



Something on gaze-speech-silence and landscape in the Antonioni trilogy. Try to tell us how the Antonioni landscape becomes a repository of pure sensation (not verbalised feelings or memories or verbalised cultural desires). Yet this landscape is nevertheless 'artificial' because it is a personal vision - we add or subtract something to the landscape from our own experience.

Abstract

What does exist between what we see and what we feel? How do we differentiate the notion of "a priori" from "post priori"? "A priori" is what we see and "post priori" is, how we see. The sense of seeing and feeling always arrive with an utterance, a moment of silence, and this silence is enough to create an imaginary sensation of the objects. Sensation lies between what we see and what we feel, through that sensation, a new language can be created, and in Deleuzian language, it is called "Transcendental Aesthetics". If a man is walking on the street and he sees many things while passing, however he rarely sees anything because he is thinking something else in his mind, his mind is already occupied with various thoughts and images. This triggers one more metaphysical question - how would these mental images and objects reflect the real objects and images? With these thesis and

antithesis a new language comes into existence but that synthesis always contradicts and represents various ways of seeing and objectifying the objects and images .

Introduction

Art cinema is usually considered to be multi-layered and ambiguous which has multiple interpretations and perspectives. Art cinema does not essentially follow any particular formula or method especially in storytelling. Sometimes, even these films do not have any definitive story line, and have play with images and movements. It also provides considerable scope for serious and philosophical discourse which is often made outside mainstream industry. There have been various movements and filmmakers associated with this. This includes iconic filmmakers such as Goddard, Antonioni and Bergman.

In this paper, I am taking trilogy by Antonioni and I will focus on the presence of pure sensation which is depicted through silence, landscapes and gazes but still it does not seems like an artificial landscape because of the presence of personal vision and interpretation. This is only possible in art cinema because within this medium artists get enough freedom to manipulate objects to make it more sensational and creative which creates a tension between “a priori”, “post priori” and never allow us to see something which is hidden because the absolute truth is broken into multiple images and movements and our mind constantly seeks something that is absent.

Blow Up(1966)

“Nothing like a little disaster for sorting things out”

The appearance and disappearance and in between lies illusion which never allows us to reach to the conclusion. ‘Blow up’ is an example of this which begins with an barren note and ends with void. The presence of the absence and the absence of the presence contradict with each other and never reach to the conclusion. The ending of “Blow up” represents the silent gazes of the people, some people are playing tennis

without any objects and some people are watching it from outside. Thomas throws a ball without having a ball which represents the void appearance of objects but that void appearance is filled with gesture, silence and space which asks a “post priori” question, how do we conceive objects and images?

The absent appearance of the presence can be explained as a form of desire of an individual and his vision of seeing the world. The world would be the same but the representation of the world will depict the desire of that individual. The desire brings the changes in the landscapes which seems like purely based on sensation. Because it evokes the moments of joy and happiness but metaphysically it does hold the essence of the real landscapes because imagination needs a surface experience that can create a visionary landscape.

The presence of silences or the appearance of the objects really help to present the subject but both subject and object lies within the landscape, therefore truth never shows its presence and merely represents the moments of joy which is the ultimate desire of human beings .As Deleuze says

“The transcendental aesthetic initially appears to have divided up the field of representation between space and time, "inner sense" is meant a sense through which one can become perceptually aware of the self and its states' Thus, space is defined as the sense by which, 'we represent to ourselves objects outside us', determinations of the mind' that belong to our inner sense, that is, time. Thus, whereas space, 'serves as the a priori condition only of outer appearances', time 'is the formal a priori condition of all appearances.”

This can be understood in the context of Kant's Transcendental idealism which evokes a new language of seeing the world or representation of "a priori" sensation, as we know Kant's Transcendental idealism is a scientific way of seeing the world or the outer world which deals with purely empirical and purely logical but Deleuze breaks this way of seeing "outer sense" and focuses on "inner sense" which deals with transcendental and empirical senses and says

"the conditions of experience in general must become conditions of real experience', such that the work of art forms in each case its own transcendental conditions – conditions that do not precede experience but arise from it".

