

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE ANALYSIS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES AND AUGUSTE DUPIN IN A CROSSOVER FANFICTION *PARACOSM*

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Abstract

Narrative technique refers to writers' methods and devices used to tell their stories. Understanding writers' processes and devices to convey their stories is crucial for analyzing and appreciating the arts. However, studying narrative techniques can be complex and requires close attention to detail. This study aims to explain what narrative techniques applied in the crossover fanfiction of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin to investigate how the narrative form generates impacts on losses and gains of the characterization of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin in references to their canons and to reveal why the characterization of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin in the crossover fanfiction are different from their canon. This research uses qualitative methods because the data are in the form of text taken from crossover fanfiction *Paracosm* (2016) by BiancaAparo. The data are analyzed using Gerald Genette's narrative techniques. The result of this study showed that the dominant data of narrative techniques applied in *Paracosm* is narrative mood, which loses their characterization. Narrative mood relates to the position or position of the author, narrator, and characters in a story. That is why the narrative mood is mainly found along with the research objects, the main characters in this fanfiction, Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin. It shows that the two characters have an impact, causing losses of their characteristic. Yet, that does not prevent any gain of the characteristic based on the characters in the original work. Thus, fanfiction can be different from the canon because it is written by different author with different biographical and social elements.

INTRODUCTION

Literary genres are classifications of literary works that share similarities in form, style, or content. They provide readers with expectations, guide writers, and reflect the dynamic interplay between societal trends, cultural values, and artistic expression (Ballad, 2024). Within this vast landscape, the mystery genre, characterized by intricate plots and the pursuit of truth, has produced iconic figures such as C. Auguste Dupin and Sherlock Holmes. This research delves into crossover fanfiction. In this creative space, these legendary detectives, originating from the minds of Edgar Allan Poe and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, converge in unexpected

narratives crafted by fans.

The narrative journey commences with Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, hailed as the pioneering modern detective story, introducing Dupin as literature's inaugural fictional detective. This narrative archetype, initiated by Poe, significantly influenced subsequent detective characters, notably Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*. Acknowledging Poe's impact, Doyle incorporated similar traits into Holmes, marking the inception of another iconic detective in literary history. Sherlock Holmes, a consulting detective with unparalleled deductive prowess, became a cultural phenomenon, transcending literature to manifest in adaptations spanning film, television, comics, animation, and fan fiction. Fanfiction, a unique form of fan expression, enables enthusiasts to reimagine and extend the narratives of their beloved characters.

However, the narrative techniques employed in crossover fanfiction involving Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin have yet to be discovered. Therefore, the study hypothesizes that analyzing these techniques, such as figurative language, literary devices, elements of fiction, and structures proposed by scholars such as Freytag (1895) and Genette (1980), can help us understand how fanfiction authors portray these iconic literary figures in new and different ways.

This study focuses on the intersection of two fictional characters, Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin, in the realm of crossover fanfiction, exploring the narrative techniques employed and their implications on character portrayal. The research recognizes the scarcity of studies addressing narrative techniques in crossover fanfiction involving Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin. The intersection of these two distinctive characters from different literary eras, backgrounds, and creators presents an intriguing exploration of storytelling possibilities. The absence of prior research on this specific intersection adds significance to this investigation.

As the narrative unfolds within the digital realm of fanfiction, where enthusiasts freely shape alternative universes, the study aims to analyse narrative techniques employed by examining figurative language, literary devices, elements of fiction, and structures proposed by scholars such as Freytag and Genette. Additionally, the research seeks to understand the impact of these narrative techniques on the characterization of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin, comparing their portrayal in fanfiction with their canonical representations.

Through this exploration, the study endeavours to answer pivotal questions regarding the narrative techniques utilized in crossover fanfiction, the resultant impact on

characterizations, and the reasons behind deviations from the canonical portrayals. By shedding light on these aspects, this research contributes to the evolving discourse on narrative techniques in fanfiction, particularly within the unique context of intersecting two iconic literary figures—Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Narrative Techniques

G rard Genette (1980) has developed a theory of narratological poetics based on a rigorous typology. According to Genette, every text contains traces of narration and it can be used to determine the structure of a narrative. The subject of G rard Genette's narrative structure consists of five main categories, namely (1) narrative order, (2) narrative duration, (3) narrative frequency, (4) narrative mood, and (5) narrative voice.

