

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Film Semiotics

2.1.1 Objective of Film Semiotics

Film semiotics is born in the middle of 1960, which applies the theory of semiotics and the idea of structural linguistics as a new trend to analyze cinematic art. Christian Metz is the pioneer of film semiotics. Based on Gibert Cohen-Seat's idea of contrast of "cinema" and "film", Metz makes the distinction between the "cinematic fact" and "filmic fact". The cinematic fact refers to the cinematic institution that includes pre-filmic events and a-filmic events. The distribution, exhibition, and the social or political impact of film are included in pre-filmic events. The décor of the theatre, the economic efficacy of the movie industry are included in the a-filmic events. Meanwhile, the filmic fact indicates a local matter and a text, not the physical film-object. Hence Metz concludes that the objective of film semiotics is "the study of discourse, of text, not of the cinema institution, for such a much multi-faceted dimension is too complicated. Metz then identifies the distinction of film and cinema within the category of "film" as the object of the semiotic study of film. In this concept, "the cinematic" symbolizes the totality of film text rather than the film industry (Stam 33-34).

The main discussion at the early period of film semiotics of Metz is whether the cinema is langue [language system] or language. The conclusion is that the cinema is not a language system but a language. Sasure, the founder of language semiotics, defines that language contains two kinds of symbols; one is signifier, and the other is signified. The signifier in the language can be regarded as "the word", and the signified is "the meaning of the word". The signifier represents the signs and symbols which are shared within cultural and social

language systems. All the words in a language, speech, body language, or signs and symbols can be included as signifiers, and we can learn cultures by interpreting their signifiers. Besides, each individual circumstance creates a mental schema to communicate and explain the meaning in mind. The component of mental schema for interpreting signifiers in every situation is called “signified”, which can be simply illustrated as the memory.

The linguistic sign in cinema is not as random as the language system, for the cinematic language is created through the mechanical production. Besides, the cinema language intends to create a richly interactive space for the signifier and signified. Thus the relation between signifier and signified is not random as those in realistic language system but motivated. For example, the representations of dog in a film and a real dog in reality, and the recorded sound of a dog’s barking and the dog’s barking in reality gives us different perceptions between the interaction of signifier and signified. There is also something in common between the cinematic object and realistic object. Metz further extends such a similarity as “the common perceptual situation between everyday experience and the cinematic experience” (Stam 34-35).



2.1.2 Grand Syntagmatique and Diegesis

Metz mentions that film has become a discourse by organizing its narrative and producing a significant body. The aim of grand syntagmatique is to analyze the specific cinematic notations within film narrative such as the image, the sound, the shot, and the montage.

The theory and methodology of grand syntagmatique is borrowed from the classic ancient Greek literary criticism. In the *Poetics* of Aristotle, one of the greatest of the ancient Athenian philosophers, there is an idea of “diegesis” which corresponds to the representations of “telling”, but not “showing”. Metz applies such an idea from literature to film. The “diegesis” is like a story and it refers to the posited events and characters of a narrative. Without relying

upon any excursive mediation, these events and characters exist independently in the significant world created by the story. In this sense, one diegesis could be presented by different means of media, for instance, the same story can be told again through a novel or movie. In other words, the same diegesis might be expressed by any signifier or narrative description, such as film, television or literature.

The diegesis in the cinema represents the world displayed among the film and also the film's denotation, which include the fictional space, the time dimensions of the narration, and the perception and feedback of the audience. So the diegesis is constructed by imagination, and the narrative of cinema operates in the fictional time and space. Nevertheless, Metz also emphasizes that the universe existing in this fictional space also exists in the reality (Stam 37-38).

2.1.3 Dispatch of Scene

The realism film researcher, Andr'e Bazin, in his *Cahiers du Cin'ema* emphasizes that the inner quality of film exists in the composition of one single shot. It is the representation of the camera's capture of the real world. Bazin thinks that the importance of one single shot lies in the non-interrupted long take, which enables the audience to glance the frame, to read and to interpret the inherent meanings of the text.

Bazin turns to the movement and composition of various elements in the frame to find the possible ways out of which meanings arise. From this perspective, the movement and arrangement of the characters, the position of the camera, the light, the backdrop, the manipulation of the focus point are all very important. Bazin assumes that the truth and aesthetic are two sides of one coin. The "mise en scene" refers to the arrangement of various elements in the frame or the camera shot. The "mise en scene" can have a significant meaning, which not only overthrows *Eisens's theory of montage (Note2.1) which becomes the basis of a



film, but enables us to discuss the various elements of the shots in one single frame or continuous frames. In this way, we can see how these elements in the shots are positioned, moved and lighted. Therefore, the way to convey the implicit meanings not only depends on the moving of the camera but also the method of montage. Therefore, the mise-en-scene and montage are two important elements of grammatical language for the film.

From montage to the transition of the mise-en-scene, the representation of visual images becomes a significant focus. What's more, the mise-en-scene highlights the importance of the audience's interpretations of the film. This is the new direction of the film theory. This theory even extends the focus of film research from the relationship between the film creation and reality to the correlation between the film and its perceivers (Graeme 51-52).



Note 2.1 The Russian Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein believed that *montage* (juxtaposing images by film editing) could create ideas or have an impact not found in the individual images. Two or more images together create a "tertium quid" (third thing) that makes the whole greater than the sum of its individual images.

