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Everyday Narrative in Slow Cinema: A Case Study of Hou Hsiao-hsien's *Dust in the Wind* and Hirokazu Kore-eda's *Still Walking*

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Abstract: "Slow cinema" is an umbrella term for a set of film practices that share particular aesthetic features. Drawing on the theoretical framework of slow cinema and adopting the perspective of "everyday narrative," this study examines Hou Hsiao-hsien's Dust in the Wind and Hirokazu Kore-eda's Still Walking, and proposes an analytical approach constituted by three dimensions: "temporal presentation," "the function of everyday scenes," and "mechanisms of emotional accumulation." Combining Li Siyi's concept of "everyday time," André Bazin's realist aesthetics, and Dai Jinhua's theory of "non-action time," the analysis shows that Hou Hsiao-hsien extends duration and preserves silence and blankness, allowing emotion to accumulate through "soaking" and generating a lyrical quality that is "sorrowful but not injurious." Kore-eda, by contrast, compresses time into a high-density single day and night, allowing emotion to seep out inadvertently through the "undercurrents" of everyday dialogue and presenting a variation on family ethics that is "painful but unspoken." The two filmmakers share an "eventless narrative" strategy yet exhibit different aesthetic elasticity. The study further traces the connection between this narrative tradition and the genealogy of East Asian aesthetics and explains that, in the context of an accelerating society, everyday narrative in slow cinema offers a "decelerated" temporal experience that resists emotional consumerism. Its value is manifested both in innovation in aesthetic form and in its response to the spiritual needs of contemporary individuals.

Keywords: Slow Cinema, Everyday Narrative, Hou Hsiao-hsien, Hirokazu Kore-eda.

1. Introduction

After watching Hou Hsiao-hsien's Dust in the Wind or Hirokazu Kore-eda's Still Walking, I often find myself in a predicament: when a friend asks, "What is this film about?", I do not know where to begin. A-yuan and A-yun walk together, write letters, and perform military service; A-yun marries the postman-such is the plot of Dust in the Wind. Still Walking is even simpler: a family eats, takes a walk, chats, and then disperses. Yet it is precisely these films in which "nothing happens" that leave a lingering resonance in my mind that does not easily fade. This constitutes a counterintuitive experience: when cinema abandons dramatic conflict, it gains another kind of power. Where does this power come from?

This article thus raises two core questions. First, by what means do films without strong conflict move audiences? Mainstream commercial cinema is built on the causal chain of "conflict-climax-resolution," whereas Dust in the Wind and Still Walking almost abandon this logic and present a large number of everyday trivialities. This article argues that the answer lies in "time" itself-not time as a vehicle for plot, but "everyday time" as a container of emotion. Second, does the repeated appearance of such films among East Asian directors have cultural roots? From Hou Hsiao-hsien to Hirokazu Kore-eda, an understated narrative constitutes an identifiable aesthetic genealogy, connected to the classical Chinese "lyrical tradition" and the ideal of "plainness," as well as to the Japanese aesthetics of mono no aware and kūjaku (emptiness and stillness). Around these two questions, this article introduces the concept of "slow cinema" and focuses on the analytical dimension of "everyday narrative." Taking Dust in the Wind and Still Walking as central cases, the paper employs close reading and comparative research to reveal the emotional mechanisms and cultural implications of everyday narrative in slow cinema. The former is a lyricism that is "sorrowful but not injurious," while the latter is an undercurrent that is "painful but unspoken."

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Resources for Slow Cinema Research

(1) The Concept and Controversies of Slow Cinema

"Slow Cinema" as a critical category is not a strict genre classification but an umbrella term for a set of film practices sharing particular aesthetic features.[1] The formal proposal of this concept can be traced to around 2008, and from 2010 onward related discussions spread from British academia.[2] Representative scholars include Michelle de Gilder and Ira Jaffe, the latter of whom systematically outlines the aesthetic genealogy of slow cinema in his book Slow Movies: Countering the Cinema of Action.