Narrative order is related to the relation between the order of events in the story and the arrangement of those events in a narrative. It consists of two types of narrative order. The first, is achrony, which refers to a narrative situation in which the time in the story and the time when the story is told runs normally, together, and parallel. The second is anachrony, which is the opposite of the first. In this version, the time in the story and when the story is told are not intertwined. In other word, the two are from different time. Then, anachrony is divided into two types, namely prolepsis (flashforward) and analepsis (flashback).

The next important element in establishing a story is events that happens in a certain duration. A series of events, or duration of events in Genette's term, in a story can happen in years, months, days, hours, and minutes, which is covered in lines and pages for a written narrative. The relation of the two, duration of the events being told and the length of the pages, determines the narrative speed, whether it is accelerated or decelerated. These accelerations and decelerations are demonstrated in the four basic forms of narrative movement, namely scene, summary, ellipsis, and descriptive pause (Genette, 1980, p. 95). Narrative duration describes the difference between the actual story of an event (story time) and the time it takes for the narrator to tell the event (narrative time). Genette (1980, p. 95) distinguishes four movements in narrative duration, namely pause, scene, summary, and ellipsis.

The next technique is narrative frequency, which is related to repetition or frequency of events occurring in action, and the number of times the events are mentioned in the text. Narrative frequency has not been studied much despite being one of the main aspects of narrative temporality (Genette, 1980, p. 113). Genette (1980, pp. 114-116) mentions four types of narrative frequencies as follows: singulative representation, anaphoric representation,

repeating representation, and iterative representation.

Narrative mood is related to the position of the story writer, the narrator, and the characters of a story. Observing the mood means observing the way the author presents the narrator in the story, whether the narrator is one of characters telling the story or is it pure narrator (not a character). Furthermore, Genette (1980, p.189-190) used the term focalization to refer to what is usually termed perspective and point of view. This focalization concept is utilized to see the narrator's position in the story. Genette divided narrative focalization techniques into three categories; internal focalization, external focalization and zero focalization or non-focalized narrative.

Narrative voice is related to who tells the story, and where he tells the story from. Narrative voice focuses on the study of the time of narrative, person, and narrative level. Time of narrating itself is the position of the narrator in describing the time in the story. Time of narrative is then divided into four, namely subsequent, prior, simultaneous, and interpolated (Genette, 1980, p. 217).

Character and Characterization

Characterization, according to Baldick (1991, p. 37), is the presentation of people in narrative or dramatic works through the characters' actions, speech, or physical appearance. It means that a character can be distinguished from others because they have distinct personalities and physical characteristics. In fanfiction there are idioms called in character (IC) and out of character (OOC). Farlex Dictionary of Idioms (2015) defines in character as "very typical of how someone would normally speak or behave", consistent with the traits or characteristics assigned to the character in a book, film or play. Meanwhile, out of character refers to behavior or speech that is very different from how someone would normally speak or behave. It is inconsistent with the traits or characteristics assigned to the character in a book, film or play. Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2022) also defines in character as being consistent with a person's usual qualities or traits, and out of character as being inconsistent with a person's usual qualities or traits.

Based on the understanding of the idioms in character and out of character above, the researcher decided to use those two idioms to investigate the losses and gains of the characterization of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin. Canonically, Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin already have the traits or characteristics assigned to their character in books or short stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Edgar Allan Poe. Therefore, the classification of the data from the fanfiction is in character as gain of the characterization and out of character

as loss of the characterization.

Sherlock Holmes

In 1887, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote a detective story with Sherlock Holmes as the main character. At first Doyle named the detective as Sherrinford Holmes, but then he changed the name into Sherlock Holmes. Holmes, a brilliant detective who lives at 221B Baker Street, London, is well-known for his ability to solve cases through logic and keen observation. He is perhaps the most famous fictional detective, as well as one of the most well-known and instantly recognizable literary characters.

