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A Study on the Narrative Perspective in Agatha Christie's *and Then There Were None*

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ABSTRACT: K This study, based on Genette's narrative focalization theory, conducts a narrative analysis of Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* (1939), aiming to systematically explore how its narrative perspectives construct suspense and break through the conventions of detective fiction. Following this theoretical background, the analysis proceeds to the operational logic of the nested perspectives in the novel: through the establishment of a symbolic zero-focalization framework, the constant switching of the limited internal focalization of the ten characters, and the interweaving of external focalization scenes, a fragmented and tension-filled narrative space is jointly shaped. The analysis shows that the zero-focalization prologue endows the overall event with a sense of fate, the limitations and unreliable narration of internal focalization enhance the reader's psychological immersion and cognitive predicament, while the blank technique of external focalization conceals key information. The alternating use of these three focalization modes not only deconstructs the information alliance of "omniscient detective-reader" in traditional detective fiction, but also reconstructs the aesthetics of suspense through the limitation and complementarity of perspectives. The study concludes that narrative focalization in Christie's works is not only a formal technique, but also a core force for deeply exploring human nature and driving thematic expression.

KEYWORDS: *And Then There Were None*; Agatha Christie; narrative perspective; focalization; Gérard Genette.

I. INTRODUCTION

Agatha Christie (1890-1976), hailed as the "Queen of Crime", is one of the best-selling authors in literary history. Born in Torquay, England, this writer is known for her exquisite puzzle design and profound insight into human nature. During the two world wars, she worked as a pharmacist, a special experience that made her proficient in professional drug knowledge. Although her works belong to the category of popular literature, they are very experimental in narrative skills, especially in the use of narrative perspective and the construction of unreliable narration. This unique narrative technique enables her works to explore in depth the complex and deep themes of justice and evil, law and lynching.

Published in 1939, *And Then There Were None* is set in the fictional Soldier's Island off the coast of Devon. The novel deeply reflects the social psychological state of Europe between the two wars. The disintegration of the traditional order, the public's trust in the authority of the law, and the diffuse social anxiety constitute the plot background of the novel, so that the work transcends the boundary of pure detective novels. The novel tells the story of ten strangers who were killed after being invited to the island villa. The innovation of his narrative structure is that he abandons the setting of a single detective protagonist and promotes the narrative through the continuous transformation of the limited third-person perspective. Studies have pointed out that Christie is actually 'looking for the most suitable narrator' in his book, completing the revelation of the truth and the deepening of the theme by switching from the hidden third-person bystander perspective to the final first-person confession of the killer (Mu, 2016). Through the flowing narration, the readers go deep into the characters' hearts and witness their fears, crimes and near-death psychology. In this way, Christie constructs a progressive atmosphere of suspense, exposes the secret past of the characters, and then explores the complex proposition that 'justice' is privately executed under the collective panic and the absence of law.

Based on Gerard Genette's narrative focalization theory, this study will focus on three aspects: First, the changeable internal focalization narrative, how to shape the reader's cognition of the complexity of the role by presenting the inner monologue and hidden past of the characters; the second is the fluidity of narrative perspective, how to create suspense and cognitive misleading, and form narrative gaps in key plots; the third is the narrative structure of dynamic advancement, how to form a deep echo with the themes of lynching trial and collective psychological collapse. Research based on narrative theory shows that the analysis of narrative time, narrative focalization, and the transformation of character speech acts in *And Then There Were None* can clearly reveal the formation mechanism of its narrative effect (Chen, 2021). Analysis shows that the narrative perspective in *And Then There Were None* is the core mechanism for conveying the theme and building psychological tension. The details presented

through specific perspectives become vivid witnesses of human nature under extreme pressure. This work is not only a puzzle of pursuing the murderer, but also a profound exploration of sin, judgment and the essence of human nature.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The academic exploration of the narrative perspective in *And Then There Were None* outside China clearly reflects the evolution of literary criticism trends. In the early days of the work's release, the critical circle mostly focused on the moral and impressionistic aspects. For instance, Wilson (1945), although questioning the detective genre as a whole, still had to admit that the plot of this novel had a unique "crazy" sense. At the same time, book reviews (such as *Times Literary Supplement*, 1939) generally believed that the author successfully created a sense of collective panic in the confined space by evenly distributing the narrative perspective among various characters, endowing it with the moral allegorical color of sin and punishment. Although the discussions at this stage did not delve into technical aspects, they had already touched upon the core reading effect produced by the use of perspective.

