

The Moment of Instability: The Textual and Intertextual Analysis of Ozu Yasujiro's *Passing Fancy*

Yuki Takinami

Abstract

This paper analyzes Ozu Yasujiro's 1933 film, *Passing Fancy* (*Dekigokoro*), in terms of its narrative structure utilizing the minimal narration of repetition and differentiation and the usage of his idiosyncratic shot/reverse shots in which the eyelines of characters are mismatched. This paper also clarifies some references to Hollywood films, such as *So, This is Paris*, *Docks of New York*, *It*, and *Marriage Circle*, in *Passing Fancy* and investigates their implications in terms of the moment of instability. Through these examinations, this paper finally addresses the famous debate between Noël Burch and David Bordwell over whether Ozu's idiosyncratic shot/reverse shots contain a sense of discontinuity, or not.

Keywords: Ozu Yasujiro, silent film, narration, shot/reverse shot, Hollywood cinema

Passing Fancy (*Diekigokoro*, 1933) is not a totally neglected film among Ozu Yasujiro's silent oeuvre, but it is rare for this *Kinema junpo* Best Film award winner of 1933 to be chosen for detailed discussion, particularly in terms of its aesthetics.¹ However, Ozu in the early 1930s had rapidly developed his aesthetics—as is clear from a brief comparison between his earliest surviving films, such as *Days of Youth* (*Wakaki hi*, 1929) and *I Flunked But...* (*Rakudai ha shitakeredo*, 1930), and his more integrated and better-wrought films in the mid-1930s, such as *Dragnet Girl* (*Hijosen no onna*, 1933) and *A Story of Floating Weeds* (*Ukikusa monogatari*, 1934). What, then, had Ozu done in 1933's *Passing Fancy* that developed his idiosyncratic film style and narration? What importance does *Passing Fancy* have in the trajectory of Ozu's oeuvre?

This chapter considers these questions by examining *Passing Fancy* in terms of (1) Ozu's minimalist narration, (2) the influence of Hollywood cinema on him, and (3) his usage of eyeline-mismatches and idiosyncratic shot/reverse shots. All three of these aspects, I argue, are interrelated.² In what follows, I will begin by clarifying Ozu's minimalist narration through a segmenting of the whole film into thirty-three parts. In terms of the influence of Hollywood cinema on early Ozu, I will then draw attention to some particular segments that refer to 1920s Hollywood films, such as *So, This*

is *Paris* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1927), *The Docks of New York* (Josef von Sternberg, 1927), *It* (Clarence G. Badger, 1927), and *The Marriage Circle* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1924). Showing the moment of *instability* to be the central concern of Ozu’s minimalist narration and his reference to Hollywood films, I finally address a question concerning Ozu’s eyeline-mismatched shot/reverse shots—whether they contain a sense of discontinuity, or not—referring to the well-known controversy between Noël Burch and David Bordwell.

1. The Narrative Structure of *Passing Fancy*: Segmentation

Passing Fancy has a well-calculated structure of minimalist narration, limiting the number of characters and settings. The plot is propelled mainly by an eternal-triangle story involving a widower, Kihachi (Sakamoto Takeshi), his friend Jiro (Obinata Den), and a waitress, Harue (Yakumo Emiko). Intertwined with this story are episodes of Kihachi’s son Tomibou (Tokkan Kozou) and the restaurant’s mistress Otome (Iida Chouko). The settings of the film are almost entirely limited to the daily milieu of the characters: the houses of Kihachi and Jiro; the factory where they work; Otome’s restaurant; and the streets and the barbershop of their neighborhood. The only deviations are: the *kodan* theater of the opening scene; the tavern where Kihachi, broken-hearted over Otome, gets drunk; the hospital where Tomibou is taken; and the ship that Kihachi boards in the last scene to earn money to pay Tomibou’s hospital bills. The film can be segmented into 33 units, which can be delineated as follows.

Streets (w/barbershop)	2, 4,	11,	15, 16,	20,	28,	31
Otome's Restaurant	3,	8, 10,				32
Kihachi's house	5, 7,	12, 13,	17,	21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29		
Jiro's house	6,		14,			30
Factory		9,		18,	24	

Kodan theater: 1. Tavern: 19. Hospital: 26. Ship: 33.

It should be noted that most of these segments are centered around conversations between two or more characters that are depicted by shot/reverse shots, usually with eyeline mismatches. Here, we can discern the prototype of Ozu’s late and “mature” films in the postwar period, in which characters repeatedly gather around the *chabudai* table in the living room, and the narrative is propelled through the repetition and differentiation of their conversations, the constants and variants of which include the content of the conversation, the combination of the characters, and their interplay of action and reaction.³

The combinations of the characters in *Passing Fancy* contain virtually all possible variations—from

that of Kihachi and Tomibou (Segments 5, 22), of Kihachi and Otsune (Segments 18, 23), of Kihachi and Harue (Segments 12, 27), of Jiro and Tomibou (Segment 6), of Jiro and Harue (Segments 14, 27, 31), to that of all five main characters in Otome's restaurant, a quasi-family circle (Segments 8, 10, 32). The topic of conversation in the first half of the film involves the love triangle among the three characters: Kihachi likes Harue, Harue likes Jiro, and Jiro rejects Harue, caring instead for Kihachi. The main narrative concern, which is Otome's request to Kihachi for a go-between for Jiro and Harue (Segment 17) and Kihachi's bad drinking in a tavern (Segment 19), shifts to the relation between Kihachi and Tomibou: Tomibou's blaming his father for drinking (Segment 22), his illness and recovery (Segments 25-26), and the difficulty of managing the hospital bills (after Segment 27).