The common features of slow cinema are summarized as: abundant long takes, narrative dispersal, lack of dramaticity, focus on everyday life, and minimalist aesthetic tendencies, among others. However, as Sun Lizhen reminds us: "We are accustomed to understanding 'fast' and 'slow' in terms of physical speed, but we cannot understand fast cinema and slow cinema from speed itself. This is because what the fastness and slowness of film bring to viewers is not the perception of speed itself, but perceptual differences brought by different narrative speeds in aspects such as narrative experience, bodily posture, and qualitative transformation of time."[3] In other words, the core of slow cinema lies not in the physical attribute of "slowness" but in how it reconstructs the viewer's perceptual experience.

The international genealogy of slow cinema usually

includes European directors such as Tarkovsky, Angelopoulos, Sokurov, and Béla Tarr. At the same time, Asian directors such as Hou Hsiao-hsien and Tsai Ming-liang have also been incorporated into this genealogy. Michel Simon once called Hou Hsiao-hsien a pioneer of Eastern "slow cinema." Song Jie and Huang Jiaquan further point out: "Although Chinese-language art cinema has been influenced by European slow cinema, its inherent Eastern view of time and traditional Chinese consciousness of life have led its narrative techniques, audiovisual language coding, and spatial composition to exhibit their own stylistic tendencies."[4]

(2) Research on Hou Hsiao-hsien: The Poetics of Everyday Narrative

Hou Hsiao-hsien's long-take aesthetics is one of the focal points of researchers. Hou's cinematic language is mainly manifested as "an organic combination of 'contemplative' long takes, multifunctional empty shots, and editing methods of anti-linear narrative."[5] This "contemplative" posture endows the film with an objective perspective while also accomplishing the conveyance of subjective artistic conception. Sun Lizhen and Hou Dongxiao analyze Hou's later works from the perspective of an "aesthetics of slowness," pointing out that "slowness" is not slow motion; rather, "the characters' actions, bodily images, and even subjective consciousness become clearly visible, perceptible, and even thinkable in the extension of time."[6]

Scholars generally note Hou Hsiao-hsien's tendency toward "de-dramatization"-he rejects the Hollywood-style causal chain and instead constructs narrative through the loose arrangement of everyday events. However, this "de-dramatization" is not merely a stylistic choice but also an emotional strategy. As Han Lei states, Hou's "minimalist aesthetic tendency, discrete narrative, and poetic long takes" reveal "a reflection on contemporary acceleration culture and a concern for the individual's existential condition."[7] However, existing studies have yet to deepen the analysis of the mechanistic question of "how the everyday generates emotion."

Existing studies of Dust in the Wind mainly focus on three perspectives: first, the rupture between the rural and the modern under the urban-rural binary structure (e.g., "Dust in the Wind from the Perspective of Urban-Rural Binary Culture," 2010); second, youth narrative and coming-of-age themes; third, the writing of collective memory in Taiwan New Cinema.

However, most of these studies are overall stylistic descriptions and rarely analyze, specifically from the perspective of "everyday time" or "eventless narrative," how the film achieves emotional accumulation through everyday scenes such as eating, walking, and writing letters. In other words, existing studies have captured the texture of "understatement" but have not fully explained why "understatement" has force.

(3) Research on Kore-eda Hirokazu: Ethics and Politics in the Everyday

Kore-eda Hirokazu has publicly acknowledged on multiple occasions that he was influenced by Hou Hsiao-hsien. In interviews, he has said that from Hou's films he learned "to structure film through time and space." [8]Cui Guoqi points out that Hou Hsiao-hsien and Kore-eda have "a broadly conceived master-disciple relationship," and their cinematic aesthetic styles "both inherit and continue [each other] while each has its own emphasis."[9] What Kore-eda learned from Hou is the latter's attitude toward "the everyday," but he transformed it into family ethical dramas with greater social criticality-from the questioning of life and death in Maborosi to the family trauma in Still Walking, the everyday always remains his narrative ground.