With the rise of formalist thought, research entered the stage of structural analysis. Scholars began to view novels as precisely constructed narrative machines. Haycraft (1974) was the first to systematically explain the operation mechanism of the "alternating interior monologue" perspective in his study. He pointed out that Christie's strategy was to "shift the reader's attention to the turbulent inner world of each character in turn", and how she skillfully concealed key information while presenting the psychology of each character fairly. Subsequently, scholars such as Winks (1980) further pointed out that this perspective strategy essentially dissolved the single detective function in traditional detective novels, replacing it with a "collective protagonist" model, thereby "returning the power and responsibility of investigation to the readers in an unprecedented way", achieving the democratization of narrative power. At this point, perspective research completed a key shift from effect evaluation to mechanism analysis.

Entering the 1990s, the maturity of classical narratology provided more precise tools for research. Researchers began to use concepts such as "focalization" and "narrative levels" for in-depth interpretation. For example, in the critical anthology edited by Bloom (2002), multiple papers analyzed Christie's narrative techniques, including discussions on her perspective-switching techniques. In recent years, the research perspective has further broadened, presenting a distinct interdisciplinary feature. Scholars have begun to combine cognitive psychology to explore how limited perspectives manipulate readers' reasoning and psychological expectations (Sutherland, 2013); or from a cultural studies perspective, to connect this "everyone is in danger" perspective structure with the widespread anxiety in modern society (Symons, 2015). This series of explorations marks that foreign research has established a multi-dimensional interpretation system from internal textual mechanisms to external cultural connections.

The research path of the domestic academic circle on the narrative perspective of *And Then There Were None* is closely related to the process of introducing, digesting and localizing Western narrative theory, and its development shows clear phased characteristics.

During the stage of theoretical introduction and case study (late 1990s - 2000s), research mainly developed along with the systematic introduction of classic narratology theories. Scholars often took *And Then There Were None* as a typical case to explain core concepts. Though Shen Dan does not devote a separate chapter to *And Then There Were None* in her authoritative work *Studies in Narratology and the Stylistics of Fiction*, she frequently takes this novel as an example to clearly demonstrate how perspectives such as internal focalization and zero focalization dynamically shift to control the flow of information and suspense (Shen, 2004). Such research integrates Western narratological theories with classical textual analysis, exerting a significant methodological enlightening effect and laying a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent studies.

Since the 2010s, the related research has entered the stage of systematic text application and close reading. During this period, a number of special papers with And Then There Were None as the special research object have emerged. These studies generally use the above-mentioned narrative framework to carefully sort out and interpret the text, which also marks the research from theoretical demonstration to solid text practice have emerged. For example, Jiang Wan (2021, p. 73-74) pointed out in "On the Narrative Techniques and Thematic Polysemy of the Novel '*And Then There Were None*'", that the novel starts from the omniscient perspective and the third-person limited perspective, relying on the dual perspective and the limited perspective of continuous switching. Narrative, she believes that the use of this complex perspective can accurately depict the complexity of human nature and also show rich thematic polysemy; Wang Mengmeng (2021, p. 76-77), in "Structuralism Perspective on '*And Then There Were None*'", also mentioned that this narrative structure breaks through the traditional creative technique and writing mode, and improves the suspense atmosphere and readability of the novel in the "lifeless" from the perspective of structuralism. These studies have completed the 'digestion' work of applying western theories to classical texts, accumulated rich analysis cases, and deepened the understanding of the works from the relationship between skills and themes.

