind and warm.

She actively talked with the bear and provided him with temporary accommodation and all kinds of help. She represents the party which has an open and positive attitude towards immigration. They believe that as a super power, Britain has the responsibility to provide asylum for immigrants who have experienced misfortunes in their former colonial countries. It is their unshirkable mission to offer them a helping hand. They believe that through good will, strict rules and unremitting help, the immigrants will take roots in Britain and play a positive role in the construction of the British Empire. The vigilance and hostility of the other party represented by Father Henry and his neighbor Curry symbolize another voice and attitude towards immigration. In their eyes, the bear was filthy, dangerous and lacking etiquette. There are a considerable number of British people holding contempt for immigrants from the third world. They believe that immigrants are either liars or trouble makers. The director's attitude towards immigration is metaphorically expressed in several details in the film: when the bear first arrived in London, the film showed a billboard alongside the road, which says "adore and endure each other". The billboard is a metaphor showing the director's tolerance for immigration and his attitude of acceptance. This slogan, serving as an overall clue running through the film is an external representation via the lens to reveal the indication of the metaphor of game and symbiosis of immigrant culture and local culture. In the film, the bear was attacked by the geographer's daughter, causing a fire to the house. Henry and Mary had a heated argument, and the bear had to leave Henry's home. In the cold rain, the homeless bear walked sadly on the streets. A sentinel took out sandwiches and red wine from his helmet to entertain the bear, warming his heart; while later another sentinel on the post drove the bear away mercilessly, which also metaphorizes the different attitudes of the two camps towards immigrants. In *Paddington Bear I*, after the bear was driven away from Henry's home, the decorative petals on the wall were fading, and the children were not willing to communicate with Henry. While at the end of the film, when the bear became a family member and the whole family was happy, the decorative painting in the hall regained its vigor and showed bright colors. This metaphor reflects the director's support and optimism towards immigration.

The director uses the vivid and touching image of a bear to map the image of immigrants from other countries. The twists and turns of the bear finding a home in London showed the audience visually what difficulties the immigrants have in integrating into the mainstream of the British society. The audience thus can easily understand the fear of immigrants about drifting without roots in a foreign culture. Therefore, it is easier for the audience to infer the director's intention to show the game between immigrant and local cultures and the eventual peaceful co-existence of these two cultures.

3. The Metaphor Reflecting Game and Symbiosis of Dream and Reality

The experiences of the protagonists in *Paddington Bear I and II* are all metaphors reflecting the game and symbiosis of dream and reality.

The dream of the bear in *Paddington Bear I* was to find someone to adopt him in a strange city thus having his own home; his dream in *Paddington Bear II* was to earn enough money to buy Aunt Lucy a birthday gift through his hard work. The English broadcast in the phonograph when the bear was in Peru said, "come to London and you will feel at home". This has formed a clear metaphorical contrast with the miserable experiences the bear had after he arrived in London. He was treated with indifference and neglect of the local British people. The birthday gift-a pop-up travel guide book was stolen just before the night the bear managed to earn enough money. After that, the bear was done wrong and imprisoned. This reflects that the gap between the dream and the reality is huge even the moment it appears that the dream is almost at your fingertips. These are the metaphors and the portrayal of the game and symbiosis of dream and reality. Just as in the letter the bear wrote to Aunt Lucy, "London is not what we imagined", it is a destruction and dashing of the illusions and dreams of the immigrants who expect to enter a dream land of Eden.

In *Paddington Bear I*, Henry dreamed that his children should be obedient and well-behaved. But the reality was that the children considered their father as being annoying, rigid, and harsh and their

family life boring and lifeless. The ruthless reality of their impatience with their dad was in stark contrast with Henry's dream. The magnificent and colorful ideal life countered with bleak and eclipsed reality. Besides, the tedious work and repetitive family life have eroded Henry's pride and enthusiasm, and blurred his heroic image in his wife's heart. But stubborn and paranoid as Henry was, he hasn't lost his caring nature. After Henry gradually discovered the simplicity and kindness of the bear, he helped the bear to embark on a journey to find the truth. Henry's enthusiasm and courage won back the respect and love from the children. When he risked his life climbing the window to save the bear in the Natural History Museum, his courage inspired the children to worship him again and rekindled the image of the warrior hero in his wife. The dream was realized in the fighting with the reality. In *Paddington Bear II*, Henry began to worry about being out of shape and physically declining. He began to experience middle-aged crisis. His position was threatened by young people. This metaphorizes the reality that the Great Britain, the empire on which the sun never set in the past, is now in the recession, and troubled with all kinds of internal and external crises. At the end of the film, Henry's dream of not being eliminated by the society, the son's dream for the steam engine, and the daughter's dream of publishing her own newspaper were all realized when saving the bear. Hence, the dream and the reality achieved symbioses in the process of game.

