Psychosemantics of the Character Attraction in the Cult Films and Symbolic-Mythological Contexts of Subject's Identification

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The personalization of art communication provides a situation of openness, that s how cult films as well as psychological studies of this phenomenon appear. The article is dedicated to the study of the psychosemantic structure of the attraction of characters in the cult film "Game of Thrones" in the context of viewer's identification with characters in situations of special art communications. In the study we used a modification of the semantic differential "Attractiveness of film characters" by C. Osgood . 204 people were recruited for this study: 130 people familiar with the series and 74 people not familiar with it. The study revealed the identification of subjects with the characters of the cult film, even if people wasnot quite familiar with them, as well as importance of the attraction factor. The psychosemantic structure of the attraction of the film's main characters is ambivalent, it is simpler and more unambiguous for subjects who feel identified with a certain character, and more complex for subjects who don't. The results of the study are presented in the context of a discussion about the phenomenon of the cult movie.

Keywords: cult film, character attraction, identification, symbolic-mythological contexts.

Психосемантика притягательности персонажей культового фильма и символико-мифологические контексты идентификации субъектов

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Персонализация арт-коммуникации создает ситуацию открытости для возникновения культовых фильмов и психологических исследований этого феномена. Статья посвящена исследованию психосемантической структуры притягательности персонажей культового кино «Игра престолов» в контексте идентификации субъектов с ними и в условиях различий арт-коммуникаций. Использовалась модификация семантического дифференциала Ч. Осгуда «Притягательность персонажей фильма». Выборку составили 204 человека: 130 человек, знакомых с сериалом, и 74 человека, не знакомых с ним. В результате исследования выявлены идентификация субъектов с персонажами культового фильма, даже в условиях ограниченного знакомства с ними, и значимость фактора привлекательности. Психосемантическая структура привлекательности персонажей амбивалентна, является более простой и однозначной у субъектов с идентификацией с персонажем и более сложной у субъектов без идентификации с ним. Результаты исследования обсуждаются в контексте дискуссии о факторах феномена культового кино.

Ключевые слова: культовый фильм, притягательность персонажа, идентификация, символико-мифологические контексты.

Introduction

The intensive development of cinema art through the interaction of digital and aesthetic transformations makes relevant the psychological research of traditionally studied as well as new factors of perception and influence on viewers. Two groups of factors of perception and influence of works in the cultural space remain unchanged: factors of the structure of the work, including symbolic, mythological, and narrative ones, and factors of the properties of subjects mediating artistic perception and impact [4; 5; 8; 9; 10; 11; 20; 21]. The communicative factors, specifics of subjects' interaction with the work in the aesthetic space are studied much less frequently. Information technologies have changed such interactions

[10]. Digitalization of art communications has provided new opportunities for personal choice of films, communication about preferred films, and participation in film promotion. The personalization of interaction between subjects, authors of the films, in the space of contemporary culture polarizes the viewers' positions in relation to films: from "I do not watch at all" to "I watch many times". *The personalization of art communication creates an opportunity for the emergence of various cult films and psychological studies dedicated to this phenomenon.*

Specific characteristics of cult movies are presented by the long-term interest of the significant audience and personal preferences in the choice of films, inclusion in regular communications associated with multiple viewing [8; 9; 15; 16].

The relevance of the study of psychological factors of the sustainable appeal of cult cinema is related both to the special characteristics of personal influences and their sociocultural significance, and the difficulty of predicting such an effect. Cult film characters represent value standards, identification with which provides the basis for self-discovery, self-expression, and personal development. Films oriented towards the wide popularity do not always become cult films, and cult films themselves produce specific influence [8].

It is relevant to study the attraction of cult film characters in the context of viewers' identification with them and selectivity of art communication.

Theoretical foundations and the research aims

Existing researches of psychological factors of perception and influence of films allow to outline the objectives of the study of the attraction of cult film characters.

1. To focus the study on the phenomenon of character *ambivalence* as a factor of aesthetic reactions of viewers, traditionally defined in the psychology of art [3; 12; 20]. Studies have identified the factors of *ambivalence of viewers' experiences, ambivalence of perceived and interpreted symbols of films* [4; 5; 8].