In recent years, domestic research has gradually become conscious of seeking local perspectives and cross-domain dialogues, and has entered a new stage of expansion and innovation. On the one hand, the research field of vision is expanded to the field of cross-media narratives, focusing on the transformation and variation of narrative perspectives in different media. Wang Jie (2016)

and Du Xinghua (2017)'s related dissertations have systematically discussed the narrative strategies of film and television adaptations of works. The 'narrative perspective' is also used as the core analysis dimension of the conversion of literary language to audio-visual language. It also analyzes the conversion mechanism of narrative perspective in the adaptation and the aesthetic variation brought about. On the other hand, attempts at cross-cultural comparison have gradually emerged. Scholars have compared the 'island mode' of the novel with the closed situation of Chinese detective novels, and discussed the cultural logic and ethical differences behind the narrative mode. Although these explorations are in the early stage, it can be seen that the domestic academic circles are transcending the simple theoretical application and thinking in a more problematic and innovative direction.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Introduction to Gérard Genette's Theory of Narrative Perspective

Based on the development of narrative theory in the 20th century, this paper studies the narrative perspective of Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*. The narrative focus theory proposed by Gérard Genette (1983) is the core analytical framework of this paper. His distinction between "narrative voice" and "narrative vision" also provides us with a strong support for understanding the complex structure of this work. In the application of theory, this paper also absorbs the concept of "unreliable narration" proposed by Wayne C. Booth's (2017), which can better explain the credibility of multiple narrators in the work. The rhetorical narratology of James Phelan's (2005) further points out that narration is a dynamic process of communication between the author and the reader. Combined with these theories, this paper builds a research idea centered on focalization analysis. On the one hand, it focuses on the application and switching of zero focalization, internal focalization and external focalization in the novel. On the other hand, it analyzes the interaction between these techniques and unreliable narration, as well as their influence on readers 'cognitive process.

B. Zero Focus

Zero focus is the omniscient perspective of the narrator. In *And Then There Were None*, this model is mainly manifested as a macro and structural narrative authority. Its function is not to show the omniscient perspective all the way, but as a potential narrative ability to call in time. Zero focus also lays the foundation for the implicit contract between the genre of detective fiction and the reader. According to Phelan (2005), such works must eventually have a narrative level that transcends the limitations of all characters and reveals the whole truth. From the perspective of Genette's focus theory, the application of zero-focalization in the novel is a temporary suspension and timely call to the traditional omniscient mode. Although it is hidden in most of the narrative time, it can provide a stable and traceable narrative coordinate system for the restrictive perspectives of internal focus and external focus. Its fundamental role is to ensure that the narrative world can finally be reasonably explained, and also provides corresponding theoretical support for the logical self-consistency of the story ending (Genette, 1988).

C. Internal Focus

Internal focus means that the narrator is confined to the perspective of a character, presenting only what the character knows, sees and feels. In *And Then There Were None*, such a focusing mechanism is an important means for the author to create a suspenseful atmosphere, control information transmission, and guide readers' cognition. According to Genette's theory, Christie uses a variety of internal focus in the novel, that is, the narrative angle will be converted back and forth between different characters (Genette, 1983). On the one hand, this approach can strictly limit the range of information that readers can receive, so that readers' cognition is always consistent with the current character, resulting in an immersive suspense experience; on the other hand, by switching between the limited perspectives of different characters, the story will also form an information network that can complement each other and may conflict with each other. The content of each internal focalization shows the subjective thoughts, prejudices and even false elements of the characters themselves, which corresponds to the "unreliable narration problem" proposed by Wayne Booth in 1961. Readers need to constantly compare and judge in multiple limited and not necessarily reliable perspectives, and this reading process is also the most critical cognitive activity in reasoning novels.