We can point out a similarity between *Passing Fancy* and Ozu's later films in the content of the conversation that mainly concerns marriage (or love) and the parent-child discord caused by it—though, in *Passing Fancy*, it is the parent who wants to marry. And yet, we can contend that the conversation scenes of *Passing Fancy* are much more dramatic than those of the later films. By this, I do not mean that shot/reverse-shot scenes of the late films are not emotional. But some shot/reverse-shot scenes of *Passing Fancy* are impressive due to the characters' actions that *visualize* the image of instability. It is my intention to show how the shot/reverse-shot scenes implying a sense of instability are located effectively in the narrative structure of the film, thus gaining powerful expressions.

In terms of shot/ reverse shot scenes implicating a sense of instability, Segment 22 is the most explicit. The segment starts with Kihachi's return from the tavern, dead drunken. In the previous segment, Tomibou spoiled the *bonsai* plant that Kihachi takes care of because he was angry at his father's bad drinking and laziness; Kihachi finds the *bonsai*'s leaves scattered on the floor, and his son sleeping. Kihachi wakes Tomibou up, and asks who tore the leaves of the plant. Because Tomibou carried out the crime due to his rage against his father, he hides the fact that he did it. Hearing that, Kihachi gets mad with Tomibou and slaps him. And yet, the son rebels against the father, blaming him for his slovenly drinking, and throwing books one by one [fig.1]. To dramatize the scene, Ozu has Tomibou slap Kihachi again and again [fig.2]. Slapping, Tomibou starts to cry; Kihachi realizes his deficiencies and apologizes to his son [fig.3].



Fig.1. Tomibou throws books.



Fig.2. Tomibou slaps his father.



Fig.3. Kihachi realizes his faults.

The positional relation between Kihachi and Tomibou changes throughout the scene because they constantly move inside the rooms; but they are usually placed in a diagonal opposition, a typical positioning of Ozu's shot/reverse shots. The medium shots, or medium close-ups, of the two are alternated with eye-line mismatches. Rather than abide by the rule of the imaginary line, the camera is set at a position that foregrounds the characters' gestures and captures them in a *graphical* match. Notably and *explicitly*, a sense of *discontinuity* often intervenes in the alternation—through the image of *instability* visualized by the characters' actions, such as Kihachi's slapping, Tomibou's throwing books and slapping, as well as his throwing himself into his father's arms in the final moment of reconciliation. Many critics have argued that the shot/reverse shots of Ozu's film contain a sense of discontinuity due to the violation of the imaginary line; apart from this stylistic matter, shot/reverse shots in the later films often occur at a narratively critical moment, such as a dissociation between father and daughter, thus implying a sense of tension at the narrative level. Ozu in the late films, however, rarely makes explicit a sense of discontinuity in the shot/reverse shots in such a bold manner as in this 1933 film—through the image that visualizes instability.

Indeed, the most distinctive part of Ozu's dramaturgy in *Passing Fancy* is in his audacious and repetitive usage of the instability-implying image in the shot/reverse-shot scenes. Among a number of scenes in which such a moment of instability erupts, we can count Segment 14 as a typical example. In the previous segment, Tomibou shows Harue a number of bromides of soldiers. In the bromides, a photograph of Jiro is included; Harue asks Tomibou to hand over that photograph and then goes to Jiro's house next door to find more photographs. Segment 14 opens up in Jiro's house. Harue starts to clean the bachelor's messy room, and Jiro happens to come back. While knowing Harue's heart, Jiro treats her plainly because he cares for Kihachi. However, Harue complains to him why he does not understand her heart, dropping down, and even kneeling in front of him. In this melodramatic scene of appeal, the shots of Harue and Jiro are alternated with an eyeline mismatch and a graphic match. It is as if the tension is held visually between their shots—due to the choreography and the correspondence of their graphic design in each series of shots. The final moment occurs when this visually sustained tension is disrupted: Jiro gets angry, and Harue falls down—the image of instability [figs. 4-5]. And yet, Ozu is so bold that he seems unsatisfied with this depiction, that itself can be said to visualize the moment of instability. After Harue falls down, Ozu alternates their shots once more and makes Harue throw a photograph of Jiro to the fore in order to insert an even more explicit image of instability [fig. 6].



Fig.4. Jiro gets angry.



Fig.5. Harue falls down.



Fig.6. Harue throws photos.