2.2 Hermeneutics on Ricoeur

Paul Ricoeur's (1913–2005) accomplishment chiefly focuses on “hermeneutics” and interpretation theory. In his early work, *The Symbolism of Evil* (1960), he views hermeneutics as a method of interpreting symbols. Later, he puts hermeneutics in a border sense for its capacity to interpret the whole text, and the symbols are included in every text. In this way, hermeneutics evolves to the theory of text. It starts with the text, and eventually extends to view the world as a text. With the textual world, human existence is explained by their own cultures and the interpretations made by humans (Simms 31).

2.2.1 Hermeneutic Circle and Intersubjectivity

1. Interpreting text for understanding the world

Within the text, Ricoeur indicates that “the symbol gives rise to the thought”. The symbolic meanings of the text are created by humans, and the text tells us something in common with our life experiences, as if revealing the truth of human existence. The symbolic interpretations of texts explain not only the individual sentences literally, but also carry the meaning for the whole texts. Such meanings are so called “intentional meanings” (Simms 31-32).

Based on Ricoeur's interpretation of myths, he concentrates on the hidden intentional meanings of texts. The intentional meaning, in Ricoeur, could be the theme for a text, which strongly connected with the context, and it has nothing to do with the author. In other words, the text explains itself completely regardless of the intention of the author. As shown in the myths or the Bible, these texts do not have particular authors, but they do carry plenty of interpretations within the text. For example, in the myth of Adam, there are various and closely related themes, such as jealousy, temptation, desire, punishment and remorse. They correspond to the human nature; therefore, the intentional meaning within the text can be

universal. In addition, as long as the human culture continues, the intentional meanings within the text would be preserved and even changed by various interpretations of people (Simms 34).

Furthermore, in hermeneutics, we understand the world through our contemplation upon text. The text carries an integral meaning for individuals to understand the world. By this means, we see the underlining meaning within the text as a complete unit. The text describes something not about itself, but about the world. It helps us understand the world in a unique and superior understanding. In sum, the key to understanding the world is to read it as a text, and reading the text is the best way to understand the world (Simms 35-36).

2. The hermeneutic circle

Once we get a better sense of understanding the world from interpreting the text, we have become more aware of our own existence in the world. As a result, we understand something in order to believe in something. Conversely, we must learn to believe in something for the sake of understanding something. This understanding enhances our belief, and vice versa. This becomes a hermeneutic circle; when we interpret a text, we enter a circle of hermeneutics. Doing hermeneutics, or interpreting texts, is essential for self-understanding as a human being. Texts as means of medium provide a world for the readers to understand their own world and hence reach their self-understanding. In short, “it is a bridge between the subjectivity of the self and the objectivity of the world.” (Simms 37-42).

3. Intersubjectivity

A. Schutz states in “*On Phenomenology and Social Relations*” about what “intersubjectivity” means:

“The world of my daily life is by no means my private world but is from the outset an intersubjective one, shared with my fellow men, experienced and interpreted by others; in brief, it is a world common to all of us. The unique biographical

situation moment of my existence is only to a very small extent of my own making. I find myself always within an historically given world which, as a world of nature as well as a sociocultural world, has existed before my birth and which will continue to exist after my death. This means that this world is not only mine but also my fellow men's environment; moreover, these fellow men are elements of my own situation, as I am of theirs.” (Schutz 164).

According to Zurmuehlen, intersubjectivity binds humanity together by creating a common language. A lone human does not create his own world, but rather his world is influenced by others as much as he influences the lives of his fellow men. The live experiences of others impact our own lives. An artist's work ultimately was gave birth from “the essentials of our aesthetic realms of experiences: intersubjectivity and imaginative integration.” (Zurmuehlen 26) The art work reflects an individual conception of the world, yet that conception is influenced by both personal and communal perceptions. Hence, a work of art is both individual and communal. Intersubjectivity and symbolism both play essential roles in the art making.

2.2.2 Narrative and Metaphor

1. The three mimetics in narrative

Ricoeur points out that narrative is composed by three “mimetics” from human action (Simms 84-86). According to Aristotle's interpretation of mimesis, Ricoeur considers mimesis as an imitation of human action instead of an imitation of nature. A narrative consists of a model of time; similarly, our future and past memory also shape how we understand time and life. Accordingly, Ricoeur believes that the narrative could be divided into three-stage

mimesis, and each stage is strongly related with one another. The first is “mimetic 1”, “prefiguration”, which is the “pre-understanding” of the text. We know how people behave in the real world based on our daily experience. In Ricoeur’s word, that is “practical thinking”. In the first place, this helps us to think of the plot for the text so as to compose the narrative for a further reading. *“Narrative composition is anchored in our practical understanding, which is why someone without much experience of the world hardly can make a good novel”*, said Ricoeur (Simms 84). That is also the reason why we prefer characters to take actions based on their specific motives in a film. And if the characters’ action is inconsistent and contradictory with his motive, we would never be convinced. In this process, Ricoeur recognizes three ways of interpreting or composing a narrative: (1) Semantic understanding: the attitudes and position of different characters within the plot. (2) Symbolic understanding: we are accustomed to the signs and symbols of society and we use them to recognize the value or identity in the narrative. For example, hero symbolizes good characters. (3) Temporal understanding: we can understand and construct the sequences of the occurring events on our own.