D. External Focus

In Genette's theoretical framework, it is characterized by merely observing and recording events and characters from the outside without delving into any character's inner consciousness (Genette, 1988). In *And Then There Were None*, this focusing mode undertakes the extremely critical functions of "objectification" and "defamiliarization". It is mostly used in scene setting, character introduction or key action. At the moment, by simply presenting the dialogue, behavior, expression and external environment of the characters, it creates an intuitive effect similar to the drama stage or the film lens. This purely behaviorist descriptive approach strips away direct explanations of psychological motives, compelling the reader to become a pure observer and to speculate on the intentions behind all characters' actions.

There is also a significant tension and complementary relationship between the psychological depth presented by the external focus and the internal focus. When the narrative shifts from the external focus to the internal focus of a character, a key perspective shift is completed, which in turn guides the reader's attention from the external representation to the internal motivation of the character. This transition from external to internal itself constitutes an important narrative rhythm and

information release mechanism. Therefore, external focalization is not only a limitation of perspective, but also an active narrative strategy. It not only enhances the mystery of the story mystery, but also strictly controls the depth of readers' cognition by accurately distinguishing "visible" and "invisible" content.

IV. NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IN *AND THEN THERE WERE NONE*

A. The Construction and Deviation of Zero Focus

Understanding narrative perspective hinges on grasping its mode of focus, that is, through whose eyes and consciousness the story information is presented. According to Genette's classic classification, narrative focalization can be divided into internal focalization, external focalization, and zero focalization. In And Then There Were None, Christie skillfully employs all three focusing methods, weaving a precise narrative web. Proceeding in line with the article's own logic, the analysis will first examine how zero focus constructs an omniscient narrative framework, then explore how internal focus delves into individual psychology to create suspense and a sense of immersion, and finally how external focus creates a detached observational distance. This chapter will reveal how the three work together to achieve the novel's timeless charm. To begin with, the opening and overall structure of the novel are based on the narrative foundation of zero focus.

Zero focus, also known as non-focus, is a type of omniscient and traditional narrative perspective. The narrator or characters can observe the story being told from any angle, and can move freely from one point to another. It allows for looking forward and backward, and observing the surroundings (Cao, 2021). The opening of *And Then There Were None* is a prime example of zero-focalization narration. The opening of And Then There Were None is a prime example of zero-focalization narrative construction. A fully omniscient narrator, like a director in control of the entire scene, places a group of strangers with diverse backgrounds and hidden pasts on the same journey to Soldier Island. The narrative not only unfolds the external journey of the group gathering at Oakbridge Station but also delves into the inner world of each character: it presents Dr. Armstrong's lingering anxiety over.

> *Lucky that he'd managed to pull himself together in time after that business ten—no, fifteen years ago. It had been a near thing, that! He'd been going to pieces. The shock had pulled him together. He'd cut out drink altogether. By Jove, it had been a near thing, though… (Christie, 2011, p. 10. Hereafter only the page number of this textbook referred to in parenthetical citations)*

regarding his professional flaw; it also depicts Mr. Blore's covert thoughts in the train compartment,

> *"Job ought to be easy enough," he ruminated. "Don't see how I can slip up on it. Hope I look all right."*
>
> *He stood up and scrutinized himself anxiously in the glass. The face reflected there was of a slightly military cast with a moustache. There was very little expression in it. The eyes were grey and set rather close together.*
>
> *"Might be a Major," said Mr. Blore. "No, I forgot. There's that old military gent. He'd spot me at once."*
>
> *"South Africa," said Mr. Blore, "that's my line! None of these people have anything to do with South Africa, and I've just been reading that travel folder so I can talk about it all right." (p. 12)*

This all-knowing perspective efficiently establishes a closed narrative stage and pre-presents the potential guilt of all characters to the readers. However, Christie's zero-focalized narrator does not stop at the traditional omniscient display but deliberately makes a crucial "selective silence" on this basis. The core of this deviation lies in the handling of the mysterious invitation letters received by all the characters: the identities of the senders are obscured by ambiguous signatures such as "U.N.O—." or illegible scrawls, and their intentions are misinterpreted by the characters themselves –Emily Brent thought to herself: "I shall be getting a free holiday at any rate." (p. 8). Despite the narrator's omniscience from the very beginning, it chooses active and selective concealment at this critical juncture.

