

SAMPLE A

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: Film

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: How do Yasujiro Ozu's films portray the
family relationship and love by using less expressive styles of
filming?

Candidate's declaration

If this declaration is not signed by the candidate the extended essay will not be assessed.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature: _____ Date: 02-12-09

Supervisor's report

The supervisor must complete the report below and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator. The supervisor must sign this report; otherwise the extended essay will not be assessed and may be returned to the school.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) _____

Comments

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

Considering the weaknesses of the candidate's first draft, this final essay is a tremendous effort. The topic still lacks clarity, but the individual points in the essay demonstrate extensive research and reflection on the topic. Couple this with the decision to focus on a filmmaker as subtle and uncomplicated as Ozu and you have an admirable submission.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent 2 hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature: _____ Date: 20 FEBRUARY 2009



How do Yasujiro Ozu's films portray the family relationship and love by using less expressive styles of filming?

Ultimately, the beginning of this essay seems solid - though it is built of quotations. The student's own expression is strained however → when we see it in the second half of the essay, & ultimately the conclusion is a quotation from Ritchie. It is hard to know what the student means of Ozu?

, Word Count: 3337

Abstract

Tokyo Story and Late Spring are the most well known films of Yasujiro Ozu, in terms of family relationship and love. He portrays these films by using the simple and less expressive techniques in the world of filming to bring out the meanings of life. Therefore, it creates a different dimensional of family love and how the young generation seems to be missing that concept in their lives. As for this Extended Essay, I will be discussing about Ozu's styles of filming and how does each scene being a portrayed through the use of film techniques.





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I. Introduction

Family relationship and love are the central topic for filmmakers in the late 1940s. "After Japan's defeat Ozu preferred to celebrate what was best in Japanese culture now in danger of being completely overrun by western, particularly American influences" (Geist 8). Therefore, Yasujiro Ozu focuses on contemporary daily lives of middle-class families with an appealing of humor and the traditional virtues of Japan. "Thus Ozu shifted the focus of his work from comedy and other genres evoking a fairly extreme audience reaction to contemplative home dramas with endearing but quite humor. Of the thirteen films made after 1949, most are home dramas, shot in a distinctly less expressive style, without intense melodrama or comedy" (Geist 2). His films are simple and contemplative home dramas, but yet it portrays the images of everyday life and relationship between parents and children. Therefore, Tokyo Story and Late Spring are well portrayed in terms of family relationship and love, and young generation's lack of cultural traditional. "But its depiction of the human capacity to forgive oneself and to forgive others, leaves a boundless richness in the hearts of those who see the films" (Osamu 437)

II. Late Spring and Tokyo Story

Late Spring and Tokyo Story are the most melodramatic of Ozu's films which depict different storylines about family relationship and love between two generations. "In Late Spring, Ozu creates a poignant and exquisitely realized portrait of devotion, fondness, separation, and familial love between a widowed father, Shukichi, and a daughter, Noriko. By providing minimal plot and eliminating external catalysts, Ozu portrays an honest reflection of contemporary Japanese middle and lower class family

life" (Ozu). Noriko is nearly in her thirties and still living happily with her widowed father. At first she refuses to get married and the idea of letting her father go will shatter her. But Shukichi has to let him go due to the fact that he will die someday and Noriko will then be left alone. "Throughout the film, Ozu makes her complex response to the impending separation from her father clear and vivid: fear and anger, a feeling of helplessness verging on panic, regret that she should cause so much trouble" (Willis 44).

"Tokyo Story", it is a story about generational fractures - culture, tradition, and people - left in the wake of modernization and consuming self-absorption" (Ozu). Two elderly people, Shukichi and Tomi Hirayama, live in Onomichi with their youngest daughter, Kyoto Hirayama. They decide to take a trip to Tokyo to visit their kids, who are displeased by an unexpected trip of their parents. The kids neglect their parents due to their busy schedule and social life, therefore the parent are to be sent on a vacation to Atami. But their daughter-in-law, Noriko, is the one who respectfully loves and cares for them. In contrast to Late Spring, Ozu creates Noriko as a powerless widowed and who acts more than a daughter-in-law's role, she shows her respect and love vividly toward the couple. Noriko's characteristics create a strong bond with the grandparents, thus, after the funeral Shukichi gives her Tomi's personal watch as a memoir of her mother-in-law. "This symbol of the love that existed between husband and wife is given, not to one of the children related by blood, but to the daughter-in-law, who had been born a total stranger" (Osamu 437)

