Significance of Asian Kishotenketsu model to filmmaking: A study of Kazakh Cinema

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Abstract

This article examines the Asian storytelling model 'Kishotenketsu', identifying its similarities with, and differences from, the classical Western model of dramaturgical plot construction. The 'Kishotenketsu' structure is used in poetry, literature, documentation, scientific research dissertations, music, and video game design. The article examines the application of this model in feature films. From the directing point of view, researchers have studied films with different artistic trends and from different production countries and discovered scripting and directing techniques having the elements of the Asian model. Through the comparative analysis of the world films with those from Kazakhstan, this study attempted to reveal the use of the 'Kishotenketsu' model and its separate elements in the process of making films by prominent filmmakers in the past and the present from different countries. The films were studied in the context of screenwriting, visual storytelling, and editing. The study found that the 'Kishotenketsu' model is found in Kazakh cinematography in the direction of Art cinemas. The authors believe that 'Kishotenketsu' model will add more artistic value to the Kazakh cinema, allowing filmmakers to diversify unconventional ways of storytelling and filmmaking in the genres of both auteurs' cinema and commercial cinema.

Keywords: Kishotenketsu; slice of life, three-act plot, dramaturgy, auteurs.

Attempts to analyse any work of fiction, such as literature, visual art, theatre production, or film, are impossible without understanding the basics of storytelling, which authors use when

they work on their creations. Researchers' ignorance of the social environment, cultural milieu, time in which the object of study was created, playwrights' model on which authors relied, may lead to false conclusions and judgment in their interpretations. Therefore, traditional and cultural differences between dramaturgical structures of plot construction in Western and Eastern cinemas should be comparatively analysed, which will facilitate the production of a film on that basis.

A key point is the distinction between the conventional 'three-act' model, common in commercial cinema, and the 'four-act' model, which is gaining popularity owing to its unconventional approach to storytelling. The four-act model is called 'Kishotenketsu' and its influence on global cinema originated in China, Japan, and Korea.

In the classic three-act model, a story is divided into the 'setup', 'confrontation', and 'resolution'. This structure was described by Aelius Donatus as far back as the fourth century A.D. and by Syd Field (2005) in his 'The Script: The Foundations of Screenwriting'. According to the director Edoardo Nolfo, the three-act structure in the human brain represents the true model of the world; the world corresponds to the pattern embedded in the brain. Therefore, the three-act model of storytelling is easily assimilated by viewers regardless of gender, nationality, environment, and life experience, while Kishotenketsu relies on a specific worldview and philosophy.

The classic Western narrative model

The first act in a three-act structure, the 'setup', is typically used for introducing viewers to characters, their relationships, and the world in which they live. Thus, the first act builds the film's setting and contains the 'initiating event' that spurs protagonists into action. This event acts as a test for protagonists whose attempts to deal with this event lead to a second, more complex dramatic test. The second ordeal is called the first plot point, which signals the end of the first act and makes it impossible for

protagonists to return to their comfort zone (starting position). For example, in David Fincher's 'Fight Club' (1999) the protagonist loses his home after an explosion. In 'Home Alone' (1990), Kevin's parents forget to take their child with them on the plane. Also, the second challenge raises a dramatic question that will be answered in the climax of the film and that must be framed in terms of the protagonists' motivation: 'Will X be able to get the diamond back? Will X get the girl? Will X catch the killer?' (Trottier, 2014, 5–7).

The second act, 'confrontation', also called 'action build-up', recounts the protagonists' attempts to solve a problem, but the situation only gets worse as a result. The main reason for the protagonists' failure is the overpowering force of antagonism. They must learn something new and realize who they are. This knowledge changes them completely, often in the opposite direction. This is called a character arc. Protagonists cannot achieve this kind of metamorphosis alone and are usually helped by their mentors and friends.

The third act is the 'Resolution'. The culmination serves as the main suspense of the story. The conflict is taken to its extreme, and the main dramatic question of the entire work is answered, leaving protagonists and other characters with a new sense of who they really are. Sometimes the climax is divided into two parts (the first of which is called 'false'), depending on how complex the conflict is and how many rivals protagonists must contend with (Weiland, 2017, 129).

The three-act model is primarily designed to tell viewers a large-scale story and covers a large time span in protagonists' lives. The obligatory point of the story is the conclusion—the conclusion of the protagonists' entire journey.

'Kishotenketsu': A comparative analysis with western narrative model.

