

Research on the shaping of top Light in film character image

Sui Yingying

School of Communication, Qufu Normal University, Rizhao, China

Abstract: *Light is the living creature of all things. It is an important symbol to help us understand and feel space, and one of the factors to reveal life. In film and television works, whether the use of tone and light is appropriate often determines the success or failure of the whole work. As a kind of modeling light, top light has different functions and functions in different film types in different film development periods. This paper mainly focuses on the modeling of top light in the film characters.*

Keywords: *Top light; Movie characters; Image creation*

1. Introduction

Film and television lighting was originally only used to illuminate the subject, but with the gradual development of science and technology and the improvement of the audience's aesthetic, for film and television, the demand for the cold and warm light and light distribution is also gradually increased. In the shooting, the effect of light can be shown as follows: first, it can enrich the image of the characters or scenery, highlight the advantages of the characters and scenery, so that the picture composition is more reasonable; Second, it can foil the atmosphere of the scene, such as high light can foil the comedy scene, low light can create a horror scene; Third, the change of light during shooting can complement the change of plot, making film and television works more natural.

2. Film and television lighting and top lighting

In film and television creative process, film and television lighting initially in order to illuminate subject, but as the film and television lighting equipment of high, refined, sharp professional development and the public to the improvement of art taste, how to make use of the characteristics of light, structure characteristic and change rule, thus through specific means and ways, to visual presentation, become the main content of the lighting art development. Generally speaking, the main role of lighting in film and television creation lies in the use of lighting for modeling design, the use of light effect to create an environmental atmosphere, and the use of light and shadow and color visual effects created by lighting to express the meaning of light.^[1] In addition, lighting can also bring different visual effects to the narrative expression of film and television.

The light source basically is cent artificial light and natural light two kinds. Natural light, also known as "natural light," includes all possible directions of vibration perpendicular to the direction of light wave propagation, so it does not exhibit polarization. Natural light emitted directly from ordinary sources is an irregular collection of numerous polarized lights, so it is impossible to see which direction the light intensity is biased when observed directly. Such light that vibrates in all directions with the same intensity is called natural light. Light is also known as "visible light". Generally, natural light is made up of seven colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and purple. Artificial light is a common light source in film and television creation. It refers to the light emitted by artificial light source, which is provided by various electric light sources with certain luminous characteristics. All interior photography uses artificial light, while exterior photography is dominated by natural light, supplemented by artificial light. The use of artificial light can be less restricted by objective conditions, the determination of light position, control of brightness, lighting arrangement and the use of various effects of light, etc., can be controlled by the photographer himself. Artificial light by suitable light, backlight, side light, top light and foot light such as the choice of light Angle and shoot, fully integrated main, auxiliary light, ambient light, background light and modify the different photosynthetic efficiency and the use of different light colors such as light, achieve both to highlight the character modelling, also can express emotion through light and shadow, color foil and connotation of the works of visual art effect.

The top light comes from the light directly above the subject, i.e. from 12 o'clock across the vertical clock face. It is a ray of light that strikes the ground and is intended to achieve a minimum illumination for all objects in the picture, so it is often used for general illumination. Top light can be either natural light or artificial light, depending on the environment in which the subject is being photographed. When the subject is outdoors and the outdoor sunlight is direct and above the head of the figure, the use of natural light will be greater than that of artificial light. However, when the subject is indoors, natural light diminishes and artificial light takes over.^[2]

Top light can show the relationship between the subject and the surrounding space position, so it is generally used in TV programs such as chorus shooting of many subjects. Because only the top light will often produce strong shadows, especially when used for character lighting, it may cause stiff modeling and haggard appearance, so it is also avoided by many light source. In movies, the director often uses the top light as the main light source in order to shape the character image and express the character's inner heart. But regard as a kind of modelling light, want us to be applied effectively only, use the downy scattering light that does not have shadow namely illuminate, cooperate the light of other direction, so top light still is a kind of effective modelling light.

3. Narrative themes shape a variety of atmospheres

The film first came from The Lumiere brothers' factory Gate in 1895. Since then, the film has experienced a long evolution from black and white period to color picture, from silent to sound. In different film and television development periods, there are many different atmospheres created for narrative themes. Next, this paper will analyze the different effects of top light on the characterization of films in the period of black and white films and color films, and analyze the effect of top light on narration in more detail.

3.1. To create the horror effect

In horror films, the use of top light is mainly to create a grim and frightening environment. Natural light or artificial light is used to shine from the top of people's heads or the soles of their feet, giving people a kind of alternative visual feeling and making people's hair stand on end.

In the early black and white films, there were no other colors except black and white. If the film wanted to better shape the image of the characters in the film and express the inner heart of the characters, lighting was particularly important in the film. As one of Hitchcock's classic works and the first work of psychological horror thriller, "Psycho" is more worthy of analysis in the use of lighting in the film.

