

Editing in Marianne and Juliane

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Argument

Through aspects of editing such as flashbacks, graphic, rhythmic and spatial editing, Von Trotta develops the characters Marianne and Juliane and establishes the dynamics of the personal relationship between the two.

Through these techniques the film insists upon Juliane's experiences more so than the political context of the time.

Scene



Graphic and Spatial Editing

- “[Graphic editing] may be considered purely as graphic configurations, as patterns of light and dark, line and shape, volumes and depths, movement and stasis – independent of the shots’ relation to the time and space of the story” (Bordwell and Thompson, p. 225)
- “[Spatial] editing permits the filmmaker to juxtapose any two points in space and thus imply some kind of relationship between them” (Bordwell and Thompson, p. 231)
 - Outside vs. inside lighting, wide open vs. confined spaces – proves contrast
 - Graphic matches – allows audience to visually connect two images and their meanings
 - Each shot juxtaposed with another in order to create the illusion of space – plays a large part in the prison sequences

Contrasting Graphic Shots



Spatial Constructions



Flashbacks

- “Manipulation of events leads to changes in story plot relations. We are most familiar with such manipulations in flashbacks which present one or more shots of their presumed story out of order” (Bordwell and Thompson)
 - The entire film is Juliane’s flashback – throughout the film flashbacks focus on Juliane and Marianne’s relationship
 - Contrasting present day and past relationships
 - Robs the story line of a smooth flow – temporal discontinuity
 - Using flashbacks the director is able to compare two different shots in order to make a point

The Strip Search

- Rhythmic Editing
 - Longer shots of female prison guard searching, quick shots of Juliane's expression in a close up
 - Juliane's expression is seemingly accustomed though humiliated
 - We see this in her sister's expression as well throughout the film
 - The strip search is Juliane's experience of what Marianne is going through – what they share
 - In the rest of the scene any cut made is between long shots – In the search the cuts are quick and the shots are short
 - The quick cuts and the emphasis on facial expression call attention to this experience
 - We see exactly what Juliane is experiencing and how she feels about it
 - This is purposefully done in order to build Juliane as a character and show the audience how invasive the prison is

Clip



The Flashback

- Fade-in to Juliane's POV
 - Prison courtyard and wall recalls childhood
 - The prison reminds Juliane of childhood – the home being a prison
- Marianne and Juliane playing
 - Inseparable, holding hands, falling down together, etc.
 - When film cuts back to present day, Marianne refuses to see Juliane
- Walking upstairs
 - Lighting is bright
 - When film cuts back to present day, prison is dark
- Image of Christ
 - Cuts to image of Juliane in relatively same position in a dark room
 - Connection between two visuals
- Abrupt transition back to prison
 - Music cuts out

Clip



Conclusion

- The editing aspects analyzed in this scene function as a microcosm of the film as a whole
- Von Trotta's insistence on highlighting personal and seemingly mundane moments creates a character study of the two women rather than an event driven plot

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