III. Japanese Traditions

Both films start off with Ozu's famous shots, such as a clear blue sky, the railroad track, cultural temples or shrines of Onomichi, Japanese traditional architectures and kids

walk to school. Ozu wants to start his films with these kinds of shots in order to set a tone of Japanese daily life after the postwar. It also leads the audiences into Ozu's famous work of art and his unique styles of filming. "These shots are also used to emphasize the vision of Japan that has not been touched by the war and the Japanese traditional aspects" (Pena). Thus, Ozu uses it as a technique to depict the young generation's apathy in their traditions as if they refused to accept the cultural customs and tend to progress forward into the future. This concept was well portrayed in Tokyo Story; where as the young generation did not graciously accept the family values when the mother passes away and gradually go back to their social life.

In the beginning of Late Spring, Ozu uses the tea ceremony scene to show the traditional pattern that passes from generation to generation and other aspects of Japanese traditions are the gardens, temples, traditional architectures and roof-top. As for Tokyo Story, Ozu uses repetition of Onomichi harbor, kids walk to school and then Japanese architectures to create a peaceful environment of Japanese daily life and set graphical matches between these three shots. Within these three shots there are objects moving from left to right, such as the boat in the harbor, follow by the kids and the train. By having the objects moving from left to right, Ozu wants to set a tone of repetition in the younger generation's daily-life activities and it reflects on their psychological behaviors to the point that they become ignorant and refuse to accept the sense of life.

IV. Ozu's Famous Transitions

The transitions Ozu uses for most of his films are still-life shots, empty shots and pillow shots. "Other writers emphasize the emptiness of Ozu's still-life shots, seeing them as absorbing the resonances of the narrative without giving forth resonances of their

own. The shot is neither objective nor empty. It hardly advances the narratives, but certainly layers it with meaning" (Geist 5). In Late Spring, Ozu tries to portray a relationship between Hattori and Noriko, however, he then shows a different perspective of the relationship between the characters to make the audiences think whether they are in love or not. First, Ozu shows the two are riding bikes, and the way he sets the bikes and the characters are symmetrical to establish the point that these two might be a couple. The next scene brings the audiences to where Hattori invites Noriko to a concert, but she politely refuses. "However, Ozu then uses a concert hall to wonder the audiences whether did Noriko give in and go to the concert, and maybe Hattori wants to break of his engagement to go with Noriko" (Pena). But Ozu simply denies his ideas and shows scenes where Hattori sits by himself next to an empty seat, and Noriko walks home alone. As for Tokyo Story, Ozu first shows the enjoyment and peaceful of the couple and how they are pleased with the scenery of Atami. However, the couple's enjoyment and peacefulness were taken away by the youth as they are playing games and singing. "The shot of Shukichi and Tomi restlessly fanning themselves as they trying to get some sleep further condemn their children for having sending them there. Whether Ozu is criticizing the behavior of the spa guests or whether such a location that simple not appropriate for Tomi and Shukichi as open to discussion" (Desser). There are multiple meanings within this scene, it could be that Tomi and Shukichi are not used to the modern Japanese society. Yet Ozu places them there to show the Japanese economic prosperity and social crisis after the post war. After a sleepless night, Shukichi notices that Tomi did find a good sleep and snored. Nevertheless, Ozu takes that idea away by simply showing Tomi gets dizzy which leaves a question mark to the audiences, whether did Tomi enjoy her

vacation or is she getting sick. Based on these scenes there are resonances within its narrative, but Ozu did not clearly portray it and he wants the audiences to find the meanings of each scene.

“Many of the “empty” shots in Ozu’s films are used to reinforce the nostalgia or sense of life’s transience which informs all of Ozu’s films, even the most hilarious comedies” (Geist 5). Empty shots are considered as shots of trains, smoking chimney, hallway, and drying laundry. “His famous trains, for example, embody disappearing time and varying space, and it is also a concept of unity in time and space is basic to traditional Japanese culture” (Geist 5). Therefore, Ozu uses these train shots in Late Spring to indicate the distance of spaces between the father and his daughter, where as the train will take Noriko away from Shukichi. “Smoke is another image of transience in Ozu’s films. They may refer to someone’s death, but more often they comment generally on the passing of life; still their ultimate reference is the crematorium” (Geist 6). These types of shots are often used in Tokyo Story, Ozu constantly uses the smoking chimney or laundry hanging, to emphasize the death of the Tomi Hirayama and the loss of the young generation’s sympathy to its traditions. “Shots of trains, smoke, hallways, bridges, and drying laundry may appear without specific narrative context, but somewhere within his oeuvre Ozu has made the significance of such shots clear” (Geist 5) In Late Spring, where Shukichi and Noriko are taking a trip to Tokyo, their eye-lined matched as they look outside of the train and the used of the train was to bring their relationship closer. However, this perspective changes as later on in the film when Noriko refuses the idea of getting married. Where as it symbolizes her departure of getting married. Unlike Late Spring, Ozu uses the transition from the grandparents to smoke coming of the chimneys