It is clear that Ozu uses the image of instability as a visual trope to represent characters' emotion, sadness, or anger. In addition, Ozu achieves a kind of rhyming effect between these images through his minimalist narration of repetition and differentiation. Most explicitly, Ozu repeats the alternation between Jiro and Harue in Segment 27, in which the three main characters gather in Kihachi's house, worried about the payment of Tomibou's hospital fees. Harue offers to Kihachi that she can manage it, but Kihachi knows that she has no means (but prostitution). Jiro suggests that Kihachi go to the hospital, and he and Harue have a confrontation. Like Segment 14, the shots of the two are alternated with an eyeline mismatch and a graphic match. Jiro gets angry with Harue for her inordinate offer but is also moved by it, saying that he will manage the money; and Harue hugs Jiro [figs. 7-9]. This is the moment of final reconciliation, when Jiro accepts Harue. And yet, of particular importance in this segment is that Ozu directs it in continuation with Segment 14. Through the alternation, a tension is kept visually between the shots of Harue and Jiro—due not only to their gestures of leaning forward, but also to their graphic correspondence. Furthermore, the climactic moment occurs when this tension is disrupted—though this disruption means a reconciliation of the two characters, rather than miscommunication between them (as in Segment 14).



Fig.7. Harue holds Jiro's hand.



Fig.8. Jiro holds Harue's hand.



Fig.9. Harue hugs Jiro.

We can here discern the advantage Ozu derives from his minimalist narration of repetition and differentiation. In Segments 14 and 27, the similar shot/ reverse shots between Harue and Jiro are repeated, centering the moment of instability. The image of instability first signifies miscommunication between the characters, and then their reconciliation. Through this process of repetition and differentiation,

Ozu prolongs and completes the love story of the protagonists in a dramatic manner. Segment 22, in which the father and the son exchange the actions and reactions of slapping and throwing books, is another example that proves Ozu structures *Passing Fancy* on the basis of shot/reverse shots containing the moment of instability. Or, returning to the shot/reverse shots between Harue and Jiro in Segments 14 and 27, we can further link their pattern to the alternations in Segment 13 and the first half of Segment 27, those between Harue and Tominou as well as between Harue and Kihachi. These segments can be said to contain a sense of instability due to the narrative situation implying the disharmony between the feelings of Kihachi and Harue.

Moreover, we can extend this intricate yet fragile web—fragile because it is penetrated by the moment of instability—woven by shot/reverse shots to the whole film. If not so explicit in terms of the image of instability, we may easily see the moment of instability underlie other shot/reverse-shot scenes. For instance, Kihachi's face is gradually clouded with resignation when Otome asks him for a go-between (which causes Kihachi's broken heart) in Segment 17; the medium close-up of crying Tomibou and the shot of the fireworks momentarily exploding in the sky are alternated after he realizes his father has departed (another climactic moment) in Segment 31. Or, if not shot/reverse shots in a strict sense, Segments 3 and 4 are noteworthy. In these segments, Tomibou knocks the shin of his father (Segment 3) and Jiro (Segment 4) with a stick to wake them up; in either case, the medium shot of the shin cuts to a long shot of Tomibou at the *exact* moment he hits it. Here, Ozu constructs these segments, being conscious of the moment of instability inherent in the actions of knocking.

That *Passing Fancy* is a fragile text mainly woven by shot/reverse shots gives us an important suggestion regarding the famous controversy over Ozu's shot/reverse shots, whether or not they contain a sense of discontinuity. Yet, before addressing this question, I would like to investigate some of Ozu's references to Hollywood films in *Passing Fancy*—to *So, This is Paris*, *The Docks of New York*, *It*, and *The Marriage Circle*—all of which evince how careful Ozu is to treat the moment of instability.

2. Three References to Hollywood Cinema

Let me (re)start with Segments 21 and 22, in which Tomibou throws books at his father. I have already discussed Segment 22 in terms of Ozu's dramatic usage of the image of instability. But these two segments should also be considered with respect to Ozu's reference to a Hollywood film, Ernst Lubitsch's 1927 *So, This is Paris*. In Segment 21, Tomibou comes back home after he was teased by his friends for his father's drinking. Crying, he plucks off the leaves of the *bonsai* plant. The medium shots of Tomibou and the falling leaves are alternated. While, strictly speaking, this alternation is not

shot/reverse shot, it refers to the shot/reverse shots of *So, This is Paris*, in which a foppish bachelor (George Beranger) throws roses to a married woman (Patsy Ruth Miller) one by one, and the shots are alternated across the movements of the thrown flowers.

In Segment 22, Ozu refers once again to the shot/reverse shots of *So, This is Paris* with a different twist. As mentioned earlier, Tomibou throws books at Kihachi one by one in the middle of the segment. In light of this reference to Hollywood cinema, Ozu models this scene after the shot/reverse-shot scene of *So, This is Paris*. To be sure, we can point out two differences between these shot/reverse-shot scenes: (1) while the thrown roses of *So, This is Paris* produce a jokey and ludicrous effect to mock the silly self-conscious behavior of the bachelor, the thrown books of *Passing Fancy* suggest the melodramatic hyperbole of the son's appeal to the father; (2) while Tomibou and Kihachi are placed in a diagonal opposition, the characters of *So, This is Paris* do not necessarily take this position (the positional relation between the two is not shown clearly). But in both scenes, the center of directorial concern lies in the thrown objects, by the way the shots are linked and from where the effect of the scene, whether comical or sentimentally hyperbolic, is derived. Ozu, while modifying the tone of the scene, gains as enormous an effect as Lubitsch by following his manner in depicting the thrown objects.