In contrast, the negative roles in the films had their own dreams, which are in nature "greed" wearing the "dream" cloak. The "dream" of the geographer's daughter in *Paddington Bear I* was to make the bear into a specimen, which would win her fame and fortune, and washed her father's shame. In *Paddington Bear II*, the villain role was played by Hugh Grant at the age of 58, who used to be a famous British actor, known as "British lover". Hugh Grant shaped successfully how an out-of-date actor was unwilling to face the decline of his fame and reluctant to step out of the stage. The wide gap between the dream and reality has distorted his psychology. His desire to maintain the long-lasting reputation as a famous artist was in strong conflict with the reality that a flower, however bright in its bloom, will wither sooner or later. This game has promoted the development of the plots and led to the climax of the conflict.

At the end of the two films, the conspiracies of the antagonists were exposed, and their desires failed. The bear settled down in Henry's family and they lived happily together. The return of the bear brought warmth and communication to Winton Garden, the neighborhood. This ending is a metaphor to show that only those dreams, the pursuit of which hasn't violated others' interests, are real dreams. The dream and reality can be perfectly combined through hard work, which also reflects the director's pursuit of idealism.

4. The Metaphor Reflecting Game and Symbiosis of Good and Evil

In *Paddington Bear* series, there are two divided camps, the good one represented by Aunt Lucy, the Brown family and the bear, and the evil one represented by the geographer's daughter who intended to kill the bear and the outdated actor Buchanan who grabbed the treasure book and framed the bear to the jail. Aunt Lucy and her husband risked their lives to save the bear and created a happy and warm family for him in the Peruvian forest; the Browns gave the bear unconditional trust and support. The bear was kind and honest. He always looked at the bright side of others, encouraged and helped others. He chased the thief, shared his last bread with the pigeons, brought breakfast to the neighbors, and worked hard to earn money to buy a gift for Aunt Lucy. All of them are embodiment of kindness and sincerity, shining with the charm of humanity. On the other hand, the geographer's daughter was sentenced to serve the community and clean the zoo in the end; Buchanan was rehabilitated in the jail. He organized the other prisoners to give regular performances. In this way, he found how to maintain his beloved performance career ever-lasting and restarted his meaningful life. The game and symbiosis of the good and the evil camps show the director's intention to promote the good, as well as his insistence on the positive life attitude.

There still existed the third camp besides the good one and the evil one. The third camp was represented by Curry, the neighbor, who hated new comers, and Iron Fist who was cold-blooded and advocated violence in prison. In the end, this third camp's eradicating evil and returning to

goodness best represent the director's educational purpose and his advocating of humanity spirit to promote the good and suppress the evil. In *Paddington Bear I*, Curry, initially tempted by the beauty of the geographer's daughter, woke up later, recognizing the woman's true face. He then took the initiative to provide clues to the Brown family, giving a helping hand in the rescue of the bear. In *Paddington Bear II*, the bear has always adhered to the principle that "as long as you treat others well, others will be kind to you". He influenced others in a positive way. The bear version of *The Shawshank Redemption* not only accomplished the bear's self-redemption but also completed the salvation and purification of the souls of the third camp. He changed the cold-blooded nature of Iron Fist with his appreciation, patience and praise. Iron Fist experienced a new feeling of being appreciated and praised by others, which far surpassed the pleasure of using his fists to tyrannize the prisoners. When Iron Fist gave up his chance of escaping and returned to save the bear, he completed his transition from evil to goodness. The bear saw the brightness in all the prisoners and led them to turn the prison into a sweet home full of delicious food and beautiful music. Even the gaoler began to read the prisoners probationary bedtime stories, which was full of romanticism intended by the director.

5. Summary

This paper analyzes how metaphorical techniques are employed to convey the director's intention. In *Paddington Bear* series, the bear is a metaphorical carrier, reflecting the image of the immigrants as being kind, sincere, diligent and warm-hearted. The bear's experiences in London and the twists and turns he has undergone are metaphorical expressions of the game and symbiosis between immigrants and local cultures; the game and symbiosis of dream and reality and the game and symbiosis of good and evil. These metaphorical expressions are employed by the director to help convey his optimism and affirmation attitude towards immigration - he believes that after hard work and integration, the immigrants will eventually become one indispensable part of British society and the UK will become a diverse, open and eclectic paradise for all people. The metaphorical expressions also reveal the director's belief that although dreams are always in conflict with the reality, they are not unachievable. Dreams will be realized with firm conviction and unremitting efforts. Being good means being kind, sincere, not giving up in dilemma, being united and trusting each other, and bringing out others' strengths. All these can tide over the difficulties, and evil will eventually stop its feet before goodness and love.

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