Another is the “configuration or emplotment of “mimetic 2”, which is to set up the sequence of events, causal relationships or other configurations among a text. The last one is, “mimesis 3” as “refiguration”, which is the interaction between the textual world and the viewer’s and the reader’s world. From “mimesis 3”, we get the new understandings from the narrative, which provide us a broader perspective for an advanced understanding of world (Simms 83-86). In this way, there lies a hermeneutic circle between narrative and life. In this circle, the narrative imitates life and we learn about life from the narrative through our interpretations. In this way, we understand the life continuously.

2. Narrative within history or fiction

Ricoeur further mentioned that there are two types of narrative (Simms 79-99). One is

history, and the other is fiction. Despite their differences, they share certain common points. Above all, the issues come out from them are not referential truths, but diverse human factors. In addition, both history and fiction need the basic “narrative competence” in order to make people comprehend the story in a much familiar and acceptable manner. In history, people record their behaviors with time. They are just like characters in a fiction. In the same way, the characters’ behaviors in fiction are as vivid as real people. Besides, the pass in the fiction is imitated and described as the real history. In other words, the fictional pass would correspond to the real history and the depictions of them are similar. The truth is that the life experience in narrative is integrated with history and fiction. We learn lessons form history as we do from myths or tales. Likewise, the fictional contexts are similar to our real life so that we could learn lessons from them, and also apply them to our real life.

3. The function of metaphor in narrative

Since one symbol might have multiple meanings, Ricoeur further introduces the idea of metaphors in *The Rule of Metaphor* (1970). There are three main interpreting processes of metaphor: the word, the sentence and the discourse (Simmis 61-62). In the level of word, metaphor is built only by the literal rhetoric; metaphor in the level of sentence is composed by semantic transitions as a language. Thirdly, metaphor in the level of discourse is the domain of hermeneutics. Taking “beauty is a weapon” as an example, within the context of the whole sentence, there is an interaction between “the frame”- beauty and “the focus”- weapon. The literal and metaphoric meanings come from “the frame” and “the focus”. Besides, depending on whether the word “is” or “is not” arise two opposite meanings.

Eventually, we perceive the metaphors in hermeneutic process. Metaphor is like a language that invites interpretation, thus it invites us into hermeneutic circle. As we devote ourselves to this hermeneutic circle, we not only link ourselves with the context of the word and sentence, but also become involved in the cultural context of the discourse related to our

world. As a matter of fact, a metaphor is the most vivid part of the language. And this is why languages exist as alive as possible for us to interpret and perceive plenty interpretations out of them (Simms 73-77).

2.2.3 Psychoanalysis and Morality in Hermeneutics

1. Psychoanalysis as a hermeneutics

Although psychoanalysis and hermeneutics are two totally different fields, Ricoeur still views psychoanalysis as a hermeneutics of desire. Based on the interpretation from myths or ancient arts that are also historical texts, Freud explains the desire of the human being. In addition, he convinces everyone his theory is verified by providing persuasive explanations to decode the historical texts. For this reason, the psychoanalysis is not a natural science with verifiable truths but a historical theory (Simms 60).

In Simmi's book discussing about this subject, he further mentions: "Religious myths, do not merely repeat themselves, and they are not merely manifestations of repression as well (57). They also reinterpret themselves and in so doing demonstrate that reality is not merely a necessity to submit ourselves to, but is also a creation to be loved." Due to the possibility of reinterpretation, regions and myths in reality are not only preserved and passed on, but also innovated. And this is why the classics are dateless so as to build a long lasting culture.

2. The question between good and evil

Initially, Ricoeur regards life as a "dialectic" between the voluntary will and the involuntary passions: in the "voluntary" self, a person controls himself and chooses his free will to act. The other is the "involuntary" self: Being obliged to the world he lives, one adjusts to the rules ordered by the world, which becomes the regulations imprinted in the unconscious mind and restrains his will. Therefore, Ricoeur's conception and his philosophy are based on

the fact that we mediate our lives by not only following our basic instinct, but also the being a human living in the world (Simms 9).

The will in a phenomenological investigation can be divided into three modes: one is “to decide”, which is motivated by reasons; the other is “to move the body”, which is to subject to the unconscious and force of habit. Another is “consent”, which is to subject oneself to necessity. The involuntary is not only the opposite of the will, but also is an essential element lying in the voluntary will. Therefore, “human existence is the unity of the subjective with the objective”. Further more, there is no division between the soul, or mind and the body. The mind or soul can never be operated without a body and our inner thoughts needs to be fulfilled by a body (Simms 28-29).