The second example of Ozu's reference to Hollywood film is in the last scene, in which Kihachi is on board to go to Hokkaido to fish for crab to pay the hospital bills of his son. While this episode implicitly refers to Kobayashi Takiji's 1929 proletarian novel *The Factory Ship* (the killing of Kobayashi by the police took place in 1933, the year *Passing Fancy* was made), what interests me here is its intertextual connection to Josef von Sternberg's *The Docks of New York*. Near the end of *The Docks of New York*, a boiler engineer Bill Roberts (George Bancroft) dives into the sea to return to Mae (Betty Compson). While his return to the shore saves her from jail for the murder of a badly drunken guest, his diving takes place somewhat abruptly without any narrative explanation. The crew tries to stop him, but he ignores them; the long shot of his diving is directly cut to the long shot of his falling into the sea, and another long shot of his swimming follows [figs. 10-12]. Likewise, Kihachi on board in *Passing Fancy* suddenly decides to go home and dives into the sea. Most notably, Ozu here follows the *decoupage* of *The Docks of New York* in a precise manner—from the long shot of a man's diving to the long shots of his falling down and swimming. Here, again, the central concern for Ozu is in the action of diving, i.e. falling-down, which contains the moment of instability.



Fig.10. Kihachi dives.



Fig.11. Kihachi falls into the sea.



Fig.12. Kihachi swims.

Considering the exactly similar decoupage from diving to swimming as well as Kihachi's role as a blue-collar worker, it would be fair to say that Ozu contrives the last scene of *Passing Fancy* on the model of *The Docks of New York*. And yet, Ozu in this scene also refers to the last scene of *It*, in which Clara Bow is thrown into the sea by a sudden turn of the yacht. We can argue that, unlike *The Docks of New York* and *Passing Fancy*, her falling is not depicted by a series of shots via match-on-action. We can also indicate that the yacht in which Bow is riding does not connote any socially realistic criticism, being rather just a property of a bourgeois, a dream vehicle that Hollywood cinema (falsely) provides to the audience. But Bow, the *It* Girl, after falling into the sea, somewhat suddenly decides to go home by swimming, just as is the case with Bill and Kihachi.⁴ Also, we should recall that the figure of the modern girl, or *moga*, plays an important role in Ozu's early films from *Walk Cheerfully* (1930) to *Dragnet Girl* (1933), prototyped by Clara Bow. Moreover, Kihachi in *Passing Fancy* somewhat easily and cheerfully swims in the ocean reflecting the sunshine. That is to say, Ozu endows this last scene with the light quality of *It*, the image of the bright ocean of California, in which Bow swims—rather than the dark image of New York at night. Taking these terms into account, we can consider that Ozu intertwines the texts of *It* and *The Docks of New York* to weave the last scene of *Passing Fancy*.

In the original script written with Ikeda Tadao, Tomibou in Segment 22 directly rushes to the tavern to blame Kihachi after he is teased. After his diving in Segment 33, Kihachi goes home and reunites with Tomibou and others, a scene which Ozu omitted.⁵ In other words, Ozu considerably changed these two segments during production, and this suggests the importance of the moment of instability for Ozu. It is this moment occupying the center of Ozu's directorial concern that also refers to the Hollywood works Ozu admired. To conclude this intertextual analysis of *Passing Fancy*, I would like to draw attention to the opening scene of the film, in which Ozu implicitly refers to Lubitsch's *The Marriage Circle*. Again, the moment of instability is of primary importance.

Passing Fancy opens with a tracking shot moving through the audience in a *kodan* theater, showing anonymous spectators with a series of fixed shots, and finally focusing on Kihachi [figs. 13-14]. Then, another fixed shot shows an anonymous audience member who finds a wallet on the floor. He picks it

up, finds it empty, and throws it away. Another audience member finds it and repeats the same action. Finally, Kihachi finds it and throws it away, but he considers that that wallet is better than his, and so he picks it up again, exchanges it with his and throws out his old one. Another audience member discovers Kihachi's wallet, finds it empty and throws it away; yet another audience member..., and *da capo al fine*. After Kihachi's throwing, the shots are linked by match-on-action via the movement of the wallet, which is repeated three times [figs. 15-16]. In this match-on-action, we can find relevance with the shot/reverse shots via the thrown books' movement in Segment 22, and, consequently, those of *So, This is Paris*. And yet, drawing attention to the horizontal (rather than vertical) movement of the wallet, I would like to point out its connection with the matches-on-action in the opening scene of *The Marriage Circle*. There, the shots are linked via the movement of clothes thrown by Mizzi (Marie Prevost) from left to right (or from right to left) (While it might seem far-fetched to argue that the opening scene of *Passing Fancy* refers to that of *The Marriage Circle* because of a lack of any explicit evidence, the opening scene of this Lubitsch film is doubtless the single most important text that Ozu repeatedly imitates in his other films, as I have demonstrated elsewhere.⁶) The action of Kihachi's and other audience members' throwing is not as prominent as Tomibou's throwing and Kihachi's diving, not least because they do not articulate any character's emotion. And yet, Ozu, in this opening scene, quietly anticipates the moment of instability by repeating the matches-on-action of the thrown wallet to make it later erupt again and again.



