

Good movie review on chinese film studies

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The Influence of Diegetic and Non-Diegetic Sound on Film Viewing

Introduction

Sounds are important elements of a movie because it enhances the conventions through which people understand the movie they watch and give them the ability to appreciate the concepts inputted in the movie they view. Sound, nevertheless, is being used at differing variations in every movie. There are two types of sound used in films: diegetic and non-diegetic. A diegetic sound is a sound that is complemented by the visuals shown in the film such as the movement of the objects, the voices of the characters, background music. Non-diegetic sound, on the other hand, is a sound that both cannot be seen in the visuals and not implied by the flow of the actions in the movie. For instance, a non-diegetic sound is provided by a narrator's commentary and sound effects. Aside from distinctive differences, diegetic and non-diegetic sounds different our understanding of the film and the different frameworks through which we perceive the idea implied in the film. The workings of the diegetic and non-diegetic sound appear so apparent in the films *Once Upon a Time in China*, *The White Haired Girl*, and *The Laborer's Love*. Both *Once Upon a Time in China* and *The White Haired Girl* used diegetic sound, which supported the majority of all the narratives in the film. The sound flows directly with the actions of the characters and the storyline that goes with every transition of scene in the film. For instance, in *Once Upon a Time*, the background music goes with the specific theme used in a specific theme. The thematic expressions connive with the moods of the characters such when the line goes comical, the background sound effects

would also produce comical sounds that makes the scene more funny and entertaining. Also, in the film *The White Haired Girl*, the source music is complemented with the implied themes of the story. When a woman swore to take vengeance over her enemies, the background music produced a gloomy and rebelling sort of music while the character's voice turned stark and bold. What is more interesting about the diegetic music is that it creates a convention for viewers through which they will understand the thematic inclinations of every scene in the film. This is particularly important because it enhances the viewers' film viewing experience and their appreciation to the movie in general.

Meanwhile, the film *Laborer's Love* used a non-diegetic sound that rather hazed the true gist of the film. The film is supposed to be a comedy with small bits of serious hints throughout the entire movie. However, there is a very little connection between the non-diegetic sound used in the film and the moods of the characters in the story. Indeed, the background music sounds humorous and light - aside from having a thin tone - but still it fails to create the kind of mood in a sound that would induce viewers to become hooked up and get in one with the film. Since there are no dialogues at all, it allows viewers to create their own storyline within their minds. But the problem is that it does not entail consistency in thoughts of the film because the conventions may vary from one person to another. Despite the efforts of the director to make funny sounds in objects, it does not carry much of what the storyline really wants to tell the audience.

In a nutshell, diegetic sound does a better job supporting the narrative of the

story by intensifying emotions and providing clearer thematic expressions as compared to non-diegetic sound.

Bibliography

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