Thus, Christie's creativity lies in reversing the conventional function of the zero-focalized perspective. Instead of using omniscience to illuminate the truth, she uses it to weave a fog, thereby shifting the story's focus from the external investigation of the crime to the internal mutual suspicion and psychological breakdown among the characters. Ultimately, this narrative strategy lays a solid logical and emotional foundation for the novel's ultimate twist – Mr. Justice Wargrave simultaneously playing the roles of the judge, the murderer, and the feigned victim. Therefore, it is precisely through the use of the zero-focalized perspective's surface "omniscience" but actual "obfuscation" that And Then There Were None breaks through the framework of traditional detective novels and achieves its enduring narrative charm.

B. The Diversity and Limitations of Internal Focus

Fixed internal focus: Vera' s fear and reader psychological identification. Vera Clathorne's sections in the novel are confined to her own internal perspective, making them a classic case of fixed internal focalization. The reader follows this young woman, who has just taken up a secretarial position, to Soldier Island, gradually uncovering the mystery shrouding the isolated villa through her eyes and feelings. The gloomy building, the ceaseless sound of the waves, and a group of seemingly strange but each with their own secrets co-residents all gradually emerge in her meticulous observations. The tension presented from Vera's perspective stems from the interweaving of the constantly accumulating fear and the long-suppressed memory of guilt.

> *She'd begin to think of Cornwall— of Hugo — of — of what she'd said to Cyril. ...*

They'd believe her all right. Cyril often told stories. He was an untruthful child. Cyril would know, of course. But that didn't matter… And anyway nothing would go wrong. She'd pretend to swim out after him. But she'd arrive too late… Nobody would ever suspect…Yes, but supposing it wasn't? Supposing it went wrong? Cyril might be rescued in time. And then -- then he'd say, "Miss Clathorne said I could…"

Well, what of it? One must take some risk! If the worst happened she'd brazen it out. "How can you tell such a wicked lie, Cyril? Of course I never said any such thing!"

"Oh, good egg, Miss Clathorne! That will be a lark!"

She'd said it now. Tomorrow! Hugo was going to Newquay. When he came back -- it would be all over… (pp. 182-183)

Through such an intimate narrative style that delves into the character's innermost thoughts, readers are drawn into Vera Clathorne's unique emotional journey. Particularly on that stormy night after the discovery of Mr. Justice Wargrave's "murder", readers not only share her confusion and unease towards the murderer but also develop a deeper understanding beyond simple moral judgment in her near-collapse state. However, this narrative approach that delves deeply into the character's inner world, while presenting psychological depth, also brings about cognitive limitations. Influenced by a profound sense of guilt and persistent fear, Vera's judgments of events are often tinged with strong subjective hues. She alternately suspects Miss Brent for no apparent reason and perceives every move of Dr. Armstrong as potentially sinister. This constantly fluctuating suspicion precisely reveals the essential feature of the internal focalization narrative - readers are strictly confined within the cognitive scope of a single character and cannot obtain objective information beyond this perspective.

In the tragic conclusion, Vera's fate astonishingly coincides with her sinful memories. As she becomes the sole survivor, facing the hanging rope in the empty villa alone, the fixed internal focalization narrative reaches the peak of artistic expression. Through her gradually blurring consciousness, readers feel not only the physical asphyxiation but also the end of the moral dilemma that has long tormented her. This narrative technique that closely interweaves external events with inner redemption elevates And Then There Were None beyond the ordinary detective novel, making it an outstanding work that explores the dark side of human nature and moral redemption.