'Kishotenketsu' comes from the Japanese 'kishōtenketsu' and describes four parts in a narrative structure. The word combines words used for each stage of storytelling: ki, sho, ten,

and ketsu. 'Ki' is the introduction. Like the exposition in a three-act structure, 'ki' introduces characters, the setting of the story, and other information needed to understand the story. 'Sho' is an extension (development) or complication. This stage is meant to expand the story but not to develop it. It is important to add new details to the story and saturate the setting of the protagonists' world. Viewers must learn more about the everyday structure of the film's universe and relationships between characters.

'Ten' is the twist—the most important part of a story. A twist is an unexpected development in the plot (but not in the character). The twist in 'Kishotenketsu' is like the sudden climax of a Western. It changes the whole structure of previous events in the story, and the audience reinterprets the events onscreen differently when they rewatch the film. This is the main function of the 'ten' act. The twist in the 'ten' act, unlike Western classical storytelling, does not have to work according to the Chekhov shotgun principle and is often unpredictable. 'Ketsu' is the conclusion. Here, the story simply ends and is directly connected with the first two acts. There is no distinction between the basic rules of storytelling in the dramaturgy of different schools: 'what you start, that's how you finish' (Maynard 1997, 159–162).

In 'Kishotenketsu', the characters do not have to show growth, and sometimes there is almost no action. Viewers are shown only the consequences of a twist. Events in four-act works lead to an 'open finale'. This is a major difference between the Western and Asian model. Whereas the three-act structure of the commercial mainstream focuses on changing characters and satisfying viewers by answering most of their questions at the end of the story, the four-act model has no such objective. In the Kishotenketsu model, it is not the protagonists or even the world around them that changes, but viewers' attitudes towards events in the film. For example, viewers who revisit the South Korean film 'Oldboy' (2003) drastically change their attitude toward the events in the film, rather than

towards the characters. They gain new experiences since possibilities for other interpretations are opened up. Western films, such as 'Fight Club' (1999), impart a similar effect. When re-watching, viewers perceive the narrator as before—when they first encountered him, while the character Tyler shows signs of antagonism from the very beginning and does not at all support the narrator as it might have seemed. Tyler is clearly just taking advantage of him, as are the other members of the Club.

Critics of 'Kishotenketsu' focus on 'open ending' and the lack of a strong conflict. Eastern culture uniquely interprets this—the structure reflects real life and its unpredictable events. The so-called 'slice-of-life' genre is very popular in anime productions, where scriptwriters or filmmakers take their inspiration from everyday life, which is not the product of fate, but a stream of unjustifiable coincidences.

The majority of slice-of-life works are comedic. According to Aristotle's 'Poetics', incidental occurrences in daily life were at the heart of ancient Greek comedy and allowed viewers to switch from historical subjects popular at the time to more intimate, everyday happenings reducible to the absurd. Greek comedy helped viewers focus on societal problems and the critique of specific individuals through a relatively benign device of ridicule. The equivalent of 'slice of life' in Western films and TV series is the 'random events plot'. Examples include such comedy series and sitcoms as 'Friends' (1994–2004), 'The Office' (2005–2013), and 'Scrubs' (2001–2010).

Contemporary Western conceptions of storytelling put the 'American dream' at the center and defines conflict as the basis for audience engagement and character development. This is common in commercial cinema, where characters can change their life and control events by overcoming obstacles, subjugating their destiny, and changing fate to their advantage. Major narrative theories, such as Joseph Campbell's 'Hero with a Thousand Faces' [Campbell 2008] , and the three-act

narrative structures proposed by other authors, use conflict as central elements and build the narrative on its foundation. There are several different types of external conflict, such as man against man, man against self, man against nature, man against society, and man against God. They begin, mix, develop, and culminate. Conflicts in this model must have high stakes; they facilitate character development and follow the escalating action to an epic climax and to an equally epic resolution—everything depends on the conflict. In Kishotenketsu, however, conflict is not so central; in most cases, there is no conflict at all. Therefore, the difference between protagonists' arches in the Western and Asian model of storytelling should be outlined. In the three-act structure, protagonists often embody the collective unconscious archetypes.