Studies of the perception and influence of the author's art films masterpieces (L. Visconti, F. Fellini, P. Greenaway, A. Tarkovsky), that remain relevant to the audience for a long time and this fact allows us to define them as one of the types of cult films [16], have revealed special effects of the influence of such works — ambivalence of the audience's reflexive experiences up to the effect of "open catastrophe". These effects are caused by "open" structure of the works, the sequential organization of symbols in the films, as well as uncertainty up to the open ending, preserving the mystery of interpretation for the viewers while solving the "problem of the meaning" [4; 5].

Studies of the influence of cult films series, as another type of cult cinema [16], have shown the role of ambivalence of experiences at the reflexive level, multidirectional tendencies of experience and their significant changes, manifested at the psychophysiological level in the process of viewing [8; 9].

2. The key to the emergence of the phenomenon of cult cinema as a long-term attraction of cinema works and persistent actualization of art communication is the *intensity of the effects of its influence*. This characteristic allows to identify both masterpieces of cinema art and film series as mass cinema phenomena [4; 8].

The intensity of the influence of films is related to the perception of ambivalence of characters, symbols of author's films, and correlates with the ambivalence of experiences: from uncertainty to catharsis, or from uncertainty to "incomplete harmonization", to "open catastrophe" [4], which is consistent with the concept of "the open work" [18]. Increased intensity of the influence in cult series is achieved through its provocativeness [8].

The study of the maximization of "highest" and "deepest" levels of experience from the influence of cult films suggests that cult film characters have symbolic, archetypal bases. They are not only perceived by viewers as having ambivalent characteristics, they represent the possibility of understanding one's own unconscious psyche, which is revealed in the process of encountering the cinema work [3; 14].

One of the characteristics of cult film is the creation of spaces and characters with detalization, redundancy [16], which reflects the traditional creation of detailed imaginary spaces in culture — spaces of dreams, illusions, faith [19]. Perhaps, this *cultural redundancy of imaginary, fantastic spaces and characters of cult film* helps realize the human need for an imaginary path to one's own individuality through the processes of multiple identification.

3. Studies of identification with characters, performed within the framework of social learning theory [17], have changed the approach to character creation, actualizing the possibilities of selective, variable identification among viewers. Cult movie characters can be differentiated on the fundamental bases of culture (good-evil), or differentiation can be more subtle, ambiguous, as shown in studies of the structure of identification with the characters of Harry Potter series [9; 24; 25].

The study of viewers' social identity and their identification with the characters of the cult film "Harry Potter" revealed that viewers choose identification with the characters that have similar social identity problems; identification with negative characters includes positive psychosemantics of their images [9].

The study of cinema art films has revealed the focus (sameness) of perception of author-directors and the specifics of identification with them: from "duplication effects", when the director is a guru to be imitated, for example, D. Jarman; to "denial effects" and "transcendence effects", when the director is a provocateur who encourages going beyond the usual, for example, P. Greenaway [5].

The formation of identity in modern culture is considered by psychologists as problematic due to sociocultural changes, the destruction of "grand narratives", value uncertainty, and opportunities for personal choice [1; 2; 13; 23]. *This makes it relevant to study the influence films as cultural phenomena on the processes of identification.*

The studies of identification with cult film characters between those subjects who "have not watched at all" this series and subjects who "have watched it many times" may reveal different identification variants — from "diffuse", "multiple" to "articulated", "dominant".

The aim of the study is to identify the specifics of the psychosemantic structure of character attraction of the cult film "Game of Thrones" in the context of identification with them and in the situation of differing art-communications.

Research design

The psychosemantic structure of the character attraction of the film series "Game of Thrones" and subject's identification with them was investigated using the psychosemantic methodology "Attractiveness of film characters" (a modification of C. Osgood's semantic differential) in the format of Google forms [9].

Methodology involves the assessment of each character as well as the subject's Self on 23 bipolar scales, 17 of which are from the standard Osgood's semantic differential. Six scales were added to study the attraction of character's screen images (Repulsive/Attractive, Sad/Joyful, Ugly/Beautiful, Ordinary/Unusual, Fearful/Safe, Masculine/Feminine).

For the study, the subjects were provided with H. Sloan's official photographs of such popular characters as: Daenerys Targaryen, Jon Snow (Stark), Sansa and Arya Stark, Tyrion, Jaime and Cersei Lannister, Joffrey Baratheon (Lannister). Table 1 presents the characteristics of the characters included in the study, as well as the archetypes they embody according to the works of O. Gavrilova and L. Vecchiola [6; 7].