Multiple Internal Focus: Group Portrait Psychology and the Fragmentation of Truth. Genette pointed out: The essence of multiple internal focalization lies in the repeated narration of the same event. Each narration may seem "repetitive" at the factual level, but due to the different inner filtering of different characters, its emotional color, details selection and meaning interpretation will undergo significant "variations" (Chen, 2024). Agatha Christie employs multiple internal focalization, constantly shifting the narrative perspective among the surviving characters such as Lomboard and Blore. Each character becomes a limited-perception subject, and these fragmented perspectives collectively confirm the essence of internal focalization: the limitation of cognition. Take the disappearance of the pistol as an example. Different characters' interpretations of this event show significant differences:

"He paused, then went on: "We are still faced by one very grave problem. What has become of Mr. Lomboard's revolver?"

Blore said: "Seems to me its owner is the most likely person to know that."

A white dint showed in Philip Lomboard's nostrils. He said: "You damned pig-headed fool! I tell you it's been stolen from me!"

The judge nodded. He said: "It must have been taken this morning during the confusion of searching for Rogers or after his dead body was discovered."

Wargrave asked: "When did you see it last?"

"Last night. It was in the drawer when I went to bed -- ready in case anything happened."

Vera said: "It must be hidden somewhere about the house. We must look for it." (pp. 166-167)

Through such arrangements, the text constantly reconstructs the psychological connections among the characters. The judgments just formed by the readers are often overturned by the next perspective, allowing them to truly experience the easy dissolution of trust among people in a closed space. The survivors are both potential allies and potential murderers to each other, and this dual identity ultimately splits the entire group psychologically. With the disappearance of the omniscient perspective, readers can no longer passively accept information but must actively participate in the construction of the plot. Faced with narrative fragments with obvious subjective colors, readers cannot easily believe any party's account - for instance, when Blore shows suspicion towards someone, we need to consider his own psychological projection mechanism; when Vera points out Armstrong, we need to examine the potential stereotypes in her thinking. This narrative structure not only requires readers to collect clues but also to maintain a critical interpretation of each narrative perspective.

The shock brought by the novel's ending largely stems from the author's meticulous layout of the narrative strategy. Mr. Justice Wargrave, the mastermind behind the entire death plan, never reveals his inner world to the readers. He cleverly hides behind the limited perspectives of each character and uses their mutual suspicion to advance his plan. Those seemingly random shifts in perspective and contradictory inner monologues are actually carefully arranged parts of his death script. Through such a narrative approach, the work not only builds a suspenseful plot layer by layer but also profoundly reveals the inherent limitations of human cognition, while inviting readers to complete their own interpretations in the fragmented narrative.

C. Objectivity of External Focus and Suspense Creation.

Pure Record of Actions and Words: Complete Concealment of Characters' Inner Thoughts under External Focus. In Agatha Christie's classic work *And Then There Were None*, the most ingenious narrative design lies in the focus concealment strategy adopted for the character of Mr. Justice Wargrave. From the perspective of Genette's narrative theory, the author completely cuts off the inner presentation of the judge after his supposed death. When the story reaches the scene of the judge's "death", the narration strictly adheres to an external focus, maintaining an objective record:

> *Mr. Justice Wargrave was sitting in his high-backed chair at the end of the room. Two candles burnt on either side of him. But what shocked and startled the onlookers was the fact that he sat there robed in scarlet with a judge's wig upon his head...*
>
> *Dr. Armstrong motioned to the others to keep back. He himself walked across to the silent staring figure, reeling a little as he walked like a drunken man.*
>
> *He bent forward, peering into the still face. Then, with a swift movement, he raised the wig. It fell to the floor, revealing the high bald forehead with, in the very middle, a round stained mark from which something had trickled... (pp. 176-177)*

Readers can only accept these surface-level, meticulously designed "facts" just like the other characters. The text strictly refuses to reveal any clues about Wargrave's true state, even when his "body" is moved or the environment changes; the narration remains external and almost clinical in its observation. This narrative choice clearly defies the conventions of traditional detective fiction. In a conventional detective story, readers are often able to obtain a similar amount of information as the detective character through the author's ingenious arrangement, at least upon re-reading, they can discover those overlooked clues. However, Christie broke this tacit understanding. By maintaining a narrative vacuum around Wargrave, she created an unprecedented reading experience. We, like the characters on the island, were trapped in a fog of information. With each new death, suspicion circulated among the survivors, but it never pointed to the sixth "absent" judge.