Moreover, as an overtly Christian philosopher, Ricoeur is interested in the way that good and evil both exist in ourselves. Humans are easy to commit evil deeds since he or she has freedom to act at his or her will. Humans are fallible because of passion, and passion comes from the “intrinsic part of existence” which is the body. Thus the possibility of making mistakes is instinctive in man’s constitution. Between the freedom to act and the necessity that constrains him to act in a certain way there are three different ways related on another that can fragile the morality: one is imagination, the other is character, and another is feeling. *“In imagination, I see myself as the others see me; in character, I differentiated myself from the rest of humanity that is just like me. In feeling, I recognize the good and bad qualities of others, and prefer the good one.”* (Simms 29) The creativity of humanity is that we can make choices according to our free will. The creation of myths claims that evil is primordial. There is a tragic vision of the world in which the goods are evil. It reveals that symbols of sin and guilt are opposed to defilement. Also, we interpret the allegory, and continuously reinterpret it. In history, it remains as a lesson that proves the unchanging nature of the human condition (Simms 28-29).

3. Ethics

Ricoeur's ethics is a version of virtue ethics. It doesn't aim at defining what is good or bad, but rather to consider what constitutes a "good life". In Simms's words (103-105), a person, which is "I", attempt to define what Ricoeur calls a "narrative identity" in life. Here the "identity" refers to the "characteristic" as a personal attribute which remains by self-constancy. As long as I am honest to others and show myself to be a consistent person, I am the same person with "good characteristic" despite the physical, moral conditions and various changes in my life.

Through interpreting "narratives", we understand life in a better sense. A literary narrative needs the readers to construct its meanings; real lives also require others to interpret them. Besides, my life is connected with others' lives and every individual could be regarded as a unique and independent narrative branch within an extensive plot. Those branches sometimes link together, and sometimes they diverge. As a result, in order to acquire the narrative identity completely, I must interact with others. Without interacting with others, I would not have my own life story. The ethical interaction lies in the fact that what I have learned from others keeps shaping me who I am. And this is my own narrative identity. Since I can affect others, I am also part of others' narrative identity (Simms 108-109).

2.3 Psychoanalysis

2.3.1 Freudian Psychoanalysis

1. Layers of mental awareness

Freud divided the human mind into three levels of consciousness, namely “consciousness”, “preconsciousness”, and “unconsciousness”, that serves our purposes in the following mental states (Freud, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* 1989: introduction xx and 38-46).

(1) Consciousness: To be conscious means to be awake and to be aware of our own behaviors.

(2) Preconsciousness: The “preconscious” process always swifts between the consciousness and unconsciousness. Many messages and information conveyed by the unconsciousness will be stored up here. Therefore, our preconsciousness becomes more like a reservoir for our consciousness to get access to.

(3) Unconsciousness and subconsciousness: It is the basis of consciousness and pre-consciousness. Mental processes do not have direct access to subconsciousness. However, it occupies the greatest amount of our total consciousness and cannot be grasped. For example, sometimes we make a mistake accidentally in reality because our consciousness has lost its sense of alarm. Unconsciousness can be expressed through many means including some inappropriate behaviors.

2. The psychoanalysis account on the structure of personality

In *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1989:20), Freud posited that there are three main components of the personality : id, ego, and superego (17-21).

First, the id is an instinct-driven self filled with energy, but is poorly organized and ill-focused, only feeds on impulses to obtain satisfaction for the instinctual needs. The id works on the pleasure-principle: satisfying urges for food, drink, and sex. The pleasure

principle can run counter to our consciousness quite easily. Because our consciousness will keep us in touch with the reality and the permissible behaviors in our society, the dangers or inappropriate actions will be kept in check. The power of the id expresses the true purpose of the individual organism's life. This consists in the satisfaction of its innate need. It keeps a person alive and protecting him from the danger of anxiety through the cooperation with ego.

Second, the ego is considered the healthiest self when it takes the external world into account. It balances the most favorable and least risky method of obtaining satisfaction by follows the reality principle. Under permissible conditions, it can help to satisfy the needs of id and release instinct. However, those things that are not allowed to conduct in the reality will be repressed in the unconscious part of superego continuously.

Third, the superego, Freud stated, is the moral agent that links both our conscious and unconscious minds. The Superego is the moral part of us and develops due to the moral and ethical restraints placed on us by our caregivers. Therefore, it will restrain us from behaving inappropriately in the society. It can help the society to function in a moral sense and requires us to constrain our abnormal impulses and instincts. In fact, these three layers of consciousness exist and combine to become oneself. The id intends to satisfy itself at all cost; however, the superego functions to repress this urgency. And the ego exists in the middle zone by balancing these three instincts. In order to follow social ethics and satisfy our id, human beings have been finding means such as the creation of art and literature as a way to sublimate their id so as to impact the society positively.

3. Libido

“Libido” means desire in Latin. It always associates with sexual instinct and can be categorized into the unconscious part of ourselves. Besides, Libido is also the free creative or psychic energy. It is the instinctual energy or force that can come into conflict with the convention of civilized behavior. According to Freud, it can be associated with all the

activities such as touch and kissing that can satisfy us. Libido forces us to seek new sensations and pleasure (Freud 2001: 6 and Wang 8-10)

The sexual instinct of Libido reveals psychological and physical characteristics of a person. Those characteristics are (Freud 2001: 75): a. The sexual instinct of Libido helps us to find pleasure from the internal organs, or sources. b. The instinct makes us gain tremendous sense of excitement that can cause pressure. c. The instinct helps us to release pressure and aim at gaining new excitements. d. To reach the goal, the object must exist; these objects can be real people or merely objects.