Data analysis was carried out in the following sequence: for each subject there were separately factorized the evaluations of Self and each of the characters (columns) according to the scales of the semantic differential (rows). As the manifestation of identification there was considered the inclusion of characters in the same factor with the subject's Self. The subjects could identify themselves with more than one character or with none of the characters.

The results of the study were analyzed in four stages.

1. Calculating the structure of identification with characters, both for the whole sample of subjects and in groups differentiated by their familiarity with the series, by using factor analysis. The loadings in the factor that included the subject's Self, calculated previously for each individual subject, were used as variables.

2. Determining the frequency of viewers' identification with characters in the series and forming groups based on the presence of identification with a particular character. Each subject could fit into more than one identification group.

3. Comparing the ratings of the most popular characters for identification on semantic differential scales between three groups of subjects: group of those previously not familiar with the series, and groups of those who identify or not identify with a particular character, by using the Kruskal-Wallace H test.

4. Analyzing the psychosemantic structure of attraction of the most popular for identification characters among three groups of subjects: group of those previously not familiar with the series, and groups of those who identify or not identify themselves with a particular character, by means of factor analysis. As the structure of the character attraction, we choose the factor containing the indicator "Repulsive/Attractive".

Kruskal-Wallace H test and factor analysis using varimax rotation were used for statistical processing of the data. Principal component method with eigenvalue higher than 1 was used to limit the number of factors.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's sphericity test for the sample as a whole and all individual groups of subjects ranged from 0.576 to 0.805 (0.487 only for the group of subjects previously not familiar with the series) and from 60.3 (p ≤ 0.01) to 1,068.9 (p ≤ 0.000), respectively, indicating the adequacy of applying the factor analysis procedure to acquired data of psychological diagnostics.

Tables 2, 5−7 present the values of factor loadings. The calculations were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics.

The study sample consisted of 204 people differentiated according to their perception of "Game of Thrones": 130 people familiar with the series (62 men and 65 women, mean age −21.7±4.1) and 74 people not familiar with it (50 men and 24 women, mean age −20.8±3.8).

Results

1. Analysis of the structure of identification with characters for different viewer groups

The structure of identification with the characters was obtained using factor analysis as the structure of the psychosemantic space of the characters on the whole sample and in groups of subjects previously familiar or not familiar with the series (Table 2). The matrix for calculating the factor analysis included factor loadings of Self and all of the characters (columns) for each individual viewer (rows).

For the entire sample of subjects, the structure of the psychosemantic space of characters is represented by three factors: a bipolar factor including the subject's Self and two positive characters opposed by two negative characters, and factors uniting male and female characters separately.

For the group of subjects previously unfamiliar with the series, the structure of the psychosemantic space of the characters is the most differentiated and consists of four factors. The first factor includes the opposition of the subject's Self to the negative character. The second bipolar factor unites ambivalent characters and represents the relations of two groups — two male charac-

Table 1

Description of the characters included in the study

Ruling house	Character	Gender	Characteristics	Archetype
Targaryen	*Daenerys*	Female	Positive	Persona, Great Mother
Stark	*Jon Snow*	Male		Divine Chile, Hero
	Sansa	Female		Maiden, Beautiful Lady
	Arya	Female		Warrior
Lannister	*Tyrion*	Male	Ambivalent	Divine Child, Trickster
	Jaime	Male		Knight
	Cersei	Female	Negative	Terrible Mother
	Joffrey	Male		Shadow

ters are opposed to a female character. The third factor is formed by female characters on the basis of external similarity. The fourth factor combines positive characters whose narrative involves death and rebirth.

In the group of subjects previously familiar with the series, the structure of the psychosemantic space of the characters is the simplest and consists of two factors. The structure of the factor that includes subject's Self repeats the structure of the Self factor in the entire sample and is additionally supplemented by an ambivalent male character. The structure of the Self factor of subjects previously familiar with the series includes the largest number of characters, their identification structure being the most enriched. The second factor includes the remaining characters without differentiation.

