



Emprise Under Light and Shadow to What Extent Does the Movie Illustrate the Theme of Emprise in Different Levels?

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Abstract. The movie “Kung Fu Hustle” directed by Stephen Chow, it was a is a comedy, which was released in 2004. Since the audience enjoyed the movie, and never get tired of watching movie, it was also a successful martial arts comedy. The background of this movie is set in 1940 Shanghai, a street gangster called Sing with a gifted and extraordinary on fighting, wishing to join “Axe gang”, which is a popular gangdom in Shanghai, because he found out justice were nothingness, when he was a child. During the process of joining axe gang, majority of conflicts was led by Sing. However, once he realized that his identity was not evil, after being guilt, Sing decided he to return to justice, and having a common job, once he defeated his enemy, Sing returned to common life, and became an owner of candy shop. Many audiences never get tired of watching movie, even own. According to this situation, it leads to a question: “To what extent does the movie illustrate the theme of emprise in different levels?” The movie “Kung Fu Hustle” reflects 4 different levels of the theme emprise, and it was presented in the characters in the movie. His article analyzes the movie “Kung Fu” by way of a statement. It also sets the different scene in the movie as independent variable, and the dependent variable is the theme of emprise of 4 levels in this movie.

Keywords: Emprise · salvation · chaotic · sinister · guilt

1 Introduction

This thesis statement will be describing how the movie “Kung Fu Hustle” reflects 4 different levels of the theme emprise. It will be focusing on 4 level of emprise. This article will compare the difference between emprise and acrobatic fighting. The reason why “Kung Fu Hustle” is an emprise movie, because the movie itself present the theme of emprise in different perspective. The movie is representative, it illustrates the emprise in modern time. Other than that, different from the other emprise films, except the axe gang, the other character wear common garments, it is hard to confirm their identity. The 4 levels of emprise made given the audience a hierarchical sense, they can define different message relating to this.

2 Text

2.1 The 1st Level

There are four levels of theme emprise that present in the positive characters in the movie. The characters that represent in 4th level (lowest level) are “hairdresser (Jiang Bao)”, “fat person (Cong)” and “mute woman (Fang)”. They are representing as fearless and not afraid of power. Especially the hairdresser, he has a sloppy appearance, and according to his facial expression, it illustrates a person live under oppression of landlord and landlady. However, when he was facing arrogant axe gang, he speaks “I’m not afraid.” Commonly, without any facial expression. According to this situation, the character “hairdresser” is correlate to the 4th level. Other than that, “fat person” and “mute woman” have correlation on 4th level, because they are present as fearless people in the movie too.

2.2 The 2nd Level

The characters in 2nd level are “labor”, “dressmaker”, “chef”, both of them have the skills of self-protection, and they are present as “bravery”, “fight against the injustice” and “help the weaker in times of need”. Those three characters have common appearance, which couldn’t let the audience think that they are relates to emprise and justice in the first impression. When the axe gang tries to burn a child a life, the “labor” stands out immediately, and kick the enemies away. While more members of axe gang join the chaos, “dressmaker” and “chef” participate in too. According to this situation, the audience can clearly associate with “bravery”, “fight against the injustice” and “help the weaker in times of need”. Amusingly, some details in the movie shows that both three characters have the skills of fighting, because the director give them numerous of scenes as they appear, especially the “labor”, in some details, it shows he can carry many heavy bags, and kick one of those bags to his back. Furthermore, there are numerous of traditional culture can be defined in the movie. From the perspective of the movement, most of the movements of those three swordsmen are comes from pecking opera. For instance, as the “chef” help the labor and dressmaker to fight against the enemy, his movement were coming from the characters that using spear.

Cultures in 2nd Level

Moreover, in the scene when they met two blind killers, more dense tradition culture revealed, it creates a murderous and amuck environment. Those killers use Gu Zheng as weapon. First of all, the technique of silhouette was used in the scene when the “labor” was killed by the killers. The shadow of bamboo leaves and a cat were cut into pieces as the labor was walking, meanwhile the killers were still playing their instrument. The director emphasis a murderous circumstance by posting a tranquil environment and using silhouette. Secondly, according to the fight scene of the killers and “dressmaker” and “chef” some culture in details can be shown. For instance, the music that those two killer plays were adapt from “The Blade of Gu Qin”, “The Conqueror Unarms”, “ambush on all sides”, they are traditional Chinese music that relates to fighting and war. As the speed of the melody increase, it creates a frustrate and amuck environment to the audience. This situation can also include in tradition culture of emprise. Besides, there is a line that

mentioned in the movie comes from a famous tune called “Guangling Verse”, it makes the circumstance more amuck.