Research on Still Walking mainly focuses on themes such as the intergenerational transmission of family trauma, death and memory, and the "unspeakable" in the everyday. Dai Xiaoqing focuses on how its "documentary-style expressive style" and "realistic and understated plot" narrow the distance from the audience.[10]

However, similar to Dust in the Wind, research on Still Walking rarely places it within the framework of slow cinema/everyday narrative and systematically analyzes it from the perspective of the "emotional accumulation" mechanism. Existing insightful comments-such as "the everyday is the container of 'unfinished emotion'"-provide inspiration but have not yet formed an operable analytical framework.

(4) Core Theoretical Resources

Li Siyi, in the fifth lecture of Ten Lectures on Literature and Cinema, expounds on the temporality of film. He distinguishes "plot time" (chronos) from "everyday time" (kairos)-the former is the causal chain of "event→event→event," serving narrative efficiency; the latter is the flow of "duration→accumulation→permeation," which is itself a carrier of emotion. This distinction provides a theoretical basis for understanding "eventless narrative" in slow cinema.[11]

In *What Is Cinema?*, Bazin proposes that the long take preserves the integrity of time and space and respects the ambiguity of reality, and that "cinema is the asymptote of reality." He argues that montage "imposes a simple structure on complex and mutable reality," whereas the long take allows the world to manifest itself. This theory provides aesthetic legitimacy for the "non-editing" and "non-intervention" of slow cinema/everyday narrative.

Dai Jinhua, in her analysis of *Blue* in *Film Criticism*, proposes "non-action time"-moments that appear to be doing nothing are precisely the "void" most saturated with emotion. She points out that the charm of cinema sometimes lies not in "what happens" but in "how those seemingly blank periods of time are spent." [12]This concept elevates time from a "tool" to "content" and provides a key term for analyzing the emotional function of everyday scenes.

(5) The Entry Point and Theoretical Framework of This Article

In summary, existing research has contributed richly to the formal features of slow cinema, stylistic descriptions of Hou Hsiao-hsien and Kore-eda Hirokazu, and thematic analysis. This article attempts to draw on the three theoretical resources mentioned above—Li Siyi's "everyday time," Bazin's realist aesthetics, and Dai Jinhua's "non-action time"—to propose an analytical framework for the everyday aesthetics of "slow cinema" constituted by three core questions: How is time presented? What function do everyday scenes assume? How is emotion accumulated? This framework will run through the subsequent case analysis and comparative research. The next chapter will elaborate this framework in detail and trace its East Asian cultural genealogy.

3. The Analytical Framework and Cultural Genealogy of Everyday Narrative in Slow Cinema

(1) The Analytical Dimension of "Everyday Narrative" in Slow Cinema

Research on slow cinema has attracted widespread attention in recent years, and its core features are usually summarized as long takes, weak plot, slow pacing, and long duration. However, not all slow films take "the everyday" as their subject matter. Tarkovsky's *Stalker* uses science-fiction scenes as its vehicle, and Béla Tarr's *The Turin Horse* presents an extreme existential predicament. The particularity of Hou Hsiao-hsien and Kore-eda Hirokazu lies in their deep integration of the formal feature of "slowness" with the content choice of "the everyday."

This article therefore proposes "everyday narrative" as an operationalized concept for analyzing slow cinema, focusing on the selection, organization, and emotional function of everyday scenes. "Eventless narrative" is its core strategy: the so-called "eventless" does not mean "no events" but "no dramatic events"-what is retained are everyday moments such as eating, walking, writing letters, and waiting that are usually regarded as "not worth filming." Sun Lizhen points out that slow cinema, by "slowing down and extending narrative time, presents a sensory-based narrative experience," and "the body becomes a display of time." Song Jie and Huang Jiaquan summarize the features of Chinese-language slow cinema: "fixed or slowly moving long takes, a contemplative and silently observant impersonal viewpoint, lyrical suturing through non-dramatic long takes, and a nonlinear, loose spatiotemporal structure."