Auguste Dupin

Le Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin is a detective character in Edgar Allan Poe's story. Dupin first appeared in Poe's 1841 short story *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, which is widely regarded as the first detective fiction story. The iconic character then reappeared in other short stories, *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* (1842) and *The Purloined Letter* (1844). Dupin became a model of detective stories in the following eras.

Extrinsic Element

Extrinsic elements are the elements that are not from within the literary work, but indirectly affect the building or the literary organization (Nurgiyantoro, 2010, p.23). In particular, extrinsic elements are not part of the literary works but influence the structure of the story. However, the extrinsic element is quite influential on the rotational structure of the resulting story. Extrinsic elements are, among others, the state of subjectivity of individual authors who have attitudes, beliefs, and views of life that will all affect the literary work they wrote. The extrinsic element of literary work depends on the author, the one who is telling the story.

There are some elements of extrinsic elements, namely biographical and social elements. Biographical elements are elements of the author's background including such as the author's residence, family, educational background, environment, and so on. Whereas, social elements related to the conditions of society when a story is made. It is the element of life shaped by society. Social elements can be viewed at the level of a nation, city, neighborhood, community, family or individuals.

Crossover Fanfiction

Fanfiction (usually shortened to "fanfic") is a fiction that is created by the fan, related to the original story (Overchuk, 2018). It can be continuing the story, using the characters to

create other plot, or the same plot with some additional stories. Fanfiction also has five elements of fiction, namely plot, setting, character, point of view and theme. It can take the form of a sequel, prequel, parody, alternate universe (AU), or crossover from the original work. Crossover fanfiction is fanfic or other fan-created work that combines two or more fandoms in some way. *Paracosm* by BiancaAparo, a crossover fanfiction from website Archive of Our Own (AO3) that published on April 26, 2016, is a non-profit open source repository for user-submitted fanfiction and other fanworks. *Paracosm* displays an unexpected meeting of two fictional characters that were previously considered could never be met, Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin.

There have been several pieces of research that discuss similar issues. The first research, *Comparison of the Mystery Solution Methods of Auguste Dupin, Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot* by Kuniewicz Marzena (2018), analyzes the methods of solving crimes by three of the most famous detectives in English literature. The second research is a journal article by Khalifatunnisa, P. R., & Iftanty, E. (2023) entitled *Character Values in Sherlock Holmes Short Stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: A Content Analysis*, which aims to investigate how character values are presented and how they affect characterization in Sherlock Holmes Short Stories based on the canonical order. Other research, *Narrative Techniques in Angie Thomas' Novel The Hate U Give* by Zakaria, M. F. R. (2020), *Narrative Techniques in F. Scott Fitzgerald's 'The Great Gatsby'* by Abusamra, R. (2023), and *Narrative Analysis of Oscar Wilde's Short Story 'The Happy Prince'* by Shaheen, U. (2019) explores the narrative techniques used in the novel and short story with same theory by Gérard Genette (1980).

on the previous studies that have been described above, none of them discuss narrative techniques used in the stories of Sherlock Holmes or Auguste Dupin. Most of the previous studies discuss the characteristic comparison between Holmes and Dupin or the method they use in solving a case. The adaptations used in some of the previous studies were also mostly films compared to one another and the use of fanfiction adaptation for a study is still quite rare.

RESEARCH METHOD

The qualitative research method differs from the quantitative method in approach (Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D., 2018, p. 292). This method involves relying on data in the form of text and image, using unique data analysis techniques, and employing a wide range of designs. When writing methods section for a qualitative research proposal, researchers must consider the purpose of qualitative research, mention the designs used, reflect on their role in

the study, choose from an array of data sources, use specific protocols for data recording, and conduct multiple stages of data analysis.