4. Instincts of destruction and Eros

In *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1989: 18-20), Freud suggests that after long consideration, he finally assumes that human instincts can be sorted into two categories. That is, destructive instinct and Eros. Here Eros refers to sexual love. Freud further explains, in biological functions the two instincts operate against or combine with each other. For example, the act of eating is destruction and incorporating of the object. In addition, the act of obtaining the most intimate union in instinct of Eros is sexual act (18-19). The following table is the contrast between them.

Contrast	Destructive Instinct	Eros
preservation	self-preservation	preservation of the species
love	love for ego	love for objects
aim	To destroy connections and things.	To establish and bind together human in unities.
Connection with living	Lead the living into an inorganic and earlier state; therefore it is also the dead instinct.	Presuppose that living substance was a unity that had once been torn apart and now is striving for new union.

Table 2.1 Freud's destructive instinct and Eros

Moreover, the initial state with the total available energy of Eros is “Libido”. It is present in the still undifferentiated ego-id and simultaneously serves to counterbalance the destructive tendency. In this case, libido seeks to force together and hold together the portions of living substance. In Freud’s *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1989: 54-61), “Libido” is referred to as a quantifiable energy required keeping the human engine operating the instinct of Eros. This libido of Eros includes our love toward ourselves, friends, or even humanity as a whole. But as far as male and female relationship is concerned, sexual love that makes two entities temporarily become one is the goal. In male and female relationship, the instinct of Eros always drives one to seek the sexual love. In Freud's view, all love is sexual in its origin or its basis. Though it does not appear to be sexual or erotic, it has a sexual root or core. In sum, instinct of Eros not only combines male and female together but all the relationship in the world. Every human relationship is based on the instinct of Eros (Freud 2001: 125-127).



5. Narcissism and sense of superiority

(1) The narcissism of Freud

In Freud’s *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1989: 20), he states that it is hard to define the behavior of libido in the id and super-ego. Libido is related to and is stored up in ego. That is the state of absolute, primary narcissism. In the analysis of narcissism, Freud says that narcissism is a necessary process that a child has to go through to develop his or her own character. In the very first, a baby will regard his own appearance from the mirror as the image of his ego. The expectation toward the image of ego will inspire the child to transfer his narcissism with himself or herself to the others, mostly to friends or lovers. Freud terms this tendency as the self model, which is based on the ego to replace the childhood narcissism. The strong sense of ego can protect oneself from falling into the state of morbidity.

However, in the process of narcissistic replacement, one must learn how to love others. If

one fails to learn to love others, the upcoming sense of frustration will collapse oneself. Therefore, if we fail to transfer the libido to others, the power of libido will return to thrust us into the state of narcissism. These symptoms of narcissism include the paranoid speculation of being peeped, the constant hearing of voices, extreme depression, melancholia, or psychosis.

(2) The sense of superiority of Adler

Freud's student, Alfred Adler, proposes that humans being have the will power to strive for the best so as to grasp a sense of superiority. The desire to pursue a sense of superiority derives from the inferiority complex, which also derives from our childhood powerless and weak position that always relies on the help of external forces like our parents.

6. The suppression from social civilization

Fromm assumes that the rule of society is constructed from people's repression of basic instincts. For examples, the ancient human history has many taboos against sexual intercourse through the demonstration of pictures. These taboos have become a part of religion, ethics and law. The overflowing of instinct can damage the social civilization. However, if the society repressed our instincts too severely, that may cause some people to suffer psychological diseases and make them become perverts (Wang 11-12).

In Fromm's perspective, the less suppression of antisocial instincts will lead to the less civilization and also the smaller incidence of neurosis. Therefore, the social civilization has been achieved through the suppression of our id. In the primitive cultures, there are many taboo and suppression against the sex instinct. These taboos have been passed on from one generation to another to become a part of human world such as human order, law and system. The endless fulfilling of id might destroy social civilization. This suppression of id leads to a future of "neurotic symptoms" that are "in essence, substitutive satisfactions for unfulfilled sexual wishes". That is why some people suffers from psychological irregular or mental disease, and why causes the abnormal society (Wang 11-12).

7. The anxiety that society has brought forth

Freud suggests that the suppression in society has brought people many anxieties. There are three kinds of anxieties he has mentioned, which are “reality anxiety”, “neurotic anxiety” and “moral anxiety”. The “reality anxiety” is based on our fear toward the dangers in the reality life. Next, “neurotic anxiety” comes from the conflict between our basic instinct and reality. Out of fear, we fail to control the anxiety of ourselves. Last, “moral anxiety” is a result of the conflict between superego and id (Fan 206).

2.3.2 Self As I and Self As Known of William James

The modern psychologist William James differentiated between the self as knower, or the I, and the self as known, or me (Fan 205).

The I is pure ego and consciousness itself. The “me” is the unity that is monitored and regulated by the social codes, which makes us spontaneously “role playing” in society. Therefore, it is more like a natural process of role-playing because it is controlled by the social regulations to act in certain ways. Furthermore, the self as I and the self as me have created a dialectical space in which the ego can be processed and developed gradually. All the social constraints and regulations are components of self as known. Self as I always reacts to the various circumstances with individual ways. The individuality of the self as I has an impact on the self as known, which makes the self as known endowed with uncertainty. And this is what underlines the variations among personal characteristic (Fan 205).