(2) An Analytical Framework of Three Core Questions for Everyday Narrative

Question One: How Is Time Presented?

Li Siyi distinguishes "plot time" from "everyday time." Plot time is the causal chain of "event→event→event"; everyday time is the flow of "duration→accumulation→permeation." Under this theory, many questions deserve consideration, such as whether the film retains a large amount of "eventless" time and whether the audience experiences being "driven by plot" or "permeated by time."

Question Two: What Function Do Everyday Scenes Assume?

Bazin points out that the long take preserves spatiotemporal integrity and respects the ambiguity of reality; "cinema is the asymptote of reality." Then, are everyday scenes the "background" or the "subject" of narrative? Does the camera "observe" or "accompany"? Geng Yingzhang points out that Hou Hsiao-hsien's "contemplative" long takes "ensure the objective perspective of his films while also accomplishing the conveyance of subjective artistic conception."

Question Three: How Is Emotion Accumulated Rather Than "Manufactured"?

Dai Jinhua proposes the concept of "non-action time"-moments that appear to be doing nothing are precisely the "void" most saturated with emotion. Then, does emotion erupt at turning points, or does it gradually permeate through the flow of the everyday? Yang Shibo and Zhang Chaoqun point out that the long takes of slow cinema "transcend the narrative principles on which modernist art cinema still relies, pointing toward attention to materiality and the body within the screen."[13]

The three questions form a progressive logic: temporal presentation (form) → scene function (content) → emotional mechanism (effect). Together they constitute a complete analytical framework.

(3) Intellectual Resources of the East Asian Cultural Genealogy of Everyday Aesthetics

Tao Yuanming's line "Picking chrysanthemums by the eastern fence, I leisurely catch sight of the southern hills" reveals eternity in the everyday. Su Shi proposed that "plainness is the ultimate of brilliance." Han Jingtai systematically explains this tradition: "The beauty of plain poetry mainly includes a *saoya*-style plainness derived from the Confucian idea of 'peace and harmony' and a *qingxu*-style plainness derived from the Daoist idea of '*chonghe*.'" [14]This advocacy of "*chongdan*" (plainness and tranquility) resonates across time and space with the "plainness" in Hou Hsiao-hsien's films.

Mono no aware emphasizes investing the deepest emotion in ordinary scenery. *Kūjaku* values imperfection, simplicity, and stillness. Peng Xiuyin and Zou Jian point out that the formation of "*kūjaku*" "was influenced, on the one hand, by the natural conditions inherent to the Japanese nation and, on the other, developed after the successful absorption of Chinese Zen Buddhist thought."[15] These ideas directly influenced Yasujiro Ozu, Hou Hsiao-hsien, and Kore-eda Hirokazu.

Li Siyi points out that Shen Congwen's "lyricism" is a "third path" distinct from revolution and enlightenment; he writes "forms of life" rather than class conflict. Hou Hsiao-hsien was deeply influenced by Shen Congwen, and the ending of *The Time to Live and the Time to Die* explicitly pays tribute to him. The gaze at the everyday in *Dust in the Wind* is precisely a cinematicization of Shen Congwen's lyrical aesthetics.

4. The Weight of Time: Everyday Narrative and Emotional Accumulation in Hou Hsiao-hsien's Dust in the Wind

(1) Time Is Presented Through the Accumulation of "Eventlessness"

A-yuan and A-yun grow up together; A-yuan goes to perform military service; A-yun marries the postman. The entire plot of *Dust in the Wind* is roughly thus. Why, then, does such a simple matter take more than an hour to film? The answer is that time is filled with "eventlessness"-walking, waiting for buses, writing letters, silence, watching clouds, eating. These "transitional times" that would be fast-forwarded in commercial films become the protagonists. Hou Hsiao-hsien's strategy of ellipsis is equally crucial. For example, A-yun's marriage is not presented directly, nor is A-yuan's reaction upon learning the news presented directly; only his silent figure from behind after discharge from the military remains. This "not saying" is more powerful than "saying," forcing viewers to fill the emotional gap.