The researcher's purpose for using a qualitative method in this research is to inform the reader about the study's design. It goes over the data analysis steps in greater detail, as well as the methods to present the data, interpret, validate, and indicate potential study outcomes. The sources of data in this research were divided into two parts; primary and secondary source. Primary source is where the main data is taken from, which in this case is crossover fanfiction *Paracosm* by BiancaAparo. The fanfiction consisted of 42 chapters and was published in the website Archive of Our Own (AO3) from 2015 until 2016. The researchers also analyze the characteristics of two characters, Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin. Secondary sources, where the secondary data is collected from, are *Sherlock Holmes* novels by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Auguste Dupin Short Stories by Edgar Allan Poe.

In this study, the instrument plays an important role. One of the critical steps in carrying out this research is the use of an instrument. As a result, during the data collection process, the researcher has to select an instrument. A research instrument is a data collection tool that must be valid and reliable. The researcher used note taking as the instrument in this study. Note taking is a system for recording information that requires the writer to use a card. The data includes the author's last name, page number, and other pertinent information (Nazir, 1998, p. 124-125).

The data of this research were collected by the following steps; (1) read *Paracosm*, the crossover fanfiction, for several times in order to understand the whole story, (2) identify some statements, sentences, phrases, and the utterances, (3) collect all of the data that have been identified in the story, (4) coding the data, (5) selects, chooses, and classifies the data that are most relevant and related to the analysis. Then, to analyze the data, the researcher used the qualitative data analysis technique of Spradley's (1980) model as a whole the research process. The four stages of data analysis in qualitative research is also presented in the process. They are domain analysis, taxonomy analysis, component analysis, and finding cultural theme.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings consist of three sections; first, the findings of narrative technique categories which were used in crossover fanfiction *Paracosm* (2016) by BiancaAparo. Second, the findings of how narrative techniques generate impacts on losses and gains of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin's characterization of. Third, the findings of the reason why the characterization of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin in the crossover fanfiction have

differences to their canon.

Narrative Technique in Crossover Fanfiction *Paracosm*

Narrative Order

This research has found five narrative orders from 307 data in crossover fanfiction *Paracosm*. An example of narrative order presented in the fanfiction is seen in the following quotation.

23 November 2015
City of Westminster, London, England
Tuesday afternoon
4:10 PM (BiancaAparo, 2016, p. 4)

The quotation shows the story time and starts the narrative time which then relates to a narrative order. The type of narrative order that occurs in this datum is anachrony, when the story and narration do not run parallel. It is included in the category of prolepsis (flash-forward) because at the beginning of the story, there is no mention of the time of the story and immediately jumps to the future, on November 23, 2015.

Narrative Duration

This research has found 10 narrative duration data from 307 data in crossover fanfiction *Paracosm*. The following quote is an example of narrative duration presented in the fanfiction.

Rubbing his wrist, he muttered, "From The Fall. I didn't land quite as I should have. Reflexively I reached out, trying to stop myself but that was an involuntary action and I'm very fortune ate I didn't shatter both wrists or sustain any more injuries than I did." (BiancaAparo, 2016, p. 51)

The dialog shows narrative duration in the scene category. Scene occurs if the narrative time corresponds to story time and usually dialogue is a good example for this category. In the dialog "*From The Fall. I didn't land quite as I should have.*", indicates that Sherlock Holmes is recounting past events that occurred according to the time of the current story without any cut or pause in the story time by mentioning it in the form of dialogue.

Narrative Frequency

This research has found 10 narrative frequency data from 307 data in crossover fanfiction *Paracosm*. It can be clearly seen in this part taken from the narration.

"Today Sherlock learned that one cannot insult the wife of a prominent government official in her own bloody house!" John bawled the last bit over his shoulder. (BiancaAparo, 2016, p. 63)

The dialog shows singulative representation of narrative frequency. This type is narrating what happened once. Here, John Watson mentioned once an event about Sherlock Holmes learning something new that also happened once. This narrative form is clearly the most common, in which the singularity of the narrative statement corresponds to the singularity of the events narrated.

Narrative Mood

This research has found 198 narrative mood data from 307 data in crossover fanfiction *Paracosm*. It is seen from this narration.