Fig. 13. Tracking through the audience.



Fig. 14. Focusing on Kihachi.



Fig. 15. Kihachi throws a wallet.



Fig. 16. The thrown wallet.

Of course, we can consider that the above references to Hollywood films are only a trivial detail that can be attributed to Ozu's cinephilic inclination. Or, we may argue that the basic plot of *Passing Fancy*, a paternal melodrama, comes from King Vidor's *The Champ* (1932).⁷ And yet, beyond the basic plot line, Ozu structures the crucial segments—the opening, climactic, and last scenes—with reference to Hollywood films that presumably had a great influence on Ozu. Though the question about what the influence of Hollywood cinema on Ozu requires more extensive investigation, we can say at least that Ozu in *Passing Fancy* imitates some Hollywood films in an eminently faithful manner at the level of découpage, and that the crucial point of Ozu's imitation lies in the moment of instability and the manner in which it is treated.

3. Ozu's Shot/reverse Shots: in Conversation with Noël Burch and David Bordwell⁸

Through an examination of Ozu's references to Hollywood films in *Passing Fancy*, it is certain that Ozu structures this 1933 film around the moment of instability. As I discussed above, the plot structure of *Passing Fancy* is composed through repetitions of shot/reverse shots that themselves contain the moment of instability, some of which, as in Segments 14, 22, and 27, even flaunt it through the explicit image of instability. (Of course, we may consider virtually all shot/reverse-shot scenes to imply this moment of instability, not least because the love-triangle story always implies a fissure).

What insight does this analysis, emphasizing the moment of instability in *Passing Fancy*, give us concerning Ozu's eyeline-mismatched shot/reverse shots? On the basis of the above examination, I would like to address the well-known debate between Noël Burch and David Bordwell in the context of formalist studies of film in the 1970s and 1980s: that is, the controversy about whether Ozu's shot/reverse shots contain a sense of discontinuity due to the violation of imaginary line. This question had already been posed when Ozu was alive; his own response was, "what is the difference [between his idiosyncratic shot/reverse shots and the orthodox ones]?"⁹ This answer by rhetorical question suggests that, at least in Ozu's view, his eyeline-mismatched shot/reverse shots contain nothing wrong, or even discontinuous. Recently, in Japan, the debate was revived between Uno Kuniichi (who considers there to be a sense of discontinuity) and Hasumi Shigehiko (who considers there to be nothing discontinuous).¹⁰ The trajectory along which Ozu developed this idiosyncratic style is another big issue that needs a thorough scrutiny. There seems to be agreement that Ozu started to use the style in a more or less stabilized manner by 1933 or 1934.¹¹ Then, *Passing Fancy*—made in the summer of 1933—should be a crucial film for the developing process of this film style. In what follows, I will review the debate between Burch and Bordwell—particularly how Burch claims a sense of discontinuity in Ozu's shot/reverse shots, and how Bordwell criticizes Burch—and argue that

Ozu's shot/reverse shots certainly contain a sense of discontinuity at least in their early stage, departing from both Burch and Bordwell's arguments.

Burch starts his discussion of Ozu's shot/reverse shots by pointing out the rule of the "imaginary line" of the more orthodox shot/reverse shots of Hollywood cinema. In this convention, the camera is prohibited from crossing over the imaginary line drawn between two characters at the moment of the shot change. To the extent that filmmakers follow this convention, the eyelines of characters are matched across the cut, and a succession of shots—and the discontinuity inherent in it—is intended to be stylistically transparent. While this discussion just follows the general idea, Burch adds a Marxist and "political modernist" twist to it, assertively discerning in this convention the "Western" tendency toward representation in which the material level of narration is intended to be invisible.¹²

By contrast, the camera alternates across the imaginary line in the shot/reverse shots of Ozu's films. Consequently, the eyelines of characters are mismatched, just as both characters look toward the same direction. On the basis of his valorization of the more orthodox shot/reverse shots of Hollywood cinema, Burch writes:

[Ozu] challenged the principle of continuity, for the "bad" eyeline match produces a 'jolt' in the editing flow, a moment of confusion in the spectator's sense of orientation, requiring a moment's readjustment. The resulting effect of hiatus emphasizes the disjunctive nature of the shot-change, which the developed "editing rules" has perceptually obliterated.¹³