2. Analysis of the frequency of viewer's identification with the characters

Based on the data on subject's identification with the characters of the series, the frequency of identification was calculated. Since a subject may no identification with any of the characters, 3 people (4.1%) previously unfamiliar with the series and 9 people (6.9%) previously familiar with the series were excluded from further analysis.

For the group of subjects previously familiar with the series, there was determined the identification frequency with each character (Table 3).

The 6 characters most popular for identification were used in the further study: Daenerys, Jon Snow, Sansa, Arya, Tyrion, Jaime. Based on the absence or presence of identification with each of them, the sample was divided into 2 subgroups for each individual character: with Daenerys, 59 and 62 subjects, respectively; with Jon Snow, 45 and 76 subjects; with Sansa, 56 and 65 subjects; with Arya, 53 and 68 subjects; with Tyrion, 59 and 62 subjects; and with Jaime, 67 and 54 subjects.

Thus, both in the groups of subjects previously unfamiliar and familiar with the series, identification with the characters of the series is observed. The images of the characters in the series are thoroughly elaborate, causing subjects to identify themselves with them. There is a minimum number of identifications of subjects with negative characters, while positive and ambivalent characters are more attractive for being identified with them.

3. Comparison of psychosemantic characteristics of characters between different groups of subjects

Based on the scores on the semantic differential scales for each character, psychosemantic evaluations

Table 2

The structure of identification with the characters of the film series "Game of Thrones"

Characters	Entire sample (n = 204)			Subjects not familiar with the series (n = 74)				Subjects familiar with the series (n = 130)	
	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	2
Self	0,6			0,8				0,6	
Daenerys			0,8				0,6		0,8
Jon Snow	0,6	0,5					0,9	0,7	0,4
Sansa	0,6					0,6		0,6	
Arya			0,7	−0,7					0,8
Tyrion		0,8			0,7			0,4	0,6
Jaime		0,8			0,6				0,7
Cersei	−0,7		0,5			0,8		−0,8	
Joffrey	−0,8			−0,9				−0,8	
% of dispersion	30,8	16,3	12,6	19,9	17,3	13,8	11,8	37,3	20,6
KMO	0,677			0,487				0,747	
Bartlett's sphericity test	344,9***			60,3**				376,2***	

Note: «*» — p<0,05; «**» — p<0,01; «***» — p<0,001.

Table 3

Frequency of identification with characters in a group of subjects, previously familiar with the series

Characters	Subjects familiar with the series	
	Without identification	With identification
Daenerys	59	62
Jon Snow	45	76
Sansa	56	65
Arya	53	68
Tyrion	59	62
Jaime	67	54
Cersei	102	19
Joffrey	116	5

were compared using the Kruskal-Wallace H test among three groups of subjects: those not previously familiar with the series (NF), those not identifying themselves with a particular character (I-), and those identifying themselves with the same character (I+). The results of the comparative analysis of psychosemantic evaluations, significant for all characters, are presented in Table 4.

Significant differences in the evaluation of characters on the semantic differential scales were revealed between groups of subjects depending on their familiarity with the series and the presence of identification with the characters. These differences were found in the evaluation of all of the analyzed characters and are characterized by presence of ambivalence in identification with them.

Subjects with identification significantly higher evaluate the attraction of those characters with whom they identify themselves on the scale "Repulsive/Attractive". They rate them significantly higher on the "Bad/Good", "Hated/Loved", and "Ugly/Beautiful" dimensions.

The evaluations of the subjects who identify themselves with the characters on the indicators "Dark/Light", "False/Truthful", "Strange/Native", "Evil/Kind", and "Foolish/Wise" are significantly lower than in the groups of subjects who are not familiar with the series and do not identify themselves with a particular character.

Thus, identification with the characters of the cult film implies their bigger attraction for the subjects, as well as ambivalence in the perception of their image. Subjects perceive the characters with whom they identify themselves as attractive, beautiful, beloved and yet dark, false, strange, evil and foolish.