The boss of the hotel in "Psycho" is the biggest villain in the play, so it is very important to shape this image. So how do you portray a schizophrenic murderer in black and white? At this time the choice of lighting should be carefully considered. The director used a large amount of top light and a small amount of other light sources to represent the image, in order to highlight his weird and scary behavior. For example, when the innkeeper first appeared to the audience, his face was obscured by the overhead light; While the detective was talking to the innkeeper, the two under the top of the house were thinking of different things, and the innkeeper's face looked grim in the dim light; When the detective and sister went to explore the room on the second floor of the hotel, the horrible music background combined with the dim ceiling light created a gloomy and scary atmosphere, which made the audience afraid, which also laid a foundation for the later plot -- "Mother" suddenly rushed out of the room with a knife and the detective was killed, setting up the atmosphere.^[3]

Compared with the black-and-white film "Psycho", the use of lighting and characterization in the 2013 anti-violence film "The Purge" is also worth learning and analyzing. In "The Purge", the use of top light, or light, is more colorful in the characterization of the film. The film tends to show the plot and arouse the climax in a dim environment, and the proper lighting in such a scene can perfect the characters. In the early part of the film, the effect of the use of light on the shaping of characters is not obvious, but from the beginning of the blackout crisis, under the weak light, each character image starts to be full of life. From the very beginning, the mask leader negotiates through the screen, and the weak ceiling light at the door makes the character like a demon. The weird mask and frightening dialogue make people even more terrifying. In scenes such as searching for intruders in the house and duel of life and death, the looming ceiling light and the light source outside the house make the image of father more firm, and the belief of defending his family in the horrible and tense environment more firm.

From the early black and white silent film to today's color films, the continuous development of

technology makes the directors present on the image and characters on the shaping of constantly innovate and practice, the top light in shaping the characters began to cut, juicers are no longer too use the top light to show scenes and characters, the use of other light sources also gradually proportion increased.

3.2. To create the mystery of the character

In addition to the plot, the portrayal of characters in the police film is the most attractive to the audience. Most of the dialogue between the characters in the film is hidden, and the use of the top light is mainly to create a sense of mystery, so that people can not understand the thoughts of the characters, but also implies that the transaction is hidden.

"The Godfather" is a classic in the use of top light to show the mystery of how it shapes characters. The Godfather is a 1972 gangster film by Francis Ford Coppola about three generations of the godfather. Film on the polishing is very exquisite, pioneering with light as a primary light source, and at the same time in order to do not show abrupt, avoid make role face look black, also placed on the walls of the room a few wall lamp, let the lens inside the wall lamp has become the top auxiliary light source of light, let the audience see the actor's performance at the same time, can feel the atmosphere of the dignified serious.

The classic top light was created by Gordon with her usual "Chicken Poop" light fixture, which is Gordon's signature for making lots of variations. The classic top light in the film is more of a spotlight on the head of the subject, so as to highlight the character, so that people's eyes are shrouded in shadow, can not see the character's heart, leaving people infinite daydream and mystery. For example, the old Godfather is very mysterious when he comes on. He is completely hidden in the shadows, and the audience knows nothing about him. Even as the movie progresses and the audience finally gets to see him in front, the light on his face is always the underexposed top light, making it hard to see his eyes. Deep eye sockets, eyes in the shadow, the director gave the old Godfather to shape inscrutable, bottomless, the audience has no real understanding of the character from beginning to end.

In the film, another hero, Mike, the son of the old Godfather, started out with a side light. This light will give the characters a three-dimensional sense, that is, let the audience see through the characters at a glance. At this time, Mike is still relatively simple and unwilling to participate in the messy affairs at home. However, with the assassination of the old Godfather, Mike slowly involved in the family affairs, the film began to have the light on his face into the shadow, and several times, and the shadow is deeper and deeper each time. At this time he is hovering between black and white, and we are beginning to lose sight of him. Fleeing Sicily, away from the trouble, the sun once again appeared on Mike's face. At this time he seems to return to the original simple himself. But when he returns to New York, takes over the patriarch's position, and is fully immersed in family affairs, let's see if the light on Mike's face is familiar. It is the old Godfather's special light, the top light, the eyes hidden in shadow, at this time we can not understand him at all, indicating that by this time young Mike has grown into a new generation of godfather.

In terms of revealing the mystery of the characters, the most flexible use of top light is the "Detective Chinatown" series released in 2015. In "Detective Chinatown 2", the director used top light as the main light source to assist other artificial light in Qin Feng's reasoning scenes. When Qin Feng was looking for Song Yi at the corner of the street in New York City, the sunlight directly came down from the upper left of the character and his eyes were hidden in the shadow, which made the character full of mystery and the audience couldn't help wondering how Qin Feng found Song Yi. At the top of the dungeon, light person the forehead and nose bone is very bright, have a strong shadows under the eyes and nose, the audience to explore through their eyes through these cases, two people's psychology makes Qin Feng and Tang Ren reasoning process of two people in a dungeon more mysterious, but also shaped the character for reasoning mystery is solved. In the sugar factory, when all the troops are ready to capture the real murderer, the faint top light below each person's face is half hidden, no one knows where the real murderer is in the end, may be hidden in the crowd. This kind of light and shadow atmosphere adds a sense of mystery and tension to the capture operation at this time, and fully shows the murderer's sense of mystery. In the climax of the film, when the murderer was introduced, the director also used the top light as the main light source to portray the various characters in the picture. In the dark background, the murderer can be invisible, and the faint light makes him unable to understand what he is thinking. When the murderer reveals his heart, the mystery under the top light makes the character image more full.

