

Dreams and Memories to Cinema

Both in dreams and in memories images are presented in a collective manner. That is, a dream image or a memory image is never presented in its utmost accuracy. Rather, a whole image consists of fragmentations of multiple images of the past. As such, the aesthetics of cinema, which is composed of fragmented images joined to form a whole, is intrinsically related to the aesthetics and the effects of dreams and memories.

Hence, when a filmmaker is subjected only by framing and editing, the produced film is at its truest and most honest form – a particular dream and memory of the filmmaker. It is at this point where the filmmaker achieves his/her auteurism. Carrying out this logic, if cinema is to be considered as art, then it is at utmost importance that auteurism is supported. The problem, however, lies in the fact that although we do consider cinema as art, we do not have faith in the ability of the medium to contain itself. Note the common saying, “a film MUST have a good story”. Why must a film have a good story? Why should a filmmaker even be bothered by telling a story? As I inquired in my previous writings, a storyteller is not obligated to make a film, so why should a filmmaker be obligated to tell a story? Any temporal art will inevitably contain a story or stories because they display events that are conditioned by time. Since that is the case, a filmmaker need not think about inserting a story into his/her film. Again, we do consider cinema as art but we do not have faith in the ability of the medium to contain itself. Here I am not concerned with so-called video art, which is a postmodern catastrophe that renders a moving image(s) as a statement rather than, again, a medium that contains itself.

I would like to use a dream sequence from Andrei Tarkovsky’s film *Nostalghia* (1983) in order to illustrate what I mean by cinema that is able to contain itself. Somewhere in the middle of the film a dream sequence comes in. The sequence is filmed in black & white and has no dialogue. I showed the sequence to a friend who has never heard of or seen a Tarkovsky film before. After a little bit into the sequence he stated that the sequence makes him think about his mother. It turns out that Tarkovsky actually dedicated the film to the memory of his mother (a dedication title at the end of the film reveals it). How, then, was my friend who had never heard of or seen a Tarkovsky film before able to think about his mother while watching the sequence? It is simply because the film contains itself without relying on supplemental add-ons such as a story. The film is so essentially honest to itself that it only needs to display itself. Similar phenomena occurred when I screened Ingmar Bergman’s film *Persona* (1966) to two different groups of people who had never heard of or seen a Bergman film. In a masterpiece, the medium contains itself.

True cinema contains itself, and as such a cinematic masterpiece is essentially about nothing but itself – cinema.

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