While William Sherlock Scott Holmes grew up on a posh estate and John Hamish Watson made the streets of London his playground, Violet Jane Hunter led the life of an American Army Brat. She wasn't alone though. Her little brother Michael was her constant companion and best friend...
(BiancaAparo, 2016, p. 8)

The quotation above shows a narrative mood in which the writer as the narrator is not a character in the story. This is also a focalization, a zero-focalization category that is also known as non-focalization narrative. It is where the narrator knows more than the characters as an observer, or more specifically the narrator says more than any of the characters knows.

Narrative Voice

This research has found 84 narrative voice data from 307 data in crossover fanfiction *Paracosm*. From the following part of the story, narrative voice is clearly seen.

Not this time however. "Oh, honestly," he snarled, walking towards the kitchen, his back to John and Violet. As John stood up, Sherlock added, "If you only came to give me another one of your dull lectures about nutrition, you can just go right home, John Watson. I don't have the time to endure listening to you blathering about a well-balanced and proper diet. You are both over-reacting anyway. I have explained countless times, I do not starve myself, I fast because digestion slows me down while I'm worki-"
(BiancaAparo, 2016, p. 16)

The quotation shows narrative voice, a study that focuses on time of narrative, person, and narrative level. It has to do with who is telling the story and where it is coming from. This narrative voice is interpolated in the time of narrative category, occurring when the narrator combines current and future events. The type of person as the narrator is homodiegetic and the narrative level aspect is an intradiegetic-homodiegetic paradigm. Homodiegetic narrator is

a type of narrative in which the narrator is present as a character in the story he tells, meanwhile the intradiegetic-homodiegetic paradigm is the narrator in the second degree who tells his own story.

Loss and Gain of The Characteristic of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin in Crossover Fanfiction *Paracosm*

There are 184 data of loss and 123 data of gain. This research focuses on the different characteristics of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin compared to the canon and the impact in their characteristics.

Loss

Loss is when there are certain changes in the characterization of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin in the fanfiction when compared to the original classic story. For example, in the following narration:

Violet wasn't sure if that was a great idea, since they were supposed to hide the fact who Henry's paternal family was. And Sherlock had the same eye shape as his mother. But Mrs. Holmes had looked so crushed when Violet told her she couldn't have children, Molly probably felt compelled to invite Mrs. Holmes over to play Nana. (BiancaAparo, 2016, p. 270)

In the above text, the narrative shows a loss in the character of Sherlock Holmes by mentioning that Sherlock had the same eye shape as his mother. In *A Study in Scarlet*, Holmes' eyes are described as particularly sharp and piercing. However, it is never mentioned that Holmes had the same eye shape as his mother in the canon.

Gain

Gain in line with what a fanfiction describe as in-character, which is when the characterization of Sherlock and Auguste in the fanfiction is in line with the original classic story.

"... I have explained countless times, I do not starve myself, I fast because digesting slows me down while I'm worki-" (BiancaAparo, 2016, p. 16)

There is a gain shown in the data above, in the character of Sherlock Holmes. In *The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone* and *The Adventure of the Reigate Squire*, Holmes could stop eating when he worked. He told Watson that: "The faculties become refined when you starve them. What your digestion gains in the way of blood supply is so much lost to the brain. I am a brain. The rest of me is a mere appendix. Therefore, it is the brain I must consider."

The Reason Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin's Characterization have Differences in Canon and Fanfiction

Based on the finding, Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin's characterization have a significant difference in canon and fanfiction. This can be seen from the narrative technique that generates loss and gain on their characteristics in fanfiction. The loss in characterization is more than the gain, which means that different characterization of the two detective is apparent. There are some reasons that influence the change occurred.

Biographical Element

"A good read, something to really sink my teeth into. I was on a classical literature kick for a while. Now I thirst for something contemporary, although I have a weakness for good poetry." (BiancaAparo, 2016, p. 227)

The narration shows that Auguste Dupin has an interest in things related to literature. There is a gain in the character of Auguste Dupin. In *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, it is known that Dupin loves reading and spends money for books. Therefore, it is possible that he also liked poetry because his creator, Edgar Allan Poe, was a poet as well. This reference makes the fans write more clearly that Dupin has an interest in literature that includes not only books or articles but also poetry and classical literature.