It brings individual perspective of a man to represent his inner senses and collude it with outer senses and they both create a new language of representation which mainly deals with absence, the absence presence, disappearance, appearance and illusion but these things do not matter in the larger context of life. As Jean Baudrillard avers

"To the tragic illusion of destiny we prefer the metaphysical illusion of subject and object, the true and the false, good and evil, the real and the imaginary; but, in a final phase, we prefer the virtual illusion even more -- that of the neither true nor false, of the neither good nor evil, of a lack of distinction between the real and the referential, of an artificial reconstruction of the world where, at the cost of total disenchantment, we would enjoy a total immunity".

In "Blow Up", silence and human gaze represent the transcendental aesthetics because the absent time and disappearance have captured through the moments of silence and gaze that represents a notion of illusion and chaos. Silence and gaze both sets the background of the landscapes which seems pure sensational and

imaginative but holds the essence of the outer senses which is absent in the moment of presence. For example, Thomas aimlessly walks in the park and sees a loving couple and takes their pictures and during this, silence is a key note to represent the mood of the couple and that silence comes with many interpretations because of their body gaze. The body gaze of the couple represents various possibilities to argue their presence in the park. It can be a moment of separation, a moment of love, a moment of pain and it seems possible because of the presence of the silence. The silence of the park (landscape) allows us to think beyond images which represent a psychoanalytic notion of imaginary and representation.

In the end, when two people are playing an empty tennis match and some spectators are watching them from the outside the court. Tomas has been shown as an absent figure. A man neither he is plays or sees but physically he is present, his physical present can be understood in the context of absent present or the appearance of the disappearance. However, at the end when he throws an empty ball, he becomes the match or the image.

It deals with psychoanalytic notion of the imaginary, how do we know that at the end Thomas becomes part of an empty game? His physical gesture and inner sense, which is expressed through silence on his face and willing to part of the game, give us an idea that now Thomas is also part of the game. Now it can be argued in the context of Baudrillard, as we know Thomas wanted to solve a murder mystery but at the end he gives up and becomes part of an empty tennis game and the surprisingly he seems happy. Which is perfectly justifies Baudrillard words, "but, in a final phase, we prefer the virtual illusion" that is above true, false, evil and good.

Perhaps this is human nature that they always live for something which they do not have. Human beings often desire for something which is absent in our lives and sometimes we even forget the essence of being in the moment ,a living moment is more worthwhile than a desired moment. Thomas finds his happiness in an absent

moment, that absent moment depicts his presence and a pessimist ending of 'Blow Up' becomes an optimist beginning of Thomas. The optimism and pessimism lies within themselves it just merely a ways of seeing.

In this silent language of representation, Antonioni uses his own personal experience to read counter-culture and represents his inner sense rather than merely focusing on outer sense which makes it more debatable. However, in spite of this, the landscape of Blow up does seem artificial because of the presence of the personal vision of seeing the world and reflecting it again through images which are 'Psychoanalytic Imaginary', but still has the strong presence of the outer sense.

Zabriskie Point (1970)

A place to hear the sun go down and fade away
To see the wind just run away with yesterday
Anyplace for those who care Zabriskie Point is anywhere...

Zabriskie Point is a point of dreams and love which exists only in the heart of lovers and dreamers. It is an end of a world and a beginning of a new world. However, a key question comes into being is – Is this new world completely a new landscape or still it has the presence in the material society? Antonioni masterly represents a new landscape that is a metaphor of love and desire.

The real/ material world always remains a part of our daily struggles and political instabilities. Someone people like Mark and Daria wants to live in a different universe which is above all these daily problems and human miseries. In 'Zabriskie

Point' they meet and fall in love. But the real question is that love has no existence in the material world or how would we define materiality? Because 'Zabriskie Point' also part of the same materiality. Another argument is, does another world really exist or is it a mental paranoia? The essence of being human is constantly changing everyday and creating a new space for communication. As Lee says in "Study for an End of the World"

"No prophecy is necessary to recognize that the sciences now establishing themselves will soon be determined by the new fundamental science which is called cyberneticism. It is the theory of the steering of the possible planning and arranging of human labour. Cybernetics transform language into an exchange of news. The arts become regulated regulating instruments of information."