The effect of this narrative strategy is perfectly confirmed at the end of the novel. It is not until the manuscript in the bottle appears that readers can catch a glimpse of the truth that has been deliberately concealed. In his confession, Wargrave details how he meticulously planned the entire murder plot, including every detail of his feigned death. Only then do readers realize that those seemingly objective descriptions of the judge's "corpse" and the observations of other characters about the state of death were all carefully designed narrative misdirection. The revelation of the manuscript not only solves the mystery of the crime but also makes readers aware that the suspense and confusion they experienced throughout the reading process originated from the strategic absence of narrative information.

Through this precise control of focalization, Christie demonstrates the power of silence in narrative art. Instead of adding more information, she deliberately omits key details to heighten the tension of the text. This narrative restraint and calculation make And Then There Were None not only an outstanding detective novel but also a successful exploration of narrative possibilities. It proves to readers that sometimes the most powerful narratives come precisely from those parts deliberately kept silent, and the unspoken content becomes the key pillar supporting the entire story structure.

Objective Presentation of Details: Limited Information and the Necessity of Reasoning. The external focalization narrative skillfully restricts the readers' access to information by presenting details objectively, leading the readers into a narrative labyrinth filled with uncertainty. Through the gradual unfolding of the narrative, it guides the audience into a "puzzle-solving" process (Zhang, 2024). When describing key items, the text merely makes the following objective record:

> *Anthony Marston said suddenly:*
>
> *"Quaint, these things, aren't they?"*
>
> *In the center of the round table, on a circular glass stand, were some little figures.*
>
> *"Soldiers," said Tony. "Soldier Island. I suppose that's the idea."*
>
> *Vera leaned forward.*
>
> *"I wonder. How many are there? Ten?"*
>
> *"Yes-ten there are." (p. 34)*

This narrative strategy not only creates a suspenseful atmosphere but also reshapes the reading experience of detective novels - we are no longer the omniscient and all-knowing observer, but like the victim trapped on the isolated island, we are exploring the truth within the limited cognitive space. As the prophecy of the nursery rhyme's death begins to come true, when the first victim, Anthony Marston, "choked his little self", the narrative perspective began to tighten. And the most crucial action - the figure who quietly took away the small porcelain statue in the darkness - always lurked in the blind spots of all characters' vision. This narrative's blank space made each death shrouded in a supernatural fog, until the scene of Mr. Justice Wargrave's "murder" pushed this information manipulation to its extreme.

As the number of survivors decreased, the psychological state of the characters became the focus of the narrative, and these focal points themselves constituted a new fog. Vera's mental state gradually collapsed under the erosion of fear, and her memories of Cyrus Beach intertwined with reality into a distorted perception. Her perspective thus became increasingly unreliable. Although Lomboard maintained a surface calmness, his professional training's thinking pattern made him overly dependent on concrete evidence, and this rational limitation precisely became the key to his being misled. All these limited perspectives jointly

constructed a seemingly conclusive murder scene, and the truth - how the judge meticulously disguised the death, how he quietly acted at night, and how he controlled the entire death game - were all cleverly excluded from the narrative focalization. The beauty of this narrative strategy lies in its creation of a dual puzzle: on the surface, it is the "who is the murderer" puzzle, while the deeper narrative art itself is "how the truth is obscured". Until the end, when Mr. Justice Wargrave' s manuscript was washed back by the waves, all the obscured truths were presented as a complete jigsaw puzzle. At this point, we suddenly realized that behind those seemingly natural perspective shifts, the dead Judge was always calmly observing the mutual suspicion among the survivors in the dark. When Philip Lomboard and Vera Clathorne were tensely confronting each other on the cliff edge, when Blore was preparing to venture into the dangerous area for investigation, when Dr. Armstrong went to a fatal trap at night for an appointment, there was always a pair of eyes watching the progress of all this in the shadows.