Due to the mismatched eyeline, the discontinuity inherent in the shot change is laid bare. To the extent that Hollywood cinema attempts to hide this discontinuity, this moment of "jolt" works as a kind of "distancing effect" that Burch conceptualizes as Ozu's "challenge" to Hollywood cinema, the Western mode of representation. Burch continues that these discrete two-dimensional images are not incorporated to produce the illusion of a three-dimensional diegesis, and further, that this discontinuous and unhidden mode of (re)presentation comes from the spatial and temporal mode of traditional Japanese art, such as the rock garden, *waka* and *bunraku*.¹⁴

However, Burch's claim on a sense of discontinuity in Ozu's films can be criticized in two ways. First, Burch's opposition between Hollywood cinema and Ozu's cinema is highly problematic. Historically speaking, Ozu no doubt started his career under the influence of Hollywood cinema; Burch's argument simply contradicts this fact. What is worse, when he opposes Hollywood's transparent mode and Ozu's unhidden mode, Burch links the latter to traditional Japanese aesthetics in an *ahistorical* manner; most problematically, Burch ignores the differences between Ozu's cinema of the 20th-century, the Ryoanji garden of the 16th-century, *waka* of the 10th-century, and *bunraku* of the 18th-century. Here, despite his initial aim to criticize the dominant and Western "representational" mode,

Burch seems to be caught up in another kind of dominant ideology, i.e. the binarism of Hollywood cinema versus “Other” cinema that reproduces the structure of Orientalism.¹⁵

Second, we may question more fundamentally the grounds on which Burch theorizes a sense of discontinuity: while Burch attributes this sense of discontinuity to the violation of the imaginary line, is it really so? This is the question posed by Bordwell:

Note that Burch’s account is both atomistic and negative. It concentrates only on the moment of the cut, and it sees it purely as a violation, a “challenge” to continuity. But if we look at how the series of shots constructs the total spatial context through the patterning of shot scale, angle, and staging of movement and figure position, we find that Ozu presents a *positive* system of his own, one with many stabilizing features.¹⁶

Behind cinema, Bordwell argues, various activities—“the patterning of shot scale, angle, and staging of movement and figure position”—work to help the viewers construct a diegetic space. Continuity of shots is only one among others. Then, the violation of continuity alone may not cause a sense of discontinuity. In other words, Burch could claim a sense of discontinuity by abstracting only the continuity editing (and its violation) and discarding many other factors.

What is, then, Bordwell’s argument on Ozu’s shot/reverse shots? First, as the above-quoted passage indicates, Bordwell emphasizes the narrative aspect of Ozu’s cinema. Even though Ozu violates some Hollywood conventions, Ozu’s cinema uses its own system to help the viewer construct a diegetic space (in the case of the shot/reverse shots, Ozu usually shows the position of the characters via an establishing shot at an appropriate moment). At any rate, Ozu’s cinema is a narrative cinema produced by a major and commercial studio of Japan, Shochiku. By carefully analyzing how the narrational procedure of Ozu’s cinema works in the widest sense, Bordwell avoids the binarism between narrative and anti-narrative cinemas.

And yet, Bordwell’s point of inquiry is Ozu’s idiosyncratic film style, the peculiarity of which Bordwell highlights by contrasting with classical styles. Concerning the shot/reverse shots, Bordwell’s argument goes as follows. While Ozu violates the rule of the imaginary line, he limits the option of the camera position to the circular field centering on the character; Bordwell names this system “the 360-degree system” in contrast to the 180-degree one of Hollywood cinema based on the imaginary line. In this system of Ozu’s cinema, the camera takes one position at some 45-degree multiples in relation to the character; though, in many cases, it is posited in front of the character [diagram 1].¹⁷ In the case of the shot/reverse shots, the two circles centering on the two characters are overlapped. These characters are often diagonally opposed, or “staggered staged”: that is, when the shots capturing the characters from the front are alternated, the camera in the shot change crosses over the imaginary line

[diagram 2].¹⁸ Bordwell further indicates an interesting feature that Ozu could develop through the dynamics of these norms: the characters often take the same gesture in Ozu’s shot/reverse shots, and the two series of shots are graphically matched (rather than matched on the eyeline).¹⁹