and the clothing-line to foreshadow the mutual loss of the Hirayama's family, Tomi's death.

V. Tatami Eye-Level

"It is always a shot taken from the level of a person seated in traditional fashion on tatami. Whether indoors or out, the Ozu camera is always about three feet from floor level, and the camera almost never moves. There are no pan shots and, except in the rarest of instances, no dollies" (Richie 18). "As we are introduced to Tomi and Shukichi, they sit side-by-side on tatami mats that seeing through Ozu's famous tatami eye view" (Desser). Even though the scene was taken from the tatami eye-level, but it allows Kyoko to enter the frame and introduce to the audiences that she is a school teacher or their youngest child. The tatami eye-level gives the audiences a glimpse of the family's love and how it brings them mutually. However, Ozu changes this family love perspective when the grandparents stay at Koichi's house. For example, when they sit in the living room Ozu places the kids in a contrary position to the parents, and the love connections between characters are hardly to be found in the scene. Therefore, the scene gives the audiences a foretaste about these kids social life as well as their personalities.

"Ozu uses low camera height and breaks the rules of conventional cinema using 360° space, creating an intimate, familial atmosphere, to draw us into the lives of the Hirayama family - through subtle gestures and mannerisms, mundane conversations, daily rituals, and simple acts of kindness" (Website). For example, Ozu places Tomi on the left and Shukichi on the right, but in the next frame he cuts where Tomi on the right and Shukichi on the left. As for Late Spring, Ozu is more about modernization and Japanese traditional customs, and yet the way he shows these scenes through the use of

tatami eye-level. For example, in the beginning Ozu shows the tea ceremony and each step has to follow by Japanese traditional customs. However, Ozu cuts to the next scene where as Shukichi and his assistant, Hattori, are sitting side by side translating words. "This scene plays somewhat like the inverse of the previous one where as the previous scene was very much about traditional Japanese culture. This is very much about modern or Westernize Japan where two people are sitting down writing an academic paper about the economic of nineteen century " (Pena). Ozu uses these two scenes to show the effects of post-war, but somehow the traditional of Japanese has never changed. As Noriko enters the frame, Ozu then places her stand next to Hattori and the tatami eye-level shows the connections between three characters, as in terms of friendship and father-and-daughter relationship.

VI. Mysterious Characters

Ozu does not identify his upcoming-screen characters and it fascinates the audiences in a way that it will contribute the mystery of the characters. "We are treated to Setsuko Hara's star entrance. Shige gave there Noriko has announced to her arrival in a way no other character has been given. Yet we are not giving a close-up of her as we would in a Hollywood film" (Desser). Even when she goes upstairs to greet her in laws, Ozu places her in the position that brings her closer to the parents, rather pushes her away like what he does to the other characters. Ozu finally shows the first close-up shot of Noriko when she answers her in laws in a respectfully and genuinely way. By using different techniques to portray Noriko's character, it is simply to identify her personality from others, where as she cares and loves the grandparents like the way they should be. In Late Spring, when Noriko meets a man and talks to him for a while, Ozu did not let

audiences see his face or know his name. Even when there was a cut within a scene, the audiences are expected to see the character's face, however, they are still in midst of this character and later on he was introduced as a friend of Shukichi. From the beginning of the film, we are noticed Noriko's future husband looks like Gary Cooper, however, Ozu never shows the character personally. Therefore, it leaves the audiences wonder when is Ozu going to show this character.

