

Cinema of Process

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handle the cinematic (and spectatorial) process in inventive and unusual ways. Cinema is the perfect medium to encompass process philosophy and to fully do so we must also find the most truthful and direct way of displaying images, and in doing so we will also have to tap into the imaginal realm.

In Julie Dash's 1991 drama *Daughters of the Dust*, there are beautiful ways in which substantialism is rejected in favour of a fluid process. The film is set in Saint Simons Island in 1901 and follows a group of safe and free African Americans who have created themselves a new life. Their version of the African American culture preserves much more of their roots, and there's a harmonic coexistence between different backgrounds, various religions and genders and so on. We are introduced to Muslim characters, Christians and some who don't seem religious at all and it somehow doesn't seem to matter too much. Although the film is narrated by an unborn daughter of the island from the future (Which vastly opens up the chronological component of the film), there is not a clear protagonist. The film begins and ends without the hopes of beginning and concluding one human beings desires. For the audience, it is not the feeling of attaching themselves to one person, whose plight is relatable to theirs. St. Simons Island, seems not to be constrained by an immediacy. There's a feeling as if this story extends beyond the frame, before and after we have begun experiencing it. It is as if it begins with an ellipsis and ends with one. It extends to infinity like the universe itself. It is unmistakable that a film will always begin and end, as it is a time based medium. But here is a film that that makes us believe this beginning and ending are simply scissors chopping off a piece of the infinite puzzle of life so that we may figure it out for ourselves. When the film is over, there is not a sense that this situation is resolved and there is no longer a reason to go back to the island. It will continue to exist. The film is however given a loose plot through the Paezant family who are conflicted about leaving the Island, although it is not centred around their plight. It is hard to deem any one character a protagonist, and its even difficult to St. Simons Island the protagonist. To do such a thing to do the film, would undermine anything about it

photographer, is taking a photograph of some children. As he is getting ready to frame,

mentioned that most people suffer from “a fallacy of dictionary”. The belief that language has expressed all fundamental ideas of existence, but of course it has not because language is always a broken vessel attempting to simplify the whole. Images are yet another vessel of sorts, but they are not symbols. If we are to treat images as images, we can achieve the truth of the imaginal realm within the cinema. This cathartic transcendence can achieve an awakening. Perhaps, by achieving this spiritual state while watching films, we can carry some of it into our daily life and attain spiritual improvement. And this formal openness can allow us to discover “the ever differentiating sea of actualization”, as Whitehead calls it. It is pointless to attempt to symbolize the sea. The cinema has to become the sea itself so that the viewer may dive in and become part of the process. The cinema of process can not symbolize process. It is process itself. This is why the idea of the imaginal realm may beautifully elevate the process based cinema, as chiefly evident in *Daughters of the Dust*. Dash’ film embodies the truth of the image. The images do not convey information, they instead contain feeling. Jafa’s cinematography employs the constant use of available light to create sublime images that were made with a process involving truthful reality, yet they achieve the dream-like state of the imaginal realm. The film’s love for everything inside the frame, without a distinct hierarchy between objects, subjects, and humanity on the top (Perhaps it only does so with the amount of screen time given to each, yet the landscape gets more screen time than the humans.) soaks the viewer in the into the interdependence between humans and the world around us.

Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One is an experimental documentary by William Greaves. The film is directed and edited by Greaves, and it also stars him as a director of a film within the film. The film opens with a montage of various citizens at a public park, who have many different interactions with this film’s true protagonist, the camera. We watch a man in discomfort with the fact that he’s been documented, with genuine self-consciousness. We also observe a child pursuing an off-screen object, genuine during a moment of truth with no awareness of the camera. Then the film moves on to a

montage of various actors attempting to bring this absurd screenplay to life. Greaves embodies a facetious director, who attempts to direct a peculiar screenplay about a couple who are having an extended argument about their relationship which goes to absurd places including accusations of homosexuality. The scene is handled with less than delicate taste in regards to the subject matter, and the actors seem to somehow be out of touch with reality. As the film goes on, members of the crew begin to converse about the odd nature of Greaves' behaviour, which is just as facetious as that of the actors. The film most directly addresses the place of the actor (And the director who who should guide the actors) in relationship to the filmmaking process, how it should be handled and how that may affect the spectatorial experience. Unlike *Daughters of the Dust*, this film is a satire, directly attacking the traditional substantialist filmmaking structures in the hopes of providing a new one for future filmmakers, all while a deeply humourous and process-oriented sequence of events unfolds. As the crew members discuss during their extended conversations, every moment that transpires before the camera will have a certain truth to it. A great filmmaker will always be aware of what this truth is, and to do so its as if he must become the guru without a facade, who does not act but is. Most filmmakers fall into the trap of playing the character of the "director", who is traditionally an authoritarian who imposes a structure on the actors, controlling his malleable subjects. Greaves portrays this character taken to an absurd extreme, a man who is obviously inauthentic about his presence and does not quite know how to control. And since he can not control, his vision cannot be imposed, and the acted scenes in the film are no longer about the director's vision but are about his failure. What's unique about this film's process, is the game it plays with the audience. The film does not quite claim to be a documentary, it begins with a credit crawl listing the subjects as cast members as if they are part of a fictionalized story. It also does not

Williams defined the Whiteheadian event as “a fragile and passing harmony of

The scripted scene seems to be about a paranoid woman who is getting suspicious about her husband falling out of love with her, perhaps because he is distant. She makes an offhand remark about him, saying he might be a homosexual. This, could be performed with some humour if it seems like a ridiculous event that is not backed up at

question the film itself. Rather it is life itself which is in question. Its as if the ending suggests that the only true “acting” can be when someone has no idea that they are acting. One can not be more intimately woven into the process than if they are not aware that they are involved in a process. To be at once aware and not aware, that is the ultimate goal. Laura Marks describes the individual who is aware of the interconnectedness of the world as the: “the wandering thinker who strives to know the totality of the world”. The hermit who enters the film out of nowhere, shows more interest for the outside world than any character, and shares many anecdotes about his travels and brags about his awareness, sexual and life awareness. This is the only striving to know the totality of the world. Perhaps in the world of William Greaves’ Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One, this man is the Buddha.

Julie Dash and William Greaves who have tackled process philosophy in the cinema from two wildly different directions. Let us take these films from the 20th century as headlights illuminating a frequently unseen part of the cinema, and give us hope for what is to come in the future because if we are open to change, it will find us. As process cinema is discussed within academic settings, and its hallmarks are to be found in more films, more individuals can gain awareness to the totality of the world and let go of subject-object relations that reduce human beings and demean their surroundings. Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One by William Greaves and Daughters of the Dust by Julie Dash are two films that shocked me in the core of my being and awakened a new vitality that opened up the cement blocks set all around us. Let us hope that with each one s hopat w