It can be seen that, compared with other light sources under film and television lighting, the use of top light can better highlight the narrative theme of the film, and the mystery under top light makes the

character image more full.

3.3. *To reveal the inner feelings of the characters*

In the process of film and television creation, different processing of lighting will produce different aesthetic effects. The use of light in a film is not only to correctly expose light, accurately describe the shape, texture and color of objects, but also to show the character image, environment atmosphere, charm and style. The top light in the feature film is mainly to highlight the character image, show the inner feelings of the characters, and create a happy, passionate or nervous emotion.

The "Notorious" is Hitchcock's most popular work of the 1940s and the most romantic of Hitchcock's films. As a black and white film, its light and shade and composition is also a highlight of the film. In the film, the top light mostly appears as auxiliary light, and only in a few individual characters will be used as the main light source. For example, at the dance party, everyone's intentions are hidden under the top light, Leah's nervous grip on the keys, Sebastian's mixed expression when he sees his rival, and Depew's eagerness to get to the wine cellar. Sebastian jealousy and controlling, tip kisses his wife when he saw the party, the instant camera and lighting changes, zoom, lamplight is by the side before the main light into light, eye socket is shadow hiding, the audience can't see through his facial expression, can be seen from this is his character and jealous of the mood at the moment. At the end of the film, when Tipper tries to drive away with a poisoned Leah, Sebastian looks terrified and helpless under the top light. He tries to stop them and even begs to take him with him, but he can't be known by his peers. The use of the top light makes the complex inner emotions of the characters appear on the surface.

As time went on, when color films appeared, directors came up with new ways of making films. Directed by Zhang Yimou, the 1999 film "My Father and Mother" depicts the touching memories of their parents' love in black and white, and in color, to highlight the stark contrast between cold reality and happy memories of the past. The color in the film not only has the function of dividing time and space, but also has the function of depicting the character's psychology, shaping the image, rendering the character's inner mood and setting off the atmosphere. In contrast, light and shadow have the function of expressing the emotions of the characters, showing the progress of time and highlighting. In particular, the top light is more prominent in showing the inner feelings of the characters. For example, the soft side light in the first encounter of two people, shy at first sight, wearing a red cotton-padded jacket, is the mother's bright eyes bright teeth, beautiful and charming can not square things, showing the mother's youth like fire; When talking with my father in the house, the two figures are blurred under the ceiling light, eager to see each other but dare not look up, shy mood permeates the whole room, full of feelings; In the field, the young mother to the full running, the overhead sunlight full body, the picture is full of warm and cheerful breath, make people happy, let the audience across the screen can feel the mother's happiness.^[4]

The diversity of the top light makes the emotions of the characters in the film more vivid and can better drive the emotional resonance of the audience, which is incomparable to other light sources in film and television lighting.

4. Conclusions

In the new era, with the rapid development of science and technology, the Internet era has come. People are paying more and more attention to mobile terminals such as mobile phones and tablets, and a variety of small video apps are gradually growing up, such as Tiktok, Huoshan Video and Kuaishou. On the APP, the audience can freely make comments and release their own video content, and a wide range of topics including advertising and news also come to join in.

In the short video of self-created film and television, the use of top light is more focused on two themes, one is the mystery theme of terror type, the other is the detective suspense type. In just a few minutes of the video, the photographer uses the top light as the main light source, supporting other lights to show the theme. In Tiktok, for example, popular detective mystery accounts include Diary of Sister and Brother and Menier. Among them, the diary of sister and younger brother is mainly based on fraud as the line to launch a series of routine and counter-routine story, in the entertainment to the audience popularized how to identify the trickster and how to deal with, for the middle of the society out of the endless fraud punch attack, give people a wake-up call. In the short video they shot, in order to make the audience better experience the scene and feel the panic of the liar, they not only created a terrible and nervous sound, but also dimmed the lights of the whole room, leaving only a weak ceiling light. Under

the irradiation of the top light, the two sisters look strange, dark eyes, just like the devil crawling out of hell. In Detective Menier's case, his stories are more of a brainstorming process, allowing viewers to find out what went wrong and who did it in very short stories. The detective creates a sense of mystery, with deep eye sockets and eyes in the shadow. The director creates an unfathomable and bottomless character. The audience does not really understand the ability of this character from beginning to end, which highlights his uniqueness.

As for top light, more and more directors like to use it as the main light source in scary or tense story plots. Although this can enable the top light to give full play to its own advantages, it also greatly restricts people's creative improvement of the top light.

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