T a b l e   4

A comparison of the psychosemantics of the characters

Scales	Group	Characters					
		Daenerys	**Jon Snow**	**Sansa**	**Arya**	**Tyrion**	**Jaime**
Repilsive/ Attractive	NF	93,9	65,3	85,4	67,7	65,2	71,5
	I—	87,4	102,8	98,7	99,7	105,2	100,3
	I+	**114,8**	**129,0**	**113,1**	**132,1**	**132,7**	**130,9**
	H_{emp}	8,7**	50,6***	8,8*	47,2***	50,6***	36,5***
Dark/Light	NF	84,9	129,9	119,1	100,4	120,5	104,8
	I—	120,5	99,8	103,8	115,0	109,9	106,1
	I+	**92,8**	**68,8**	**70,7**	**84,3**	**62,7**	**78,6**
	H_{emp}	14,4***	44,8***	26,8***	9,3**	39,0***	9,1*
False/Faithful	NF	111,1	126,1	109,8	105,4	111,7	96,5
	I—	103,1	98,5	115,5	117,7	114,2	109,1
	I+	**79,2**	**73,4**	**70,7**	**76,8**	**68,8**	**86,1**
	H_{emp}	11,5**	34,4***	24,3***	17,8***	26,3***	5,2
Bad/Good	NF	96,1	57,1	75,0	87,3	76,7	90,0
	I—	83,5	119,4	90,3	93,6	90,3	87,9
	I+	**116,1**	**126,4**	**132,2**	**116,1**	**133,9**	**121,5**
	H_{emp}	10,9**	69,2***	38,2***	10,2**	37,8***	13,7***
Strange/Native	NF	93,9	126,0	111,1	115,2	116,2	116,1
	I—	126,4	102,9	107,5	109,8	109,3	104,5
	I+	**76,4**	**70,6**	**76,3**	**72,7**	**68,5**	**65,4**
	H_{emp}	25,7***	36,6***	15,6***	23,3***	27,4***	27,9***
Evil/Kind	NF	99,3	127,3	112,9	105,2	119,0	109,9
	I—	110,8	99,9	107,4	109,7	114,2	110,2
	I+	**85,4**	**71,3**	**74,4**	**83,6**	**60,2**	**66,5**
	H_{emp}	6,45*	38,14***	18,49***	8,05*	43,66***	24,27***
Hated/Loved	NF	90,5	65,7	83,8	72,0	71,2	80,8
	I—	81,3	99,1	90,0	99,5	96,8	89,5
	I+	**124,9**	**131,0**	**122,6**	**127,5**	**134,0**	**132,0**
	$H_{эмп}$	21,4***	51,2***	19,1***	35,1***	42,6***	29,8***
Foolish/Wise	NF	100,3	97,3	103,3	117,8	132,3	102,1
	I—	113,9	127,0	114,6	105,0	99,1	115,6
	I+	**81,3**	**83,0**	**78,8**	**73,9**	**59,7**	**70,3**
	H_{emp}	10,8**	18,3***	13,6***	22,7***	60,2***	20,8***

Scales	Group	Characters					
		Daenerys	**Jon Snow**	**Sansa**	**Arya**	**Tyrion**	**Jaime**
Ugly/Beautiful	NF	85,7	72,9	81,1	75,5	84,4	69,9
	I—	95,5	100,8	94,1	94,8	101,8	102,5
	I+	**116,5**	**122,9**	**121,9**	**127,7**	**115,3**	**130,3**
	H_{emp}	12,9**	31,1***	20,8***	30,9***	10,3**	38,2***

Note: NF — group of subjects, previously unfamiliar with the series; I— — group of subjects, who don't identify themselves with a character; I+ — group of subjects, who identify themselves with a character; «*» — p<0,05; «**» — p<0,01; «***» — p<0,001.

4. Psychosemantic structure of character attraction of different groups of subjects

Based on the scores on the semantic differential scales for each character, the psychosemantic structure was analyzed using factor analysis for three groups of subjects: those not previously familiar with the series, and those identifying and not identifying themselves with a particular character (Tables 5—7).

The psychosemantic structure of each character's attraction is represented by a factor that includes the "Repulsive/Attractive" indicator.

The psychosemantic structure of character attraction for subjects not previously familiar with the series is simple — monopolar and single-factor (except for the character of Sansa). For all characters, the attraction factor includes author scale "Ugly/Beautiful". For all characters, except for the ambivalent character Jaime, the attractivon structure is supplemented by the standard scale "Hated/Loved" and the author scale "Fearful/Safe". For all positive characters, the structure of attraction includes the standard scales "Bad/Good" and "Dirty/Clean".