2.3.3 Humanism Psychoanalysis of Fromm

Fromm is a member of New Psychoanalysis Division, which intends to highlight the social and cultural impacts on human beings. They find that human behaviors can differ a lot

because of cultural differences. Human behaviors can go beyond the animalistic instincts but constrained by the social system. Therefore, the unconscious doesn't come from the conflict between the sexual instinct and death instinct, but comes from a demand for security and satisfaction. Fromm also believed: "In order to have insight into the psychological structure of a human being completely and integrally, one has to extend his focus of concern from the family to the society. However, Freud's theory is mainly based on the family (Fromm 14-15)". Between the socially economic basis and human thinking, Fromm assumes that there presides a middle zone. This zone is the social screen which exists in every society and which is constituted by a set of concepts and system. This mechanic screen can examine the thinking and emotion which are allowed to exist in the society and those which are disallowed to be cast into the unconscious. The social unconsciousness means the marginalized and oppressed groups in the social system that is unable to reach the spiritual realm of social system. The set of conceptual system is the result of social progress. By their way of practicing life and associating emotions, a society is formed based on a community's set of beliefs and rules. Therefore, experiences which can pass the trail of social screen can thus become a part of unconscious. Therefore, certain emotions like social taboos, some disallowed emotions and experiences are prohibited to become the common consciousness of a community. In order to crack down on the others, these taboos become standards to exclude people. Based on Fromm, every society functions to exclude certain thinking and emotion to make its social members unable to convey, think and express subjects related to this prohibited thinking. Some matters are even disallowed to think about. The community proclaims that some social taboos are dangerous and doomed to be prohibited to forbid them to reach the realm of the conscious. The followings are several concepts of Fromm that are concerned with suppression of humanity in this research:

1. The social consciousness and lost of identity

Every community has its unreasonable side, which surely will oppress many members in this community. Their emotions and will power are disallowed to enter the realm of the conscious. The more the social community can't represent the interests of its people in majority, the stronger the sense of repression will grow. If people in majority feel discontented with this situation, they will grow hatred and intimidate the present order of the society. Therefore, in order to maintain the social order, the truthful feeling of a person must be repressed and cast into the unconscious. If one doesn't learn how to repress one's feeling, one plunges himself or herself into danger. The reason why we are unconscious to the control and examination of the social screen lies in the fact that we are afraid of being isolated and excluded by the society. In order to maintain a connection with others, one has to follow the allowed rules, beliefs and regulations of a community so as not to be isolated (Fromm 77-81).

Goffman said, "We are always tied to the wheels of control." (Fan 205) It means that humans are forced to act in their own roles without choice. That means they are tragic figures. Under the gaze of others, we become the objects of nakedness under supervision. With anxiety, we are forced to do what the society obliges us to perform. This kind of existence of living for the others can have a great impact on our sense of subjectivity. Fearfully, we might lose our sense of distinctive personality. Fromm said, "In order to live up to others' expectations, one repressed oneself and one's identity so as to get a sense of security (Fan 205). However, giving up our sense of subjectivity and personality may make us feel depressed all the time. It makes us live like a walking zombie, unable to live to be ourselves.

2. The ethical system of society

(1) The need of root

According to Fromm's need of root theory (Fan 207), the need to find a root originates from people's relation with nature. After the establishment of civilization, the balancing relationship between men and nature is damaged, making men become isolated in need of

searching for a new relationship to replace the old one. The blood relationship is the root of searching for an origin, which becomes the basis of a community and nation. The need to search for a root gives humans a sense of identity that helps them to define themselves in a new sense and bestow them a sense of security and belonging.

(2) Authoritarian and totalitarian ethical system

Fromm believes that there are two kinds of ethical system (Wang 155). One represents the unreasonable “authoritarian and totalitarian systems”. The other one represents the reasonable ethical system that follows humanity. However, the community in the film seems to follow the totalitarian system of ethics. In the “totalitarian system” of ethics, we can’t separate its form from its essence. For their own self interests, the power holders make it a rule that states, “Obedience is the best virtue of all” and “Disobedience is the worst sin of all.” In the old testament of Bible, Adam and Eve acquire a sense of judgment on evil and good after taking in the fruits of knowledge. Although this seems no big deal, Jews and Christians all believe the ability to judge good and evil is a virtue indeed. However, Adam and Eve are cast out of Eden because they defy the supremacy of God’s power by eating the fruits.

(3) Fundamental attribution error

“Fundamental attribution error” refers to the fact that whenever people are making attributions about an action, they tend to over-emphasize dispositional factors about the actor. Thus, as we were born, we are constrained to follow many regulations that require us to follow. It is a way to develop the communal consciousness of the public since it can help to develop a sense of stability in the community. However, this kind of constraint compels one to repress oneself continually. And those who can’t follow the social regulations will be regarded as abnormal. Therefore, in “fundamental attribution error,” we believe that human make mistakes because of their own character and personality. When people are powerless and constrained in the situation in which they are forced to follow the social regulations, they feel

depressed and isolated. It will be an uphill struggle against the ethical principles of the whole social community. Therefore, those who defy the social rules will frequently obey the social rules so that they can be accepted and integrated into the social system (Fan 200).