Social Elements

"He was a visionary in his field. He was able to marry," she linked her fingers together, "deductive reasoning with inductive thinking, which changed investigative procedures as well as forensic science forever." (BiancaAparo, 2016, p. 33)

It is mentioned that Dupin was married. There is also a loss in the character of Auguste Dupin. However, in the canon version by Edgar Allan Poe, Dupin was unmarried and there is no proof in the three short stories about him that indicated his involvement with a woman. In none of the stories does his attitude towards the female sex become apparent. The fanfiction writer makes Dupin a married man in the story to help the storyline where he has written Dupin as a middle-aged man who has many acquaintances, especially women. This reason is also influenced by the writer's social condition. In the write's era and culture, middle-aged man is often described as someone who is married or a widower. In contrast to Poe, who prefers to write Dupin as a young gentleman who is difficult to get along with except with the nameless narrator who always accompanies him in the canon.

This research identified five narrative techniques used in the story, with narrative mood

being the most dominant technique, followed by narrative voice as the least dominant. The study found that extrinsic elements such as biographical and social elements had a significant impact on the characterization of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin. From the analysis, it is shown that narrative mood was the most dominant technique and that biographical elements generated gains, while social elements produced losses. The findings suggest that the crossover fanfiction genre allows writers to experiment with different narrative techniques and extrinsic elements to shape the characterization of fictional characters. The genre provides an opportunity for fans to explore and extend the boundaries of the original canon, creating new and exciting narratives that reflect contemporary concerns and issues.

The research's strengths lie in its focus on a specific fanfiction story, which allowed for a detailed analysis of the narrative techniques and extrinsic elements used in the story. The findings provide valuable insights into the impact of narrative techniques and extrinsic elements on the characterization of fictional characters. However, the study's limitations lie in its limited sample size, which may not be representative of the broader crossover fanfiction genre. The results of the research have implications for the broader context of fanfiction and the creative process.

The study highlights the importance of narrative techniques and extrinsic elements in shaping the characterization of fictional characters. The research also emphasizes the role of fanfiction in expanding and enriching the original canon, providing an opportunity for fans to engage with and reimagine their favorite characters and stories.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this research is that the characterization of Sherlock Holmes and Auguste Dupin in crossover fanfiction *Paracosm* is inconsistent with their original character traits. The nine ways to present character personalities, such as personal description, reactions, conversation of others, thoughts, and mannerism, were used through the narrative mood technique. However, the characterization of the characters in the fanfiction did not align with the traits or characteristics assigned to them by their original authors, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Edgar Allan Poe. This finding is quite shocking as it indicates that fanfiction authors can significantly alter the characters' personalities and traits in their stories, leading to inconsistencies with the original canon.

This research has made significant contributions to the understanding of narrative techniques in crossover fanfiction and their impact on characterization. By analyzing the narrative order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice, the researcher was able to understand

how these techniques generate impacts of losses and gains on the characters' traits and personalities. The most commonly used narrative technique in *Paracosm* was narrative mood, which refers to the writer's, narrator's, and characters' positions in a story. This study highlights the importance of understanding narrative techniques to create a coherent and consistent story that aligns with the original canon.

Although this research provides valuable insights into the narrative techniques used in crossover fanfiction and their impact on characterization, there are some limitations. This study only analyzed one crossover fanfiction, *Paracosm*, which may not be representative of all crossover fanfictions. Additionally, the researcher used limited methods to analyze the data, and further research is needed to accommodate more complete methods. As such, future research can consider analyzing a larger sample size of crossover fanfictions and using more comprehensive methods to gain a better understanding of the narrative techniques used in these stories. By doing so, we can gain a more in-depth understanding of how fanfiction authors use narrative techniques to alter the original canon's characterization and traits.

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