Subjects who do not identify themselves with specific characters revealed the most complex character attraction structure. For all characters, except for the positive character of Jon Snow, the structure of attraction is bipolar, and for three characters out of six it is bifactorial. For almost all characters, the attraction factor includes the author's scale "Ugly/Beautiful" (except Jaime), the author's scales "Bad/Good" and "Hated/Loved" (except Tyrion); and the author's scale "Cowardly/Daring" (except Sansa). Almost all characters have the "Repulsive/Attractive" scale opposed to the "Strange/Native" scale (except Daenerys). Other scales in the structure of character attraction are specific.

For subjects who identify themselves with specific characters, the psychosemantic structure of character attraction is the simplest and most single-factor and unipolar for most characters, except for the positive character of Jon Snow and the ambivalent character of Tyrion. For all characters, the attraction factor includes the author's scale "Ugly/Beautiful". For four out of the six characters, the attraction factor includes the "Hated/Loved" scale (except for characters embodying the Divine Child archetype). Other scales in the structure of character attraction are specific.

T a b l e 5

The structure of character attraction in a group of subjects, previously unfamiliar with the series

Scales	The structure of character attraction						
	Daenerys (n = 71)	**Jon Snow (n = 71)**	**Sansa (n = 71)**		**Arya (n = 71)**	**Tyrion (n = 71)**	**Jaime (n = 71)**
	1	2	2	6	1	4	3
Repulsive/Attractive	0,7	0,8	0,5	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,8
Passive/Active	0,5				0,4		0,8
Chaotic/Organised	0,7		0,5		0,6		0,8
Bad/Good	0,8	0,6	0,6		0,5		
Slow/Fast					0,4		
Miserable/Lively					0,5	0,4	
Hated/Loved	0,7	0,7	0,5		0,8	0,4	
Dirty/Clean	0,7	0,6	0,8		0,8		
Sad/Joyful				0,7			
Ugly/Beautiful	0,6	0,7	0,8		0,7	0,8	0,6
Fearful/Safe	0,7	0,7	0,8		0,7	0,4	
Masculine/Feminine				-0,5			
% of dispersion	27,8	17,4	14,2	4,9	34,7	7,3	12,1
KMO	0,753	0,638	0,631		0,797	0,737	0,721
Bartlett's sphericity test	835,1***	784,5***	872,5***		965,4***	889,8***	1068,9***

Note: "*" — p<0,05; "**" — p<0,01; "***" — p<0,001; 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 — factor numbers.

Discussion

Cult films offer to the viewer a wide range of characters as options for identification, with careful construction of images, their standardization, their external attractiveness, precise embodiment of archetypal ambivalence and appeal. Even a brief presentation of photographic images of the characters acts as a sufficient basis for identification with them and recognition of the myth they embody. The psychosemantic space of the characters shows that subjects use universal cultural indicators (good-evil) to differentiate them. The results do confirm the characteristic of cult films discussed by researchers — "standardization", "templateness", "stereotypicality" [16; 19].

Psychosemantic analysis shows that stereotypes of cult film characters' characteristics go back to the fundamental oppositions of culture; moreover, they appear in an attractive multi variant diversity. Characters with whom viewers identify themselves are perceived by them as more appealing, with not only their positive aspects

Table 6

The structure of character attraction in groups of subjects without identification with a specific character

Scales	Without identification with a character								
	Daenerys (n = 59)		Jon Snow (n = 45)	Sansa (n = 56)	Arya (n = 53)		Tyrion (n = 59)	Jaime (n = 67)	
	2	5	2	2	1	2	2	1	3
Repulsive/Attractive	0,5	0,6	0,8	0,7	−0,5	0,7	0,8	−0,4	0,6
Weak/Strong					0,9				
Dark/Light					0,4				
Passive/Active	0,8					0,8			0,8
Chaotic/Organised		0,8							
False/Truthful					0,6				
Bad/Good		0,4	0,8	0,6		0,5		−0,4	
Tense/Relaxed		−0,5							
Cowardly/Daring	0,6		0,8			0,9	0,5		0,7
Strange/Native				−0,5	0,8		−0,5	0,8	
Slow/Fast	0,8					0,8			0,8
Evil/Kind					0,8			0,7	
Hated/Loved	0,4		0,7	0,7	−0,4	0,7		−0,8	
Foolish/Wise				−0,5	0,8				
Dirty/Clean			0,6	0,8					
Ugly/Beautiful	0,6		0,8	0,8		0,7	0,7		
Ordinary/Unusual					0,7				
Fearful/Safe		0,4	0,6	0,5					
Masculine/Feminine					−0,5		0,4		
% of dispersion	13,8	5,8	13,4	12,1	28,4	11,4	9,5	21,9	9,8
KMO	0,684		0,805	0,731	0,757		0,586	0,576	
Bartlett's sphericity test	759,1***		1039,9***	766,9***	724,2***		591,7***	537,2***	