2.3 The 3rd Level

The third level of emprise are “being brave to sacrifice” and “support the justice” [2]. Those two features are illustrated on the landlady and landlord. As the landlady appears, it creates a powerful visual impact to the audience. The first impression of landlady was a selfish, obese and irascible woman who majority of oppression to the lodgers, whereas by contrast, the landlord is a lazy, skinny and avarice man. They used to be skillful swordsmen, until their son’s death, for the reason of been too conceited. However, through the development of the plot, the audience change their impression of both characters. For instance, as the landlady and landlord saw the death of the “labor”, “dressmaker” and “chef”, they chase away the killers for protect the area and support the justice indirectly. In the gaming house, as the axe gang appears fiercely, they face the danger commonly, or even contempt. According to the behavior of landlady and landlord, they can relate to the 3rd level of emprise.

Cultures in 3rd Level

In terms of cultures, it reveals in the lines and other details of landlady and landlord. From the perspective of lines, “If someone has to take the tough stuff, let me do it.”, this quote came from “The Sutra of Ti-tsang Bodhisattva’s Vows” a famous Buddhism sutra, and it represent self-sacrifice, relief. This line link to the third level of emprise. In terms of details, as the landlord and landlady met the axe gang and Fo Wan Che San (Beast), they said that they already prepare a gift for them, which was a clock. In tradition Chinese, send a clock as a gift is inauspicious, and also relates to death[10]. Furthermore, the name of the movement of landlady and landlord are mainly coming from popular emprise novel of China. For example, the “lion roar” comes from the novel “Heavenly Sword Dragon Slaying Saber”.

2.4 The 4th Level

In terms of the 4th (the highest) level of emprise, it is relating to the theme of “salvation”, including the enemies. The highest level of emprise is illustrating on the character Sing. At the start of the movie, the first impression of Sing given to the audience is a sloppy and an unlucky man, and use almost all of his money to buy a book that relates to fighting from a bagger. He was inborn as a good warrior, and tries to support the justice, whereas he failed (when Sing was young, he tries to save a mute girl from the bad guys). Through this situation, Sing decide to be an evil person, because his intuition told him that the justice is useless in this society, therefore, he proves his wish by bullying the people who seems weaker them, but he was naturally kind. Through the development of the plot, in the scene of he saw mute woman holding the lollypop, Sing threw the stuff away, and escape, because that mute woman is that mute girl he tries to save when he was young. He felt guilt when he recognized that “mute woman” was the “mute girl” he tries to save from the bullies in childhood, because she represents his failure, Sing didn’t want to face his terrible past. The lollypop in this scene is a symbol of kindness and guilt, the action

of mute woman pulls Sing back to the kindness and justice from degenerate, and this is the first step of salvation.

As Sing saw the landlord and landlady support the justice, and demand the satisfaction of an emprise, this attitude awakes his kindness. In the scene when the landlord and landlady were plot in secret with hidden weapon from the enemy, in the moment of when the leader of axe gang command him to hit them, whereas he refused, and hit Fo Wan Che San (Beast), that is the second step of salvation, which is absolutely waken the justice in his heart. There is a fascinating detail in the movie, as Fo Wan Che San (Beast) almost kills Sing, the latter pick up a broken stick, and hit him softly. The “stick” is a symbol that represent revolt.

Finally, as landlady and landlord rescue Sing, the final stage of salvation is shown. Surprisingly, his wounds healed quickly, and reborn. After settle the landlady and landlord down, Sing face the villains fearlessly. After defeating Fo Wan Che San (Beast), he confiscates the former’s hidden weapon, and threw the telson away. It was the salvation of himself and his enemy. From the perspective of former, Sing totally returns to justice and kindness from depravity, which means he can have a common life. By the other hand, in terms of his enemy, as Sing defeated him, he felt guilty about the crime committed. In the end of the movie, Sing returns to a common life, and became an owner of a candy shop. Those stops are the mutation of returning to kindness from evil. Amusingly, the last scene of the movie, the beggar that sells the book to Sing appears again, and he ask a kid weather he wants to be strong or not by holding the similar books that sold to Sing before. This scene sublimates the theme of emprise, which means impart and inherit the justice.