Archetypes reflect individuals' predisposition to collectively understand universal psychological issues, such as the desire for love, the need for spiritual healing, and rebirth (Indick 2004, 179). Examples of archetypes in the Western model are shadow, mentor, anima or animus, persona, and ego. Protagonists, as they journey through the plot of films, achieve or fail in their desire to integrate these archetypes. Characters follow the principle of the 'transformation machine'. Blake Snyder says, '…when we begin any story, the audience and the author stand on the same train platform and board the train...and never go back' (Snyder 2005, 65). Consequently, characters' desires drive them forward; their decisions directly influence the development of events; the climax in the second act and the finale in the third act are causal factors in the totality of characters' choices. For example, in the 'Matrix' film trilogy (1999–2003), a character named Neo makes a conscious choice to sacrifice his life in a final battle with the antagonist, Agent Smith, and, as the story progresses, Neo's distinctive qualities and skills progress owing to the increasing scale of his trials. Namely, the protagonist in the final story is very different from the one at the beginning of the film. According to the Western

narrative model, there can only be one winner in the final conflict, even if winners give their life for the victory, and thus their arcs end. Neo stands out even among special ones through his qualities and makes a choice that none of the Chosen Ones have made before him. In doing so, Neo alone achieves his goal of making peace between machines and humanity.

Conflict is central in the Western model and is vividly expressed without implying any other interpretations. 'Gladiator' (2000) is a successful example of this concept. General Maximus defeats an impostor emperor in the arena in the final scene. Despite the seeming duality of the antagonist's motives, the plot still focuses on the low, nefarious aspects of the emperor's personality, such as cowardice and patricide, while Maximus is a paragon of honour. So, at the end of the film, Maximus becomes the favourite not only of his soldiers, but also of the common crowd. The conflict in these stories—the conflict of man against man—is signalled immediately and becomes the catalyst for the development of the hero and the events in the film.

A clear division between good and evil forces can also be observed in a large number of commercial mainstream horror films, in which victims defeat maniacs in unequal battles, eliciting viewers' empathy with the injured party (Snyder, 2005). Villains' motives, originating from childhood traumas or social injustice, are completely overshadowed by their atrocities, and viewers cease to justify them.

Notably, protagonists' journey in the Western model does not end even with their death. They are always reborn and resurrected in one form or another. Thus, the protagonists' arc in the film reaches its logical conclusion, and viewers leave the cinema, satisfied. For example, though Neo gives his life for humanity in the Matrix trilogy, at the end of the third film, viewers are clearly given a hint that he may be alive in the new version of the film, which was released in the fourth film of the franchise. Characters in commercially successful franchises rarely leave viewers forever.

In the Kishotenketsu structure, the protagonists do not have to change dramatically; they do not change at all on their journey. They are not reborn in any way and do not seek to rectify or rewrite events. Whereas the Western model focuses on conflicts and external threats to protagonists' physical safety, the Kishotenketsu model does not explicitly identify the essence of conflict and often changes focus. Therefore, confusing protagonists and antagonists is very easy, and external threats are often overshadowed by threats to the protagonists' inner and spiritual world and worldview. Viewers are given the opportunity to empathize with villains and the freedom to choose whose side they want to take and whose worldview they want to support.

In the anime series 'Death Notebook' (2006), protagonist Light Yagami and antagonist Detective L are locked in a mental, rather than physical, confrontation. The characters feel threatened by their enemy with the possibility of their beliefs being undermined. This is vividly displayed in an episode where the protagonist loses his memory and sides with the antagonist, a rarity in the western mainstream. Kira appears with the Death Notebook and disappears with it: when Light gives up the Death Notebook and loses his memories of it, his key idea and lust for power disappear and a genuine desire to help the police catch the criminal appears. However, the character's development regresses when Kira regains possession of the Notebook.

In the series finale, Light Yagami does not change at all; nor does his alter ego Kira. He only progresses more into his original delusion. Unlike Western characters, 'Kishotenketsu' characters do not defeat their inner evil, which ideologically binds protagonists to villains and tempts them to switch to the dark side. 'Kishotenketsu' characters merge with their dark sides, which reveals their full potential and also induces viewers' uncertain attitudes towards them, thereby provoking the viewers to revisit the work.

In another internationally popular anime series, 'Attack on Titan' (2013–2023), identifying the right side of the conflict and siding with the protagonist is difficult for similar reasons. Further, the conflict in this anime constantly changes the focus of the issues, causing a debate in interpretation. The character arcs of Eren Yeager and Reiner are similar, and in the 'ten' act, they switch positions altogether. This drama technique reached its apogee in the 'Naruto' anime (2002–2017), where all antagonists receive extensive exposition in the 'ten' act, and in the middle of the anime battles entire episodes are suddenly devoted to the villain's backstory, at which the screenwriter or the director does not hint in previous episodes. Viewers, when they watch the series again, interpret events and characters' motives differently.