The real question arrives with this cyberneticism that how would society react to it and what would be the relationship with people and artists? Antonioni represents a new landscape, which is purely aesthetic and empirical and loses the relationship with logic to find the essence of being a human. The whole idea of creating a new landscape does seem more hypothetical and superficial but still it has the strong relationship with the escapist world because the roots of having a desire to live in a beautiful world also arrives from the same world where we do struggle with our daily needs. The Transcendental Aesthetics erases and adds many things according to the desire and creative and imaginative skills of an artist and Antonioni artistically applies all these things that make "Zabriskie Point" more imaginative and debatable. As Ascott says in "Is There Love In The Telematic Embrace"?

"The artist as sender and therefore originator of meaning, the artist as creator and owner of images and ideas, the artist as controller of context and content."

In Zabriskie Point, Antonioni represents a unique combination of music, images and landscape to create an essence of the pure sensation. The sensation which allows us

to forget human beings and become part of the nature. Putting this in the context of inner spaces, then it represents a psychoanalytic notion of the imaginary which is above realism and formalism and create a new language of seeing the landscape and its relationships with human beings and human beings mind is the creator of the landscape. Antonioni represents the problems and challenges of the 1970's through this film but in a completely different way, which does not allow us to read it in a particular context. However, it has the essence of its time and space but images belong to the desire of the creator. For example, in the love-making scene where Mark's all friends are making love in a desert, it does not seem like a love making scene due to absence of human faces. As we also see in the ending of "Blow Up" that human expressions are painted and melted through the colours and the objects that create an illusion between the presence and absence and merely depict anything except pure sensation. However, empirically this pure sensation is a perception of a human mind. In both scenes, music and silence create the whole notion of pure sensation.

The Passenger (1975)

People disappear every day...

'The passenger' is the third film of the trilogy which represents the world and infinite movements in the desert. We can also imagine it as a landscape and it becomes visually through the images which are taken in barren time to create a space for movement or the movement that generates the space and through that space, we create the images in barren time. It all happens in our mind and we do not even know that is already happening because the presence of the sensation. The silence is a metaphor of the sensational emptiness. 'The passenger' represents several worlds in a world and tries to communicate between many landscapes and through the movement; it becomes visible to see various landscapes in a landscape. Empty roads create enough movement to create space for the images to consume empty

time and images are empty images and these empty images taken in an empty time to reproduce empty space. The word empty is not all about nothingness and emptiness which creates a space to produce something creative and visible .

The death of the reporter creates an illusion. The shot is perfectly taken in the presence of silence and absence of the presence as Baudrillard says, "Death too becomes conspicuous by its absence" and death does not hold any kind of justification. Death does not leave any kind of appearances behind its soul. After the death of the reporter see nothing and everything becomes invisible and produces an empty time without any movement. And a beautiful evening is passing though on the eve of a man's death.

The sky is colourful with full of joy but with the tears of sorrow and there are many questions in our minds but they are also silent like nothing happened. All these things are going together without knowing that actually they are going, like we see the empty roads from the back of the car, we see nothing except the movements and sensation as here we also see everything but still our mind is empty because of the presence of the sensation and that sensation does not seem superficial or artificial because of the presence of movements which is visionary that allow us to conceive the images to find its own meaning because images do not hold any meaning and there are merely empty images which are contradictory of each other but still have relevance to find something new which is absent in the presence of disappearance .

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this paper with a quote by Baudrillard "we find pleasure neither in appearance nor in meaning." Human eyes are eager to see something magical or something that does not have any kind of physical appearance but still it exists like a shadow of a walking man in the dark of the night. We can see the shadow but cannot touch it because it is merely a reflection of our imagination. Antonioni's trilogy is purely based on sensation which captures images of empty

time and movement. Moreover, these images do not seem like artificial or superficial nor they are real / contained the strong background of realism. The imagination or the individual's vision or perception of seeing the same world differently creates the sensation in the minds of the spectators. The images are self-contained dada based and do not need a narrative to read the images because images have enough power to convey its own existence and appearance and the presence of silence and transcendental landscape helps images to be more sensational and pure optical.

Readings

Gregory Flaxman ('Transcendental Aesthetics: Deleuze's Philosophy of Space')

Lee ('Bridget Riley's Eye/Body Problem')

Lee ('Study for an End of the World')

Ascott (Is there love in the Telematic Embrace?)

Cool Memories ('October 1980: The first day of the rest of your life')

Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*

*The aesthetics of
Disappearance by Paul Virilio part -iv*

Term Paper

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