Li Siyi distinguishes "plot time" from "everyday time": the former is the causal chain of "event→event→event," while the latter is the flow of "duration→accumulation→permeation." In *Dust in the Wind*, the time of walking, waiting, and silence is preserved intact. Viewers are not watching "the timeline of events" but "spending" time co-present with the characters. It can thus be seen that Hou Hsiao-hsien's "slow cinema" provides "a new

perception of time"; this is the "thickness" of time.

(2) The Function of Everyday Scenes: Landscape and Bodily Companionship

Walking home. A-yuan and A-yun walk home together, with a fixed camera position, a medium-long shot, and a long take. Walking does not "advance the plot" but "extends time"; the dialogue is extremely everyday, there is no musical score, only footsteps and ambient sound. Hou Hsiao-hsien's "contemplative" long take ensures the objective perspective of his film while also accomplishing the conveyance of subjective artistic conception. The camera does not intervene; it merely "waits" for the characters to walk past. Viewers are not "watching a story" but "accompanying"-and this companionship itself is the deepest mode of existence of emotion.

Reading letters. A-yuan reads A-yun's letters; a close-up films the letter paper; the rhythm of reading is slow, interspersed with empty shots of gazing into the distance. The content of the letters is a running account-family matters, the weather, greetings-without "I miss you." Yet it is precisely this "eventless" writing that carries longing. The everyday scene connects two separated spaces and makes time tangible.

The silence at the end. A-yuan returns home after discharge, wearing the shirt A-yun made, yet he does not go to see A-yun. He has no lines; he merely walks silently through the landscapes of his hometown. This is the most "eventless" and yet most "eventful" moment in the entire film. Hou Hsiao-hsien omits all possible dramatic scenes, leaving only silence. These seemingly idle "non-action" moments are precisely the "void" most saturated with emotion.

(3) Emotional Accumulation Through Permeation Rather Than Impact

The tacit understanding while walking, the anticipation while waiting for letters, the silence while reading letters, the blankness after learning the news, the silence at the end-each everyday scene, viewed in isolation, is not "moving," but accumulated together, the silence at the end acquires immense weight. And this is precisely the construction of "a new subject of the slow spirit."

For commercial films, viewers are driven by plot suspense and ask, "What will happen next?" In *Dust in the Wind*, viewers no longer ask, "And then?" but rather "Just like this." The mode of identification shifts from "goal" to "time itself." At this point, the "void" in "non-action time" is not blankness but a space for viewers to fill in emotion themselves.

Dust in the Wind most purely embodies the characteristics of "eventless narrative": time is presented as "thickness," everyday scenes carry companionship and absence, and emotion accumulates through permeation. It is the "prototype" of the everyday aesthetic dimension in slow cinema.

5. Variations of the Everyday: Everyday Narrative and Family Ethics in Kore-eda Hirokazu's Still Walking

(1) The Inheritance and Transformation of Everyday Aesthetics from Hou Hsiao-hsien to Kore-eda Hirokazu

Kore-eda Hirokazu has stated on multiple occasions that he was influenced by Hou Hsiao-hsien, saying that from Hou's films he learned "to structure film through time and space." The two have "a broadly conceived master-disciple relationship," and their aesthetic styles both inherit and continue [each other] while each has its own emphasis. In *Still Walking*, the death of the eldest son is the background that is never explicitly stated throughout the film; all everyday conversations revolve around this "void." This section uses the same three questions as its framework, focusing on its differences from Hou Hsiao-hsien.

(2) Time Is Presented Through the Temporal Density of a Single Day

The narrative time of *Still Walking* is compressed into a family gathering of one day and one night. Unlike the scattered time spanning several years in *Dust in the Wind*, time here is "high-density"-every everyday moment is stuffed with the weight of the past and the future. Time is not extended but "compressed"; every minute of the everyday may be the last. Kore-eda once said that he wanted to film "the non-everyday within the everyday."