For an analogy to highlight the distinction, one should turn to the BBC series Sherlock (2010–2017). Unlike 'The Death Note', the antagonist's beliefs do not inspire empathy in viewers. Although the charisma of Professor Moriarty and the actor's performance evoke their sympathy, the viewers do not wish him to win at all. The protagonist Sherlock Holmes is powerfully developed through constant trials and external threats against himself and his loved ones, from season to season. In the finale, he becomes a completely different person. Sherlock Holmes, much like Terminator T-800 in 'Terminator 2: Judgment Day' (1991), becomes a human being from a soulless machine, and becomes closer and more understandable to viewers; the archetype of wanting to receive and give love is employed here. This is a radical change of character—from a controlling type to a socially useful one. These types are outlined by Indick (2004) based on Adler's teachings.

There are four personality types in total:

1. The controlling personality type—self-confident, assertive, and active characters with little or no social interest, i.e. little or no concern for others.

2. The taker or receiver personality type—parasitic characters who prefer to live at the expense of others' interests and needs.

3. Avoidant personality type—characters who have no sufficient social interest and are more fearful of failure than striving for success.

4. A socially helpful personality type—characters who combine a high level of activity with altruism, i.e. a developed social interest.

Whereas the central character undergoes a change from the first three types to the socially useful one in the Western three-act structure, this is not necessarily the case in the Kishotenketsu structure. The central character in the anime 'Naruto' is driven by the goal of gaining love and acceptance, does not change over the course of the story, and initially desires to be socially useful—this quality, his unbreakable and unquestionable dream of becoming the head of a ninja village and protecting people, leads him to his goal.

In the anime 'Spirited Away' (2001), directed by animator Hayao Miyazaki, the girl protagonist Chihiro does not change either, although the characters around her do (slightly). Generally, in the Kishotenketsu structure, the 'ketsu' act in Miyazaki's anime films is often expressed by characters from the finale addressing themselves at the beginning of the story—in the 'ki' act. Chihiro in the 'ketsu' act reminds the dragon boy Haku of his real name (Kuakugawa) and their meeting is revealed to be both accidental and inevitable. Chihiro interacted with him as a child in the form of a river dragon, having fallen into the Amber River. This moment also complements the function of the 'ten' act, as it performs a twist that has not been stated elsewhere before and is not even shown in the anime itself. In another anime work of Miyazaki, 'Howl's Moving Castle' (2004), Howl utters the phrase, 'There you are, I've been looking for you', towards Sophie in the 'ki' act. As it turns out in the 'ketsu' act, Howl from the past, having seen Sophie the moment he met the fire demon, will search for her in the future and find her. The chance encounter does not turn out

to be a coincidence. Such a motif is pronounced in oriental philosophy, where prevalence is given to fatalism or resignation to fate. Notably, the protagonist Sophie, despite her physical changes, remains unchanged in character. Old Sophie is free from worries about her appearance. 'You're still sturdy, and those clothes finally suit you', she tells her reflection in the mirror (Le Blanc and Odell 2019, p.163). Later, while defending Howl to the Witch, Sophie gets younger, and this happens imperceptibly. Sophie has always been true to her beliefs throughout the anime. She was originally a socially useful type of person and remains so in the finale of the story.

Western Narrative and Kishotenketsu: Editing Differences

We should now turn to the drastically different editing solutions for films of two directions and to the notion of Art Cinema, an accepted and established notion.

According to David Mamet, a director must answer fundamental questions such as: 'Where will I place the camera?'; 'What will I tell actors?' and 'What is this scene about?' (Mamet 1991, 15). The way a director goes about answering these questions also determines the editing style of the film. In mainstream films, based on a three-act structure, directors follow actors and record their reactions to external obstacles. This is the way many American films are shot, where the framing choice and camera placement are based on catching readers' attention, and the protagonists lead the story. This principle is called 'narrative editing'. Editing solutions in this case often utilize standard editing transitions, such as hard cut, cut on action, or jump cut. Mainstream cinema uses a wide variety of editing techniques to entertain viewers and maintain an active rhythm, while the editing of Kishotenketsu films is more restrained and the editing rhythm is meditative. To illustrate the difference in editing techniques and rhythm between the two approaches, one need only to cite Michael Bay's brilliantly made 'Transformers' (2007) in terms of scale and attraction, and Takeshi Kitano's discreet, laconic,