"Ozu does not dramatize or embarrass his character by allowing the camera to dwell on him. Nor does he deny the character's emotion or disallow our response by cutting to other activity. Rather, he allows the gravity of the emotion to sink in and gives us time to respond to it by inserting the empty shots, which then become "containers" for both the emotion and our response" (Geist 234). "In Late Spring the daughter has seen what will happen to her: she will leave her father, she will marry" (Geist 238). After Noriko agrees to get married, Ozu then shows scenes where Noriko and her father are spending time together. These scenes illustrate the closeness relationship between father and daughter. Especially, when Noriko talks about the idea of her father getting married then she realizes that he has been asleep. "The expression of her face is very interesting, it's not one of the anger, somewhat has been amused in certain way and once again one of the opaque looks that characters giving Ozu that read easily for us to understand" (Pena). Noriko's expression shows her authentic emotions and respect toward Shukichi. "She comes to understand this precisely during the time that both we and she have been shown the vase. The vase itself means nothing, but its presence is also a space and into it pours our emotion" (Geist 238). Then, Ozu cuts to the vase scene, it might seem as Noriko's point of view when she looks at it, however, the vase serves as a container of emotions. It

gives time for Noriko to dispense her emotions and think about how her marriage will affect Shukichi, as well as his marriage. "Perhaps the reason is that Ozu imposes a kind of impersonality, a kind of coolness, between the daughter and our selves. Not by seeing her but by seeing what she sees we can more completely, more fully comprehend and hence feel what she herself is feeling" (Richie 16).

"Throughout his films Ozu uses westernization to characterize, sometimes to ridicule certain individuals. Once Ozu came to identify his upper-middle-class families, as he did in his postwar films, he placed them in Japanese houses. Yet he continued to use western affectations for characterization" (Geist 7). Noriko's best friend, Aya, is considered as an upper-class person and yet Ozu places in her a traditional Japanese house then her westernize house to ridicule her upper-class personality. When Noriko serves Aya tea western-style, they laugh at her father, who has brought up the tray for them, forgets spoons and sugar, not used to it when drinking Japanese tea. Later on in the film, Ozu then uses her character to mock Noriko's shyness when it comes to marriage. However, Ozu changes her character into an understandable person, when she talks to Shukichi about his marriage and how he will be living alone. It is a surprise to the audiences that she gives Shukichi a kiss and shows her affections vividly. Therefore in most of Ozu's films, the transitions or narrative ellipses will change the characters' personalities and their emotions.

VII. Marriage

In Late Spring, Ozu creates Noriko's character more than just being a daughter, the audiences seem her as a housewife, where she cleans the house, cooks and takes care of her father. "As for Shukichi's character, he is more patient, selfless and stoic. It keeps

his and Noriko's character quite distinct in kind, yet firmly links him with her" (Willis 45). When Shukichi asks about Noriko's blood pressure result, it gives the audiences an idea that life during postwar was difficult for many middle-low-class families and children have to suffer diseases and sicknesses; and Noriko is one of them. As the result, it could a bonding that brings her and Shukichi closely. Consequently, it gets difficult when they come to discuss about Noriko's marriage and it could beak this father-daughter relationship.

The conversation between Shukichi and Aya was about marriage and he asks if her parents are still nagging her into remarry. This conversation indicates the conflict between parents and children when it comes to marriage. "Aya seems as a model of an independent woman where as she does not need a man but still can happy with it, and it is pretty clear to audiences that Noriko might end up in this situation" (Richard Pena).

VIII. Rebellious Kids

Move on to the next scene is one of Ozu favorites: "rebellious kids." Noriko's cousin was grounded for being ignorant and the scene foreshadows Noriko's rebellion against her father's wishes later on in the film. Noriko's aunty, Masa Taguchi, introduces her to Mrs. Miwa, whom might be married to her father and tries to persuade Noriko into marry. Close-up shot of Noriko reveals her feelings about the ideal of her father remarry and her marriage; her face expression shows the rebellion and disappointment. A cut to Noriko's house, Shukichi happily welcomes her home but she ignores him and goes upstairs to her room. Noriko's attitude can be related to her cousin's where as being childish with her father and throws a bad temper then goes off shopping.

IX. Noh Play

Some of Ozu's most memorable effects are those most apparently simple, such as the Noh play. "They do not move; neither does the camera; and the scene is intensely affecting, simply because of the carefully contrived context surrounding" (Richie 23-24). The Noh play has its significant; it pulls out Noriko's emotion and reflects her life as domestic problems. "It is also be considered as one of Ozu's essential moment of controlling his actors, and his extraordinary can make the characters communicate and draw out their deep emotions" (Richard Pena). The performance is different from others, because it plays at a slow tempo and Ozu wants to serve it as the container, it allows Noriko to intensely portray her emotions. In the beginning of the play, Noriko's face expression seems angry at the fact of her arranged marriage. As the play progresses, Noriko's face expression tends to change it into a warmth feeling and she bows her head, which indicates her obedient and respect for Shukichi. Cuts between the actor extends her arms and Noriko's bow both have emotions in it, therefore it indicates her acceptant of the arranged marriage.