The eldest son's death is the "black hole" of time. Every everyday conversation inadvertently touches this black hole and then quickly skirts around it. Time does not move forward linearly but constantly folds back. This temporal experience is closer to the reality of everyday life, as if we do not live in "events" but in "the repetition of memory." In slow cinema, "the body becomes a display of time"; in *Still Walking*, the body and speech of each family member develop the image of that unhealed trauma.

(3) Everyday Scenes as Sites of Power Performance and Containers of Emotion

The kitchen and eating. The mother and daughter prepare food in the kitchen, the daughter-in-law helps, and the father reads the newspaper in the living room. The seating arrangement and conversation at the meal conceal decades of accumulated resentment and love. Who is in the kitchen, who sits at the table, and who sits where are all performances of family power. Bazinian "realism" is not surface reality but the reality of relationships. The mother's corn tempura was the eldest son's favorite-everyday food becomes a vehicle of memory. Kore-eda "both delves into the characters' delicate and fragile inner depths and maintains a calm and detached attitude toward them in the surface of cinematic language."[16]

Bathing and yukata. The father is alone in the bathtub; the son enters; there is an awkward silence. Bathing is the most private and most "eventless" moment in the everyday, yet it becomes a metaphor for the father-son relationship-unable to approach, yet unable to bear staying away. The two hesitate to speak and ultimately say nothing. The function of the everyday scene is not to "advance the plot" but to "present the truth of relationships."

Night talk and the return journey. Mother and son talk late into the night about everyday trivialities, but the eldest son's name is repeatedly mentioned. The mother says she once saw the eldest son's ghost wandering in the courtyard. On the bus back the next day, the son suddenly remembers the name of a sumo wrestler and blurts out: "I haven't yet been filial to you." Emotion accumulates layer upon layer in the everyday and suddenly erupts at the most inadvertent moment. This is the most classic moment of "eventless narrative": all "eventlessness" exists for this moment of "eventfulness." But immediately after the eruption, it is once again covered over by the everyday.

(4) The Accumulation and Eruption of Emotion in "Undercurrents"

If the emotion of *Dust in the Wind* is "sorrowful but not injurious," with accumulation through "soaking" and eruption through "silent blankness," then the emotion of *Still Walking* is "painful but unspoken," with accumulation through

"compression" and eruption through "inadvertent leakage." The former is a lyrical poem; the latter is a family ethical drama.

In *Still Walking*, emotional accumulation does not rely on the "length" of time but on the "density" of time—each everyday instant compresses years of family history. Viewers are not "spending time" but "feeling the weight of time."

Through comparison, it can be seen that "everyday narrative" is not singular but an aesthetic space with elasticity and variations. Hou Hsiao-hsien connects to the classical lyrical tradition; Kore-eda Hirokazu connects to the predicaments of modern family ethics. Together, the two cases enrich the study of everyday narrative in slow cinema, demonstrating that "eventless narrative" can carry both the melancholy of youth and the undercurrents of family life.

6. The Contemporary Significance of Everyday Narrative in Slow Cinema

(1) Countering the "Aesthetics of Acceleration"

The core logic of mainstream commercial films is "speed." The faster the plot advances, the more reversals there are, and the denser the climaxes, the more viewers feel they have "gotten their money's worth." Editing rhythms become increasingly fast, shots increasingly short, and viewers are trained into consumers pursuing instant gratification who can hardly tolerate "eventless" time. This "violence of speed" is not merely an aesthetic choice but a microcosm of the accelerating trend of society as a whole.

The era of acceleration brings information overload, fragmented attention, and the devaluation of experience. Modern people find it increasingly difficult to "immerse" themselves in anything, because speed does not permit lingering. Experience cannot be transformed into inner memory; it can only become a consumer good. Fast cinema provides visual stimulation and pleasure, yet leaves people forgetting quickly after they leave the theater.