Looking back at the novel from the perspective of the murderer, the previously neglected details show a different meaning. The excitement of the judge's first accusation, the legal evaluation of the victim's crimes, and his remarks before his 'death', these details, which are presented equally by the external focus narrative but not deliberately emphasized, are actually the fair clues left by Christie. They exist in reality, but are subtly concealed by the objectivity of the narrative. The subtlety of this narrative technique is that the reader always shares the limited cognitive space with the survivors, and it is difficult to see the whole picture of the event. When the fog is gone, the reader not only solves the puzzle, but also experiences the psychological process from confusion, fear to insight. The restrictive multi-focus narrative adopted in Christie's works has far more influence than in the field of literature. By strictly controlling information and perspective, Christie's restrictive multi-focus narrative locks the reader within the characters' cognitive boundaries, creating a strong psychological immersion. At its core, this strategy relies on the strategic shielding of information and the binding of perspective. Readers can only perceive events from the subjective perspective of characters, which is interlinked with the reasoning logic of "script killing" relying on individual scripts. The limited narrative in film and television creation also uses this to strengthen the sense of substitution and suspense (Lu, 2021). It can be seen that the real sense of immersion does not originate from the accumulation of information, but relies on the exquisite screening and arrangement of information to promote the audience from passive reception to active construction, which is the common basis of classical literature and contemporary immersive experience.

CONCLUSIONS

In And *Then There Were None*, the ingenious use of narrative perspective forms a close symbiotic relationship with the plot development. At the beginning of the story, ten strangers who have never met before are invited to Soldier Island. Through an omniscient narrative perspective, readers can overlook this isolated stage. However, with the sudden death of the first character, Anthony Marston, the narrative perspective begins to subtly shift, gradually transitioning from an omniscient perspective to a multi-focal internal perspective. When the gramophone suddenly starts playing, accusing each guest of hidden crimes, the narrative begins to flow among the inner worlds of various characters. Readers first sense the severity of the situation through Dr. Armstrong's professional alertness; then, through the sensitive and suspicious perspective of the schoolteacher Vera Clathorne, they experience the gradually spreading fear. This narrative strategy gives each character's death a different emotional color: Mrs. Rogers' murder in the dead of night appears particularly eerie in the narrative of the butler Rogers; Miss Brent's death takes on a special meaning from her own religious fanaticism perspective.

It is particularly notable that Mr. Justice Wargrave's narrative perspective is always absent. During the fake death scene, the inner monologues of other characters are all nervously guessing the identity of the murderer, but the judge's thought process is completely concealed. This narrative blank is not filled until the final manuscript, when readers suddenly realize that the most crucial perspective has been hidden all along. This narrative design not only creates suspense but also reconstructs the reader's cognitive process. As the ten little figurines disappear one by one, each survivor's inner monologue becomes a piece of the puzzle. General Macarthur's philosophical musings by the sea, Lomboard's final struggle, and Vera's self-termination in a hallucination, these fragmented subjective experiences collectively construct a complete psychological picture. And all of this is reinterpreted in the judge's posthumous confession, where previously seemingly random narrative fragments are given new meanings.

Through this unique narrative experiment, Christie not only completes a perfect detective story but also demonstrates how narrative perspective itself can become a component of the plot. Each character's death not only advances the story but also constantly changes the focalization and direction of the narrative. This seamless integration of narrative and plot makes *And Then There Were None* transcend the limitations of traditional detective novels, becoming a model of the perfect combination of narrative art and suspenseful plot.

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