atmospheric 'Sonatine' (1993), which was celebrated at the Venice and Cannes festivals in the same year. The classic 'Transformers' movie model, in which the protagonist helps alien autobots save the world in a string of spectacular scenes of large-scale battles, demands a dynamic montage. Explosions, chases, and constant in-frame movements should excite viewers and give them an emotion like that of going on an amusement ride. Conversely, 'Sonatine' features the elements of 'slice of life' —Yakuza members spend time on the beach, playing games and immersing themselves in the memory of their childhood. But the comedic scenes of such games are sinister. Viewers watch the yakuza for a long time, absorbed in the atmosphere of the scene. The rhythm of the montage of scenes is smooth, and the framing maintains the overall visual tone. The shocking finale awakens viewers from meditation and contemplation, making them look at the actions of Murakawa, the story's protagonist, differently on second viewing.

In the early years of cinema, S. Eisenstein proposed the method to be used by representatives of Art Cinema. This method is based on the principle that 'a film is constructed as a sequence of images juxtaposed in such a way that their juxtaposition moves the plot in the viewer's mind' (Mamet 1991, 15-16). This principle is also based on Lev Kuleshov's montage practice, the 'Kuleshov Effect', the essence of which is based on creating drama through the juxtaposition of shots. Alfred Hitchcock called films based on this principle 'pure cinema'. In this case, the pace and rhythm of the film also affect actors' performance. Robert Bresson, also known for his peculiar way of working with actors, said in an interview that a film was born of precision and simplicity. Balance and proportions are paramount in his films. From this perspective, the director hoped for the success of his film 'Pickpocket' (1959) in Japan. As he said, the Japanese are precise people (Bresson 2003, 86).

According to Eisenstein, the best image is an independent image. Independent short pieces can be edited to make a story. From incoherent, and sometimes contradictory, shots, a coherent and emotionally appealing story is born. This paradox lies at the heart of the equation 'film + editing = film' (Crittenden 2012, 8). Nowadays, increasing differences between the two styles not only in the script approach but also in the montage solution necessitate an increased division between the representatives of film schools in the field of film criticism. This symbiosis of structures also needs to be explored, and Art Cinema, in which new names are discovered each year, is a forum for this.

Art Cinema: A prelude to 'Kishotenketsu' in Kazakh Cinema

Art Cinema is a form of cinematic art that emerged after the First World War to counterbalance the influence of Hollywood in European domestic markets. Art Cinema is an international term used to refer to auteurs' cinema. It is used, at least in academic discourses, primarily in relation to European auteur cinema and is seen as a specific European phenomenon (Konovalov 2014, p.75). Art films are marked primarily by an emphasis on visual and editing styles. Auteurs' statements are of initial importance in such films. Auteurs' insights directly influence the visual narrative, making it unique. Art films give less importance to the action than the classic Hollywood films and focus more on characters and their reflections than on intrigues or plot development (Neale 1981, p.3).

As previously mentioned, Art Cinema emerged as the result of European cinema's confrontation with the dominance of Hollywood films in the European domestic market. From the 1960s to the 1970s, the UK and Europe witnessed an intense debate on the clash between different approaches to filmmaking and tried to define Art Cinema, which for a long time remained opaque owing to the sheer number and originality of its proponents. A clear definition of Art Cinema rested not only on the artistic

potential of films but also on the key role of the state in preserving the cultural code and historical heritage and in influencing legislation and distribution control. European states needed to confront the decline of domestic films, elevate them to the mainstream, develop economic strategies to support the domestic film market, and maintain identity and culture in the minds of the youth.

In this context, state programmes for supporting independent films were developed with the aim of expanding the scale of film screenings and organizing major international festivals. However, established studies by film scholars on the Hollywood standard in those years aimed primarily to highlight the mastery of Hollywood directors rather than drawing attention to artistic experimentation, and the study of Art Cinema failed to be systematized. Processes such as financing, distribution, public screenings, and relations with film institutions in other countries could not be clearly established without systematization.

In its competition with Hollywood productions, Art Cinema makes itself distinctive. This distinctiveness is rooted in art films' reference to high art; their semiotic systems; the national cultural code; and the specific economic, social, and social structure of the producing country. Therefore, the only requirement for the freedom of Art Cinema lies in the impossibility of crossing recognized aesthetic boundaries. If the accepted standards are crossed because of a filmmaker's individual statement, depending on the content, the film will end up in other institutional art fields, such as avant-garde, propaganda, and pornography.