Note: "*" — p < 0,05; "**" — p<0,01; "***" — p<0,001; 1, 2, 3, 5 — factor numbers.

Table 7

The structure of character attraction in a group of subjects who have identification with specific characters

Scales	Identification with a character					
	Daenerys (n = 62)	Jon Snow (n = 76)	Sansa (n = 65)	Arya (n = 68)	Tyrion (n = 62)	Jaime (n = 54)
	1	2	2	3	3	3
Repulsive/Attractive	0,7	−0,6	0,7	0,8	0,7	0,9
Passive/Active	0,7					
Bad/Good			0,7			
Simple/Complex		0,5				
Cowardly/Daring	0,8		0,5			0,5
Slow/Fast	0,6					
Hated/Loved	0,5		0,8	0,7		0,7
Foolish/Wise		0,6				

Scales	Identification with a character					
	Daenerys (n = 62)	Jon Snow (n = 76)	Sansa (n = 65)	Arya (n = 68)	Tyrion (n = 62)	Jaime (n = 54)
	1	2	2	3	3	3
Dirty/Clean			0,6	0,4		
Sad/Joyful		0,6			−0,5	
Ugly/Beautiful	0,8	−0,4	0,7	0,7	0,7	0,8
Ordinary/Unusual		0,8				
Fearful/Safe					−0,5	
% of dispersion	17,6	15,9	14,4	10,5	8,5	12,2
KMO	0,580	0,629	0,582	0,605	0,651	0,618
Bartlett's sphericity test	591,7***	650,5***	557,4***	580,5***	713,0***	673,8***

Note: "***" — $p < 0,001$; 1, 2, 3 — factor numbers.

but also ambivalent ones being reflexed. Viewers perceive the characters with whom they identify themselves as simultaneously appealing, beautiful, and beloved and yet dark, false, strange, evil, and foolish. Identification with a character includes perceiving them as strange rather than native, as false, keeping secrets, which maintains interest in them. The reflection of ambivalent characteristics of characters can also be a consequence of the phenomenon of assumed similarity, bestowing the character with traits similar to one's own [26].

It is important to note that the psychosemantic structure of character attraction reflects subject's perception of their external characteristics, external attractiveness. External attractiveness, in combination with identification with the character, can serve as a foundation for the construction of romantic parasocial relationships, when the fictional character is perceived not only as a close friend, but also as a suitable romantic partner [22].

Identification with a character leads to subjective simplification of their images, highlighting the main characteristics. Getting to know characters without identifying with them leads to the identification of objectively higher number attributes related to attraction. These data are consistent with the results of other studies [26], where it is shown that viewers develop simplified versions of the personality of fictional characters to facilitate easier correlating of them with themselves and identification.

Thus, a dynamic balance is formed in the psychosemantic structure of cult film characters — the interaction between the attractive stereotypical simplicity of personal identity and the attractive excessive complexity of existing alienated others, which prolongs interest in the work itself and its repeated viewings.

It seems promising to continue the study of the attraction of cult film characters in the context of personal characteristics of viewers, as well as analysis of the gender specifics of character attraction.

Conclusions

1. Positive and ambivalent characters are more likely to encourage subjects to identify themselves with them. Characters that carry negative semantics are less likely to evoke a desire in subjects to identify themselves with them.

2. Identification with cult movie characters is accompanied by their stronger attraction from subjects. Film characters, even positive ones, are perceived by subjects as having certain ambivalent characteristics.

3. The psychosemantic structure of character attraction reflects subject's perception of their external characteristics, external attractiveness. Identification with a character leads to subjective simplification of their image, highlighting the main characteristics. Familiarization with characters without identification with them leads to the identification of objectively higher number attributes related to attraction.

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