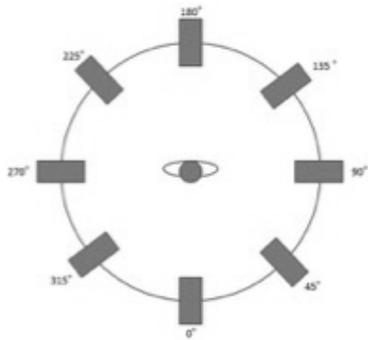


Diagram 1

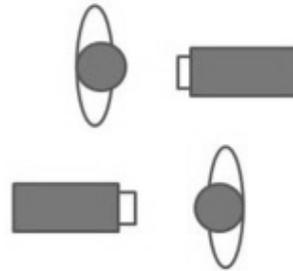


Diagram 2

I consider the two objections addressed to Burch to be appropriate. Burch’s claim that Ozu’s discontinuous mode comes from traditional Japanese aesthetics is ahistorical; Ozu’s cinema is doubtless a narrative cinema. Furthermore, Bordwell rightly points out the dynamics of norms, from which Ozu derives a subtle yet audacious effect. In many shot/reverse-shot scenes of *Passing Fancy*, Ozu posits the characters in a diagonal opposition, making the most of the graphical correspondence. And yet, as we have seen, the shot/reverse shots of *Passing Fancy* are certainly pierced by the moment of instability—and thus a sense of discontinuity. Graphically matched, a tension is held between the shots. (I totally agree with Bordwell that Ozu’s unique camera positioning is appropriate for the graphical match.) But Ozu highlights this visual aspect purposely to make the violation of the graphic correspondences outstanding—not just because of Ozu’s “unreasonable” preference of some stylistic features, as Bordwell suggests. And surely, as Burch argues, the flat image unfolds on the screen particularly when the character is in a forward-bent posture, about to collapse or get mad: that is, the two-dimensional image of instability. If so, the eyeline-mismatched shot/reverse shots in Ozu’s cinema, at least at the moment of late 1933, when Ozu was in the process of developing his idiosyncratic film style, contain a sense of discontinuity at the level of *image*—particularly due to Ozu’s *mise-en-scène* and careful timings of cutting a shot and linking it to another.

Conclusion

In this paper, I argued that (1) *Passing Fancy* is structured by Ozu's minimalist narration of repetition and differentiation of shot/reverse-shot scenes, at the center of which the moment of instability is, and that (2) Ozu's reference to Hollywood films in this film concerns the moment of instability. On the basis of these two observations, I also addressed the controversy concerning Ozu's eyeline-mismatched shot/reverse shots—whether this idiosyncratic film style contains a sense of discontinuity. I demonstrated that Ozu, in *Passing Fancy*, one of the earliest films in which he systematically started to use this film style, associated his shot/reverse shots to a sense of discontinuity, or the moment of instability, at the level of image. This is not due to violations of the rule of the imaginary line, as Noël Burch contended.

What about, then, the shot/reverse shots of Ozu's later and more "mature" films? Are they underlain by the moment of instability? Do they thus contain a sense of discontinuity? Glancing at his late films, including *Late Spring* (1949), *Early Summer* (1951), and above all *Tokyo Twilight* (1957), I would argue so particularly because Ozu directs the shot/reverse-shot scenes with meticulous effort. Graphical correspondences and their violations appear at the most dramatic moments. (For example, there is the moment in *Tokyo Twilight* when the heroine college student [Arima Ineko] slaps her boyfriend [Taura Masami] after her abortion.) But thorough examination of these late films is beyond this paper. Instead, I will conclude by quoting a passage from Ozu's remarks in 1952, the period when Ozu had gained the highest fame of his career, when he had completed *Late Spring* and *Early Summer* (just before *Tokyo Story*). Here, Ozu proudly recollects the scene in which Tomibou throws books and slaps his father again and again:

The film has a scene in which the child who was teased in school for his father's drinking plucks off the *bonsai* leaves of the father; the father knocks down the child when he comes back from a café, but the child fights back; soon, the father gets quiet, and the child quits slapping, and starts to cry. If the film were available, I would like to watch that scene.²⁰

It should be noted that Ozu was a man discontented with his works, and it is quite exceptional for him to be satisfied with an achievement. In addition, Ozu at the height of his career when he made that statement, precisely recollected a scene he shot some twenty years earlier. This suggests the importance of the shot/reverse shot scene of *Passing Fancy*—that he modeled after *So, This is Paris* and at the center of which the moment of instability lies—for the development of his idiosyncratic film style as well as his whole oeuvre.