However, despite its confrontation with Hollywood, Art Cinema still bears a palpable resemblance to the standards of the film business. The first standard is the retention of producers' brand and an emphasis on auteurs' publicity—these markers are retained for the recognition of art cinema products and for enticing audiences.

European filmmakers, meanwhile, were not waiting to be systematized and were trying to make their own contribution to the definition of Art Cinema, making films and writing about them. Independent film clubs were established; small publications were printed; film screenings were held often in cooperation with other countries. One example of this was the opening of specialized cinemas in Paris in 1924 (The Old Dove House and the Studio Des Ursulines) which catered specifically to the emerging French avant-garde and showcased films from abroad, particularly from the Soviet Union, which influenced Europe in the twenties.

Most art films were (and still are) made with private money, often invested by filmmakers themselves and a handful of investors. Against this backdrop, the relevance of film clubs was reinforced as representatives of independent film studios and auteurs could find like-minded individuals to implement their projects. Film clubs could find filmmakers from outside their countries and involve them in international co-productions. In 1928, the founder of the Old Dove, French filmmaker Jean Tedesco gave an example of the international organization of film clubs.

Tedesco proclaimed that the French avant-garde should reach out to those in Europe and America who were trying to elevate the art of cinema above that produced by businessmen to make money via conveyor belts. In this environment, the cinematic approach to editing and directors' views of the pace and rhythm of the montage developed strongly and diversely.

However, with the advent of sound in cinema, the French avant-garde disappeared. The high cost of producing sound films dealt independent cinema another blow (the previous one had been its inability to reach a wide audience). Thus, many small film companies went bankrupt and closed down, while private subsidies dried up. Those companies that survived were dominated by foreign cinemas, and the domestic film production became extremely unstable. The situation in Germany

was further aggravated by the Second World War and the entrenched dominance of American film production in the domestic market that followed the country's loss in the war. However, even this precarious base of independent film companies still supported filmmakers whose names became synonymous with art films.

After the Second World War, European countries passed several laws to support Art Cinema and thereby saved the industry from its precarious state. Further, art films began to gain recognition outside their home countries both in festival venues and after wide distribution. Television also played a role in popularizing art films.

The distinction between American box office and Art Cinema has finally consolidated by the end of the twentieth century. Whilst Chaplin and Griffith embodied both entertainment and art in their films simultaneously, the cinematic institution now began to be divided into different spheres from its former unity, for the above-mentioned reasons. The outcome of the confrontation between Art Cinema and Hollywood was the emergence of spaces for cinematic activity to which we are used today: entertainment cinema, Art Cinema, avant-garde, propaganda, and political cinema.

Art Cinema has been defined over many decades as follows. In its cultural and aesthetic aspirations, Art Cinema relies heavily on 'universal' values of culture and art, as opposed to the Hollywood genre. This attribute is very clearly reflected in international film festivals where these films can be screened and awarded the status of 'art' through prizes and distinctions, balancing the criteria of artistic quality and commercial potential. Art films also bear a clear cultural code of the producing country and national language. Therefore, these films are not dubbed when they are exhibited in foreign countries—dubbing is replaced by subtitles. Contrarily, international distribution of 'entertainment' films is always accompanied by dubbing to engage the audience by removing language barriers.

Also, an auteur assumes the primary status in the current state of Art Cinema. Ironically, Hollywood, which has always been dominated by auteurs, has shifted the criterion for selecting directors from the uniqueness of their styles to general entertainment professionalism, whereas in Art Cinema the substitution of auteurs is unthinkable. Therefore, fewer auteurs are engaged in 'entertainment' cinema than in Art Cinema. Some names, such as Truffaut, Bertolucci, Visconti, Tarkovsky, Bresson, Buñuel, Fellini, Antonioni, and Wenders are inseparable from Art Cinema.

In Art Cinema, defining the relationship between protagonists and the film space begins at the script stage. Most art film scripts are written by directors. Specific dramaturgy, the choice of plot, characters, and location generate a particular stylistic and visual solution to the film, because the extent to which protagonists' immersion in the environment and screen space (not just physical and geographical, but primarily spiritual) in the first place reveals the auteurs' stylistic and ideological position. Since we are dealing with an actual, contemporary viewer space, the ultimate criterion of artistic authenticity is realism, i.e. utmost trustworthiness in the depiction of both characters and their environments. Art house films instantly allow viewers to know that they are being introduced into a special time-space, where special temporal sensations and characters' relationship with their environment await the viewers (Poznin 2015, 42). Cinematic narrative, constructed through interframe editing according to a variant of Bergson's irrational 'stream of consciousness', is another element of this integrity, which is essential for the aesthetic effect the screen has on viewers [Reifman, 2018, 19].

