
Analysis Of Film Techniques Used In The Film Late Spring

Michael Pigott puts forward the argument that Ozu Yasujiro foregrounds, through various non-conventional (to Western standards) techniques, the sense of time. Describing these techniques, Pigott explains their purpose in relation to the overarching theme of time and contrasts them with their traditionally associated purposes in Western cinema. Pigott focuses on camera, editing, sound and mise-en-scène. Through editing, Ozu omits narratively significant moments from the film. These types of ellipsis have a de-dramatizing effect. Instead of the peaks of interest in the lives of the characters, we are shown either empty exterior shots or the banal scenes pre and after these significant moments.

Pigott refers to Ozu's 'refusal to portray Noriko's meeting with her prospective husband or the wedding ceremony itself'. In the anti-classical vein of Ozu, these scenes contradict the 'logic of narrative economy' yet still retain their importance. These scenes situate the character in their everyday routine as Ozu highlights how ordinary lives can be interesting. But, as Pigott remarks, Ozu also uses these scenes where no ellipsis occurs, yet they still seem unnecessary. Pigott refutes two interpretations of these sequences; that they serve to cover time-lapses, or that they are formalistically external to the diegesis.

Instead, Pigott postulates, the temporal duration of these scenes makes them something more than pure establishing shots or B roll, furnishing mundane, anonymous objects of mise-en-scène with coherent meaning. Pigott uses the Ryoanji rock garden scene as an example: 'the elements of the frame as a whole seem to be in equilibrium', we can discern no 'source of consternation', and this consequently evokes: 'stillness...the absence of human conflict or tension, an image also of eternity, and that which exists without change'. Moreover, Pigott observes that these scenes have a dreamlike quality, a kind of 'temporal obscurantism' that underlines the non-specify of time. However, Ozu also employs ellipsis within scenes themselves instead of resorting to dislocating cutaways. These scenes lack any transitional insert to delineate the passage of time, which is instead suggested through shot extracts as if arranged in a 'temporal collage'. Ozu uses cutaways when they aren't logically necessary and omits them when they are. Pigott terms this 'discontinuous continuity'. Pigott also draws our attention to the importance of music. He first establishes, citing Chion, that since the advent of sound in Western cinema, it has been used to denote the linearity of shots by facilitating the invisibility of cuts (1994).

Pigott stresses that sound need not always have this function. In *Late Spring*, he argues, it adds to the indeterminacy and absence of linear temporality. Pigott places time on par with other stylistic elements of film, as editing, sound or mise-en-scène and argues that it is this attention

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to temporality that distinguished film art from literary art. He substantiates his claims with enough evidence from the film itself, supporting the view that Ozu cleverly manipulates the time in Late Spring, making apparent 'the grand all-encompassing flow of life' in which 'the performer may grow old, die and be replaced {but} the actions to be performed will not change'.

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