3. The fear of loneliness

In Fromm's opinion, nowadays people grow fearful of loneliness. To conquer the fear of loneliness, people escape freedom and give up freedom, giving up one sense of distinction and completeness so as to cater to others. The followings are three regimes that facilitate people to escape freedom (Wang 190-195).

(1) Totalitarianism

This regime is based on constraining and dominating others. We can say the relationship built on this one is like a relationship between a torturer and victim. But this relationship is also based on a reliance of each other. This relationship can be regarded as seeking for new constraints to replace the old constraints and dominate and control others. The representations of this kind of torture can be viewed in these three ways (Wang 190-193).

- a. The first one is based on the desire to rely on and control others, which tends to regard others as their instruments.
- b. The second one is based on the desire not only to control others, but to dominate others and disrupt others.
- c. The third one is based on the malignancy to hurt others and want to see others suffer in pain, physical and spiritual destitution and humiliation.

According to Fromm (Wang 190-192), the tortured represents a feeling of internally pessimistic, depressed and powerless of oneself. They always listen to the outside forces and opinions that constrain them. They don't have an independent sense of subjectivity but constrain themselves to the ordering of others. They seldom experience the desire of being themselves and being the masters of their own lives. Life to them is like an irresistible natural

force that constrains their subjectivity. They not only look down on themselves, but succumb to others. They are willing to be tortured and harmed by others. They are seemingly sick and unexplainable. However, they tend to think the feeling of being constrained and tortured express their love and faith.

Fromm regards this relationship built on submission and dominance as a symbiotic relationship (Wang 193). These two entities depend on each other. They are involved in the network of power. One of them seeks to expand their dominion of control, making others become part of him; the other one loses a sense of identity by succumbing to others.

(2) The force of devastation

The force of devastation means a person has the desire to destroy the constraining forces from outside because he can not stand with his sense of powerlessness and isolation. Therefore, by eradicating the constraining forces from outside, one can feel free and get a sense of independence and power (Wang 193).

(3) Giving one's character to adjust to the environment

This means self adaptability by giving up oneself. In this sense, he can't be himself anymore because he lives to live up to others' wishes. He gives up his sense of uniqueness to become like others. In this way, he won't suffer from anxiety and worry. This sense of adjustment can be expressed in emotional terms as well (Wang 194-195).

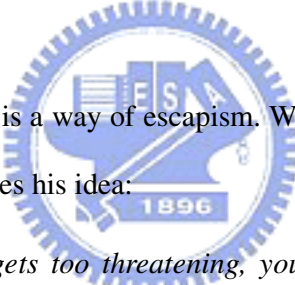
2.4 Von Trier's Concepts of Film Making

2.4.1 Film and Lars von Trier

1. The idea of filmmaking

Von Trier believes that films are very unconventional; they didn't tell a story in the conventional way. He was very fascinated by advertised images made by *Jorgen Leth (note 2), or photographs from Vogue and other magazines. It is a capture a static moment of life used by people. Jorgen Leth's films hold the same aesthetic sense as those shown in the magazine pictures. Besides aesthetics, his films further convey a variety of styles, experiences and events. The beautiful poetic aesthetics in Leth's film affect von Trier's film style until now. It was liberating to see some trail-brazing films from most of the films promoted by Danish cinema (Bjorkman 25).

For von Trier, film making is a way of escapism. Why he devotes himself in film making, the following description stresses his idea:



“When life gets too threatening, you have to create some sort of fantasy existence, a life where you can control the things you can't control in real life. That's a fairly good reason for creating fictions.” (Bjorkman 25).

2. The innovation

(1) The real thing for films

Von Trier criticized that the film-makers at that time relied too heavily on the advanced techniques to make films. This convenience causes “Great Inertia” (Bjorkman 61). And to please people's taste, they follow the traditional movie style all the time and fail to make their films diverse, vibrant and intriguing. He was trying to instill a new sense of energy and enthusiasm into the interaction between the film-makers and their films. In this way, filmmakers can regain the joy of creation in the process of making films.

Von Trier further mentions that the film-makers at that time relied too heavily on the advanced techniques to make films. This convenience has caused a “Great Inertia” And to please people’s taste, they follow the tradition of their movie style all the time and fail to make their films diverse, vibrant and intriduing. Von Trier further stated that he would never be satisfied with “well-meaning films with a humanist message;” he’d rather produce some films that are based on the realsitic fansciations, and childish, pure experiences. He was trying to instill a new sense of energy and enthusiasm into the interaction between the film-makers and their films.In this way, filmmakers can regain the joy of creationin the process of making films (Bjorkman 61).

(2) Erotic externals with unerotic contents

At his school age, he liked erotic books or films very much. He always had a book by de Sade, or Pauline Re’age’s *The Story of O (Note2.2 and 2.3). Bjorkman also asks von Trier’s opinion about the charm of films. In von Trier’s perspective, sometimes films are supposed to “look” erotic although their contents are actually unerotic.And porn films aren’t incuded in his viuewpoint. Von Trier answered Bjorkman’s above question by claiming that the great characteristic of film lies in its capacity and possibility to creat erotic people, but not merely in erotic films. Those sensual and charismatic actors make films carry themselves with a great deal of erotic images (Bjorkman 34).

