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Cultural specificity and cinematic narration

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Abstract

Except Indian theories, contemporary theories of cinematic narration seldom sufficiently verify the extent and ends to which cultural specificity informs principles of narration. That predicament is exacerbated by that significant theoretical accounts fail to effectively address the cross-cultural validity of narration theories. This dissertation undertakes to deconstruct these theories, seeking to establish ways in which the structures of cinematic narration and its theorization in specific cultural contexts are continuous with corresponding cultural patterns of thoughts. African, Indian, Latin American and Euro-American theories were therefore selected and analysed for such continuity. The analysis revealed some evidence which suggests the continuity of cinematic narration, and its theorization, with culturally specific patterns of thoughts. Another set of evidence, however, particularly the scarcity of comparative ethnographic studies of cinematic narration and the prevalence of a universalising approach in Euro-American theories, makes this continuity problematic. This dichotomy of evidence highlights issues of cross-cultural validity of narration theories, especially the transposability of theories to different cultural contexts. To be meaningfully addressed, these issues would require consistent ethnographic studies of narration. Such studies would be particularly useful (1) to post-theorist scholars who seek solutions to contextually-motivated theoretical problems, (2) in cross-cultural pluralist film analysis and (3) in studies of national cinema.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Mahoro Semege

20th March 2015

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