First, the policy of the Art Cinema is the promotion of auteurs' freedom of expression and the preservation of their individual styles. Second, the existence of festival platforms and state support for the production of such films stem from a desire to reduce the influence of

Hollywood on the domestic mainstream. Festivals are a springboard for auteurs to launch their careers and demonstrate their artistic potential. Third, in Art Cinema, the cultural code of the country of origin is preserved and the experiences of the national art are exchanged with the representatives of other countries. In this context, films made under the Kishotenketsu structure could reach international venues and globally influence artists. This also explains the rise of the 'Kishotenketsu' structure in contemporary Kazakh cinema, where most auteurs' films are not aimed at wide commercial distribution but rather at festivals.

Elements of 'kishotenketsu' in Kazakhstan's cinema

Kazakh director Nariman Turebayev's 'Adventure' (2014) features the elements of the 'Kishotenketsu' structure. The film won two prizes at the Eurasia International Film Festival and was recognized at the 49th festival in Karlovy Vary. The title of the film reflects the principles at the heart of the 'Kishotenketsu' structure: the intimate nature of events, the reality of life, and the unpredictability of events independent of protagonists' will. The film is a free adaptation of Dostoevsky's short story, 'White Nights'.

'Adventure' features a young guard Marat, a girl named Mariam, and the four nights they spend together. Over the course of the plot, Marat does not change. Though events leave a mark on Marat's soul, there are no significant upheavals in his consciousness, as in a classic three-act work. Mariam is Marat's guide through the events of the film, and the 'Chekhov shotgun' principle serves here only to reveal Marat's everyday life. The entire film is edited succinctly and in a single rhythm, which immerses viewers more in the mundane nature of these events—viewers are involuntarily drawn into contemplation, like Japanese philosophers who like to observe their garden of stones. The editing solution is based on an associative and narrative montage, avoiding any dynamics that might disturb the dream-like meditation. The director's

aim was precisely to create such an effect — viewers, like Marat, should wake up from their sleep, with a smooth and pleasant aftertaste of a rested mind.

Many scenes in the film are solved through in-frame editing. Usual cuts between shots facilitate transition among scenes. Each shot is a complete action and a distinct image, which creates the effect of continuity of the four days and nights in the film. The detailed bonding between scenes in 'Adventure' is meant to create an association between readers' mind and Marat's reflexive mind through 'Kuleshov Effect'. Tasks, such as immersing viewers in real circumstances using the 'Kishotenketsu' structure, are popular in contemporary Japanese and Chinese cinemas. Takeshi Kitano also uses a similar montage rhythm and laconic cuts in 'Sonatine' (1993) and 'Fireworks' (1997), which, through juxtaposed imagery, evoke melancholy and painful yearning, but with a taste of life. 'Adventure' is an art film, which, through montage, communicates the state and rhythm of young artists' lives in Kazakhstan at the time when they were searching for themselves in a young, independent country.

The short film 'July' (1988) directed by Darejan Omirbayev also contains the elements of 'Kishotenketsu' affecting the montage solution of the film. The film shows everyday life in a village through a boy who does not undergo strong metamorphosis but simply drifts in the flow of life until the end of the film. Numerous twists and turns occur, making viewers perceive certain events differently when they watch it for the second time and making them feel so sorry for the children who went out to steal melons for nothing. The film is edited in such a way that each frame remains independent and when they are juxtaposed, an association of images is born. This achieves the state of reverie and dreaming characteristic of children at their age. Viewers are immersed in nostalgia for times they have never experienced.

Overall, Omirbaev's films are characterized by both visual and montage solutions typical of

art-cinema and Asian film structure. In 'Kairat' (1991) the director uses a broken carriage window to show the first sexual intercourse. And to explain such a shot, the director shows a boy throwing a stone at a train at the beginning of the film. The director believes that such scenes should be the language of cinema. 'Yes, you can hire people to make love unashamedly in front of the camera, but that would be the naked truth, not art. Let's say when a person doesn't know a foreign language, he gets a buzz. But when he learns the language, everything begins to make sense. Similarly, with the language of cinema, if the viewer accepts the style, the film language of the director, then everything falls into place' [Rakhimova, 2020].