Everyday narrative in slow cinema, by contrast, offers a "decelerated" temporal experience. It does not allow us to "escape" reality but rather to relearn the capacity to "linger"-to linger in those "eventless" moments of walking, eating, and silence. Slowness is not the opposite of fastness but a force of difference. Time in everyday narrative is not consumed but experienced and allowed to settle. This "time with thickness"[17] is the gentlest and yet most thorough resistance to an accelerating society.

(2) The Emotional Ethics of "Eventlessness"

True love, family affection, and friendship often lie not in dramatic moments but in those "eventless" times spent together. A-yuan and A-yun in *Dust in the Wind* never confess to each other, yet viewers know they love each other; the family in *Still Walking* never reconciles, yet viewers know they care for one another. Everyday narrative reveals that emotion is not a one-time event but a long process.

Emotion is not manufactured but grown. Meaning lies not in what happens but in "how [time] is spent." This is a resistance to modern emotional consumerism. Holiday marketing, emotional commodities, and speed-dating culture package emotion as objects of instant consumption, whereas in the everyday narrative of slow cinema, genuine emotion requires time to settle and cannot be rapidly produced or rapidly consumed. In an era when everyone pursues efficiency, acknowledging the value of "slowness" is itself an ethical choice.

(3) The Spiritual Echo of the Everyday Narrative Tradition

The East Asian cultural genealogy of everyday narrative-Tao Yuanming's pastoral, Su Shi's "plainness," Japan's *mono no aware* and *kūjaku*, and Shen Congwen's lyrical tradition-is not simply inherited as cultural tradition but reactivated in problematized form in the films of Hou Hsiao-hsien and Kore-eda Hirokazu. Against the background of an accelerating society, the reason contemporary viewers can derive solace from these films is precisely that they echo a repressed valuation of the everyday, a reverence for time, and a recognition of true feeling within "eventlessness."

Such films offer contemporary viewers an emotional belonging and cultural identity different from Western narrative models. They are not "Orientalist" spectacles but authentic expressions rooted in everyday experience. In a globalized context, everyday narrative becomes a gentle form of cultural resistance-not confrontation, but the offering of another possibility.

7. Conclusion

Centering on Hou Hsiao-hsien's *Dust in the Wind* and Kore-eda Hirokazu's *Still Walking*, this article explores the emotional mechanisms and cultural implications of everyday narrative in slow cinema. Through close reading and comparison of the two films, three levels of reflection can be outlined.

First, this article attempts to construct an analytical framework consisting of three questions: How is time presented? What function do everyday scenes assume? How is emotion accumulated? This framework maps Li Siyi's "everyday time," Bazin's realist aesthetics, and Dai Jinhua's "non-action time" respectively onto the three dimensions of form, content, and effect, attempting to reveal the operating logic by which emotion in "eventless narrative" does not erupt at turning points but permeates through the flow.

Second, through the comparative analysis of *Dust in the Wind* and *Still Walking*, the aesthetic elasticity of everyday narrative becomes visible. Hou Hsiao-hsien's "plainness" is a lyrical poem that is "sorrowful but not injurious": time is extended into duration, and emotion accumulates in silent blankness. Kore-eda Hirokazu's "plainness" is a family ethical drama that is "painful but unspoken": time is compressed into density, and emotion ferments in unspoken undercurrents. The two share the core strategy of "eventless narrative" yet present radically different emotional textures, indicating that "everyday narrative" is not a single model.

Third, situating everyday narrative within the East Asian cultural genealogy-from Tao Yuanming's pastoral, Su Shi's "plainness," and Japan's *mono no aware* and *kūjaku*, to Shen Congwen's lyrical tradition-helps to understand its contemporary significance in an accelerating society. In an era in which everything pursues speed, everyday narrative in slow cinema offers a "decelerated" temporal experience and a mode of feeling different from emotional consumerism. It is not a nostalgic regression but a contemporary echo of tradition.

Perhaps the most sincere and weighty things in life are never to be found in those lightning-flash, earth-shattering moments, but in those everyday moments in which nothing seems to happen-quietly stirring, silently growing, with still waters running deep.

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