-
- ¹ For studies that contain a substantial analysis of *Passing Fancy*, see Sato Tadao, *Ozu Yasujiro no geijustu* (1971; Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun Shuppansha, 2003), pp. 296-304; David Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema* (London: BFI, 1988), pp. 248-252. Sato discusses in terms of the Kihachi series; Bordwell in terms of the repetition of the same motifs and the “parametric play” in the transitional scenes.
- ² And yet, the issue of the influence of Hollywood cinema on Ozu is beyond the scope of this part. For studies approaching this issue in terms of subject-matter in connection with Japanese modern culture, see Tanaka Masumi, *Ozu Yasujiro shuyu* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 2003); Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: the Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). Bordwell, in addition to terms of subject-matter, argues that Ozu learned classical narration from Hollywood cinema in his *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, esp. pp. 23-24. However, Ozu’s reference to Hollywood films in *Passing Fancy* suggests that the influence of Hollywood cinema on him is irreducible to issues of subject-matter and the continuity system. In my dissertation, “Reflecting Hollywood: ‘Mobility’ and ‘Lightness’ in the Early Silent Films of Ozu Yasujiro” (University of Chicago, 2012), I traced the influence of Hollywood cinema on silent Ozu more extensively both in terms of subject-matter and film style—as well as in aesthetic terms pertaining to cinematic experience, based on the notion of “vernacular modernism” proposed by Miriam Hansen. Also see Miriam Bratu Hansen, “The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism,” in Gledhill and Williams, eds., *Reinventing Film Studies*, pp. 332-350.
- ³ Cf. Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 56-64.
- ⁴ While Sternberg is uncredited, it is said that he worked for *It* for a short period. Considering the similarity with the last scene of *The Docks of New York*, I suspect that it is the last scene. See John Baxter, *Von Sternberg* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2010), p. 65.
- ⁵ On comparisons between the film and the script of *Passing Fancy*, see Inoue Kazuo’s commentary in Inoue Kazuo, ed., *Ozu Yasujiro zenshu* (Tokyo: Shinshokan, 2003), vol.1. p. 718.
- ⁶ With respect to Ozu’s imitation of the opening scene of *The Marriage Circle*, I analyzed some scenes of *Tokyo Chorus* (1931) and *Woman of Tokyo* (1933). See Yuki Takinami, “‘Ugoki’ no bigaku: Ozu Yasujiro nitaisuru Erunsuto Rubicchi no eikyo,” in *Hyosho*, 7 (2013), pp. 172-190. Also see Takinami, “Reflecting Hollywood,” Ch. 1 and Ch.3.
- ⁷ On paternal melodrama in Japan particularly in relation to Hollywood films, see Yamamoto Kikuo, *Nihon eiga ni okeru gaikoku eiga no eikyo* (Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Shuppan, 1983).
- ⁸ This section is a revised version of part of my dissertation “Reflecting Hollywood,” Ch.1, and my Japanese-written paper, “Furenzokusei no kankaku: Ozu Yasujiro no shisen no icchishinai kirikaeshi no hassei katei,” *Johougaku kenkyu*, 85 (2013), pp. 1-20.
- ⁹ This famous episode is told by Hamamura Yoshimasa, who worked as an editor of Ozu’s films after 1941, to Sato Tadao. In a less well-known essay in 1948, Ozu also refers to this issue; see Ozu Yasujiro, “Eiga no

-
- bunpou,” in Tanaka Masasumi, ed., *Ozu Yasujiro sengo goroku shusei* (Tokyo: Firumu Aatosha, 1989), pp. 37-40.
- ¹⁰ Uno Kuniichi, *Eizoshintairon* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2008); Hasumi Shigehiko, *Godaru, Fuukou, Mane* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 2008).
- ¹¹ Burch analyzes *Woman of Tokyo* (February 1933) as the film Ozu began to use this film style “systematically”; Bordwell considers that Ozu elaborated it particularly in the years 1932-1934. Ibid. p. 159.
- ¹² D.N. Rodowick, *The Crisis of Political Modernism: Criticism and Ideology in Contemporary Film Theory* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).
- ¹³ Burch, *To the Distant Observer*, p. 159.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., pp.160-161, p. 175.
- ¹⁵ On the criticism to Burch in terms of Orientalism, see Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. 7-49.
- ¹⁶ Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, p. 92. Emphasis in original.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 92-93.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 93-95.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., p. 98.
- ²⁰ Ozu Yasujiro, “Jisaku wo kataru,” in Tanaka, ed., *Ozu Yasujiro sengo goroku shusei*, p. 127.

〈不安定性〉の感覚

——小津安二郎『出来ごころ』のテキスト的ならびに間テキスト的分析

滝 浪 佑 紀

【要旨】

本論文は小津安二郎監督の 1933 年作品『出来ごころ』を、〈視線の一致しない切り返し〉の使用という観点から詳細なテキスト分析を試み、さらには同作品で言及されているハリウッド作品と小津の言及の仕方を考察するものである。まず、〈視線の一致しない切り返し〉に関して言えば、小津はこの独特のスタイルを、差異を含みながら反復的に使用することで、ミニマリスト的語りを可能にしている。そして重要なことに、小津は決定的瞬間に切り返しの交替の連続に破断をもたらすような、〈不安定性〉の感覚を視覚化したイメージを挿入しているのである（例えば、息子が父親の喜八に平手打ちを繰り返す場面など）。

また、『出来ごころ』で言及されているハリウッド作品として、本論文はジョセフ・フォン・スタンバーグの『紐育の波止場』、クラレンス・バジャーの『あれ』、エルンスト・ルビッチの『陽気な巴里っ子』ならびに『結婚哲学』を指摘し、いずれの場合も〈不安定性〉の感覚を視覚化した重要なシーンで参照されていることを明らかにする（喜八が財布を投げた冒頭シーン、上述の息子が喜八に平手打ちを繰り返すシーン、喜八が船上から海へ飛び込むシーン）。

以上のテキスト的ならびに間テキスト的分析から、本論文は、小津は『出来ごころ』を〈不安定性〉の感覚を中心として、構造化していることを示す。その上で、1970 年代から 1980 年代に著名な映画研究者であるノエル・バーチとデビット・ボードウェルの間で展開された、小津の特異な〈視線の一致しない切り返し〉には〈不連続性〉が含まれているか否かという論争—すなわち編集上のつながりが不連続的であるか否かが争点となった論争—に、小津は切り返しシーンの決定的な瞬間において、〈不安定性〉の感覚を視覚化するイメージを挿入しているという観点から介入し、小津の〈視線の一致しない切り返し〉には確かに〈不連続性〉の感覚が含意されていると主張する。