A Film scholar noted in his article on Omirbaev's 'Shuga' (2007): 'The stylistics of Darejan Omirbaev's films are unusual; they have some similarity to the poetics of films by Japanese director Ozu: a minimum of emotions and words' [Ishanova, 2012]. In this adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's 'Anna Karenina' the dramaturgical component of the structure of 'Kishotenketsu' is expressed in the journey of the protagonist, who could not get what she wanted and threw herself under a train.

The 2000's were characterized by the beginning of three generations of cinematographers in the Kazakh film industry: the generation of the 'Kazakh New Wave,' 'the post-war generation,' and the generation of the 'children of Independence'. The last one includes the young director Adilkhan Yerzhanov, who also represents the 'guerrilla cinema'.

Adilkhan Yerzhanov's 'Atbai's Fight' (2019) tells the story of a mixed martial arts fighter who seeks to solve his personal problems through violence, both physical and psychological. Atbai is aggressive and constantly angry, both in his open conflicts with officials and in his relations with his family and friends. At the end of the film, contrary to the last act of the Western three-act structure, Atbai returns to his heroic journey with no drastic changes. The Journey, the 'Monomyth' which meant either to bring Atbai down to Hell or elevate him to Heaven, does not affect him anyway but gives him earlier delusions of a new lease of life. Viewers can see Atbai's denial, awareness, and acceptance of life realities through Daniyar Alshinov's superb acting. In a fight scene with Raphael, Atbai first laughs, then cries, and then laughs again in the shot without any montage. The director deliberately keeps the frame long on the actor's performance, allowing viewers to feel the moment. It reminds viewers of 'Oldboy', where the protagonist also accepts the harsh reality and decides to go on living without pain and inner struggle. 'Atbai's Fight', as in 'Oldboy', is edited with similar pacing—scenes end with usual cuts and in-frame editing employed for greater involvement in fight scenes. The director prefers the aesthetics of a static, dispassionate gaze that allows viewers to observe from the sidelines and conclude whether to empathize with the protagonist who has chosen the path of violence or to condemn him for his rigidity.

Elements of the Kishotenketsu structure can be located in the historical parable films of Kazakhstan. The structure allows them to stand out from other participants of the genre. Ermerk Tursunov's 'Daughter-in-law' (2009) is a vivid example. Filmed in a silent setting in the middle of snow-covered mountains, the film depicts the harsh living environment and customs of people in the distant past. There are five nameless characters, each serving a strictly defined function for the story and representing one of Adler's four personality types. The protagonist is an avoidant personality type and remains so until the end of the story, submissively accepting all blows of fate and being abused by all three men in the film. At the end, the heroine also accepts her fate by giving birth to a son. The lack of development of other characters is also felt keenly—they pursue their own goals, each of them alien to reflection.

Elements of 'Kishotenketsu' are expressed in 'Daughter-in-law' not only in characters; the plot of the film is also a 'slice of life', but in times of

antiquity. The characters have no universal goals; they have only personal and everyday objectives. The everyday routine of ancient Turks is shown through the performance of daily duties of the time. The outcome is shocking, and viewers do not expect a catch. The re-watching evokes a different feeling; there are ominous overtones in her feigned humility.

The above works offer a synthesis of the three-act and four-act models. The Asian model has enriched different components of these films, making them stand out from the large number of commercial films that are built on the predictable classic Western narrative model. A further in-depth study on the Asian model and its application in domestic cinematography in the future will allow diversification of the film market in Kazakhstan through the narration of a variety of stories.

Conclusion

The Asian 'Kishotenketsu' narrative structure is widely known and globally recognized for its innovative approach compared to the well-established and popular standard of Hollywood storytelling. Many directors have often used Kishotenketsu structure to express their ideas and goals and evoke viewers' emotional and intellectual experiences. Kishotenketsu structure facilitates creating stories in the slice-of-life format and organically integrates independent scenes into large-scale stories.

Directors need to consider the 'Kishotenketsu' structure when they are scripting and editing films, as the narrative of the Asian world demands it. A platform for the promotion of Kishotenketsu films is the Art Cinema Institute which can bring the auteurs' experiment to the screen.

Numerous contemporary art films in Kazakhstan use elements of 'Kishotenketsu', including editing techniques described in the above examples. At this stage, Kazakh directors do not fully use this structure but extract elements necessary for plotting, as the structure itself is still globally understudied. But over time, 'Kishotenketsu' structure can enrich Kazakh films on the artistic side; and auteurs can fully express their feelings about the world and viewers will have an unforgettable contemplative experience.

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