In von Trier’s films, the erotic contents often appear to be the most shocking scenes. In *Breaking the Waves*, the female protagonist follows her husband’s will to have sexual contact with other men. In *Idiots*, there is a scene that involves group sex. Then in *Dogville*, the female protagonist, Grace, finally becomes the victim of sexual outlet for the men in Dogville. In *Manderlay*, there is a scene about having sex with alternatively.

(3) The concept of powers

Stig Bjorkman used to question von Trier’s thoughts on the concept of powers. He

indicates the idea of power structures appear in his previous *European trilogy*, and continues to influence the later TV series, *Kingdom*, and *Breaking the Waves*. In *Breaking the Waves*, it is the power of religion and patriarchy in society.

Nevertheless, the response of von Trier is quite different. He never have any ambitions toward the concept or consequences of power in political or else. Also he didn't consciously set out to deal with it as a subject. Actually, he doesn't think like that. He primarily focuses on the idea of "how an idealist with his best intentions to act, but eventually ends up in a catastrophic and intractable situation, and becomes the one who unleashes the catastrophe" (Bjorkman 129).

2.4.2 Dogme 95

He also suggests that a good film should be made under some restrictions which are distinct from conventional techniques. Therefore in 1995, he led some new directors in Denmark to sign an oath of 10 rules, which was the notable "dogma 95". The main goal for Dogme 95 was that they wanted a reformation of the major motion-picture film making industry that followed the so called hollywood style mostly. For von Trier and those auteur who signed the contract: "movie is not an illusion" (*Dogme 95*. <http://www.dogme95.dk/>. Nov 12, 2005). The idea of Dogme 95 comes from von Trier's difficult experiences of making films. It is not only a rebellion against the film making process, but also a rebellion against him. Due to his habitual ability to make the filming and medium subject too complicated, this experience will be a new challenge for him. Therefore, he is eager for simplicity now (Stevenson 2003: 53). Here is the content of "Vow of Chastity" in Dogme 95 (*Dogme 95*. <http://www.dogme95.dk/>. Nov 12, 2005):

Vow of Chastity

"I swear to submit to the following set of rules drawn up and confirmed by Dogme 95:"

- 1. Shooting must be done on location. Props and sets must not be brought in (if a particular prop is necessary for the story, a location must be chosen where this prop is to be found).*
- 2. The sound must never be produced apart from the images or vice versa. (Music must not be used unless it occurs where the scene is being shot).*
- 3. The camera must be hand-held. Any movement or immobility attainable in the hand is permitted. (The film must not take place where the camera is standing; shooting must take place where the film takes place).*
- 4. The film must be in color. Special lighting is not acceptable. (If there is too little light for exposure the scene must be cut or a single lamp be attached to the camera).*
- 5. Optical work and filters are forbidden.*
- 6. The film must not contain superficial action. (Murders, weapons, etc. must not occur.)*
- 7. Temporal and geographical alienation are forbidden. (That is to say that the film takes place here and now.)*
- 8. Genre movies are not acceptable.*
- 9. The film format must be Academy 35 mm.*
- 10. The director must not be credited.*

Furthermore I swear as a director to refrain from personal taste! I am no longer an artist. I swear to refrain from creating a "work", as I regard the instant as more important than the whole. My supreme goal is to force the truth out of my characters and settings. I swear to do so by all the means available and at the cost of any good taste and any aesthetic considerations.

Thus I make my VOW OF CHASTITY."

Copenhagen, Monday 13 March 1995

On behalf of DOGME 95

Lars von Trier

Thomas Vinterberg

Though he never fulfill all the ten rules due to its difficulty of practicing, he only realized the third rule by using a hand-held camera that is utilized in almost every of his films. Moreover, von Trier's main principle of presenting a story is to make it as close to "reality" as possible through the detailed portrait of the characters and scenes. He likes to use his hand-held camera to capture and photograph different angles of actors in the films. Without exquisite make-up being put on, they look just like normal people who would sometimes feel repressed in their emotions and lives as far as their emotions and life are concerned. In some ways, he would make the photographing of the movie look rough and dull intentionally so as to achieve the simple and honest presentation of the story. Most importantly, in von Trier's viewpoint, a good film has a duty to offer insightful perspectives or lessons. Therefore, he likes to reveal the dark side of humanity in his film, which always provokes people to think profoundly about humanity.



Note2.1 Jorgen Leth: Jørgen Leth (born June 14, 1937 in Århus, Denmark.) is a Danish writer, and director of the acclaimed short film *Det Perfekte Menneske* (The Perfect Human) (featured in *The Five Obstructions* by Lars von Trier).

Note2.2 *Histoire d'O* (English title: *Story of O*) is a sadomasochistic novel by French author Pauline Réage.

Note2.3 Donatien Alphonse François, le Marquis de Sade (born June 2, 1740 in Paris; died December 2, 1814 in Charenton-Saint-Maurice) was a French aristocrat and writer of violent pornography and some strictly philosophical works. His is a philosophy of extreme freedom, unrestrained by ethics, religion and law. And the pursuit of personal pleasure is his utmost principle of life. Much of his writing was done during the 29 years of his imprisonment. His name is pronounced as [maŋki.də.sɑ̃d]; it is the origin of the word sadism ("Marquis de Sade").