Cultures in 4th Level

The most interesting culture is the symbol of the lotus in the movie. In Buddhism, the lotus means calm, savage and kindness. In the movie, when the main character took away the telson from the metal lotus, the object blossom, and gone through the wind, which represent the main character and the villain was been redeem. Coincidentally, the skill that Sing study are relates to Buddhism too. In terms of the villain, the name of his skill called “Toad leap”, this name comes from a famous novel called “The Legend of the Condor Heroes”. From the perspective of music, the name of the music in the scene of decisive battle is “Dagger Society Suite”, the combination of excitement and pathos, reveals bold and generous strength of nation, associating with the action, this is a pageantry underscore, put circumstance in motion [4, 5] (Fig. 1).

Levels of emprise and its meaning	
Levels	Meaning
1st	Fearless and not afraid of power
2nd	Fight against the injustice and help the weaker in times of need
3rd	Being brave to sacrifice and support the justice
4th	Salvation

Fig. 1. 4 levels of emprise

2.5 The Villains

Before analyzing the positive characters, villains are significant too. The villains are present as a group of arrogant and powerful people. The most representative villain is “axe gang” and Fo Wan Che San (Beast). The image “axe gang” in the movie is dominated as a group of chaotic, sinister, arrogant, rampant and powerful people. Therefore, the movie use montage vividly, through the shear of the scenes, it provides a tension and dreadful emotion to the audience. After the leader of axe gang killed the head of alligator gang, then the scene changes slowly into a dark room, and it reveals a dramatic dance of the member of axe gang. While the gang members were dancing, the movie illustrate some bloody image that relates to the crime that committed. This scene reveals how extreme, sinister, terrible, rampant and powerful is the axe gang. Besides, the music and movement are fascinating too. The music is present as minor, and it has a frustrating melody, and the instrument that contains are trombone, saxophone, drum. Besides, through the dance of the axe gang, it reveals the appearance of circumstance: the society was chaotic, because the gangdom can commit crimes rampantly.

Another montage that shows in the movie is the appearance of Fo Wan Che San (Beast), it creates a huge contrast: Fo Wan Che San (Beast) has a humor appearance of a skinny old man, whereas he is the evillest person in the movie. Amusingly, the name and the posture are come from famous emprise novel. For example: “Toad leach” comes from “The Legend of the Condor Heroes” (Figs. 2 and 3).



Fig. 2. Poster of “Kung Fu panda”



Fig. 3. Poster of “Kung Fu Hustle”

3 Difference Between Emprise and Acrobatic Fighting

There is a big issue about the difference between “emprise” and “acrobatic fighting”. Emprise is a traditional identity in Chinese culture, which describe the people who uphold justice in society, and it contains many definitions. Through the development of literature and movies, there are majority of definition to explain this word, for instance, some movies suggest emprise can be defined as pleasure and enmity, debt of gratitude of revenge. Emprise movie mainly focusing on presentation of identity emprise, not fighting. Besides, some emprise movie doesn’t include fight scenes. Acrobatic fighting is relating to action movie, the action movies mainly focusing on the movement and position of characters, and provide visual enjoyment.

From this situation, many movies from other country made majority of errors of understanding emprise. The main cause of this problem is cultural misunderstanding, Cultural misunderstanding happens when two or more people speak the same language, but they mean or understand different things. This is usually due to their cultural background and experiences.

Especially a cartoon movie called “Kung-Fu panda”, this movie illustrates a wrong explanation of emprise. First of all, the director illustrates the theme emprise as becoming skillful on fighting, wearing a specialized garment, then beat the enemies [9]. He illustrates the theme of emprise as different aspect of acrobatic fighting (in the 1st movie); how the mind of justice is determined (in the second movie) and collaboration and spirit (in the third movie) [1]. Other than that, the characters in this movie are too formularize, the audience will know the identity of the character immediately, especially the villains, they wears a fancy cloth when they appears [3]. For example, in the second movie, as “lord Shen” come out, the 1st impression given to the audience is that he is the villain, according to his garment and behavior [7].

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the movie “Kung Fu Hustle” directed by Stephen Chow reveals the theme of “emprise” into four levels. The 1st level of emprise is fearless and not afraid of power; the second level present as “bravery”, “fight against the injustice” and “help the weaker in times of need”. The third level are “being brave to sacrifice” and “support the justice”. Lastly, the highest level of emprise is “salvation”. Furthermore, emprise is not holding a powerful weapon or dressing up a fancy garment, emprise is an identity that present as 4 levels that mentioned before, no matter people know to fight or not.

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