X. Conclusion

"Japan is a patriarchy and it is the father we remember longest because his of realization of mono no aware usually forms the coda and conclusion of an Ozu's film" (Richie 24).

This is clearly not the student's conclusion.

Works Cited

Ozu, Yasujiro. Late Spring. Japan: Shochiku Kinema Kenkyu-Jo, 1949.

Noriko is 27 years old and is still living with her father Somya, a widower.

Noriko just recovered from an illness she developed during the post-war, and she never thinks about marriage. Everybody who is important in her life tries to talk her into it: her father, her aunt and her best-friend. But Noriko does not want to get married and refuses several marriage offers, because she seems extremely happy with her life. Noriko wants to stay with her father to keep him company rather than getting married to become a housewife and a mother. Somya then comes up with an idea of remarrying and with the help of her aunt, she arranges a partner for Noriko.

Ozu, Yasujiro. Tokyo Story. Japan: Shochiku Kinema Kenkyu-Jo, 1953.

Two elderly parents, Shukishi and Tomi Hirayama, are from a small seaside town of Onomichi in southwest Japan. The couple decides to pay a visit to their busy children in Tokyo. After the arduous journey, they find themselves neglected by their children. The children genuinely wish to spend time with their parents, but they have families of their own therefore it is difficult to maintain a balance between the two. Only the couple's widowed daughter-in-law, Noriko, goes out of her way to entertain and take care of them.

Audio commentary by Ozu-film scholar David Desser, editor of Ozu's *Tokyo Story*, a compilation of writings and reviews about the film.

For this commentary, scholar Desser talks about the meaning of the film as a whole and how Ozu do portray it through the use of film techniques. So far, it does help me to understand Ozu's styles of filming.

Audio commentary by Richard Peña, program director of New York's Film Society of Lincoln Center.

This commentary is same as the above one, the director talks about Ozu's styles of filming.

Geist, Kathe. "Art Journal." West Looks East: The Influence of Yasujiro Ozu on Wim Wenders and Peter Handke. Fall 1983: 234

This articles talks about Ozu's different styles of filming and its meanings. For example, the author discusses the use of empty shots and how does it heightened in Ozu's films. Therefore, this article will help me a lot in terms of determining the meanings of Ozu's styles.

Geist, Kathe. "Film Quarterly." Yasujiro Ozu: Notes on a Retrospective. Autumn 1983: 2-9

This article talks about different styles of Ozu's films and each of them contains deeply definitions. Therefore, I used to identify shots in the films and compare it.

Osamu, Takahashi. Brilliant Shadows: Ozu Yasujiro 2. ProQuest Information and Learning Company, 2002

This article specifically talks about Tokyo Story and the definition of the ending. "No facial expressions attempting to make the viewer understand sorrow and despair can be observed in this scene." (435)

Richie, Donal. "Film Quarterly." The Later Film of Yasujiro Ozu. Autumn 1959: 18-25

This article talks about the later films of Ozu and how he changes his style of filming. Therefore, it helps me to understand more about his style of filming.

Richie, Donal. "Film Quarterly." Yasujiro Ozu: The Syntax of His Films. Winter 1964-1964: 11-26
Donal

This article talks about the syntax of Ozu's film and it does help me to understand his style of filming.

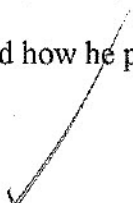
Strictly Film School. <http://www.filmref.com/directors/dirpages/ozu.html#tokyo>.

February 19th, 2009.

This is an online source, it seems like it does not have an author. However, in my paper I cited it by using Ozu as an author. *OK?*

Willis, Don. Yasujiro Ozu: Emotional and Contemplation.

This article talks about the emotions and contemplation in Ozu's films, such as, Tokyo Story and Late Spring. It helps me to understand the characters' emotions and how he portrays it clearly for the audiences to understand it as well.



Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number	0	0	
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		Achievement level	
		First examiner	Second examiner
Assessment criteria		maximum	
A research question		1	1
B introduction		1	1
C investigation		3	3
D knowledge and understanding		2	2
E reasoned argument		2	2
F analysis and evaluation		2	2
G use of subject language		3	3
H conclusion		0	0
I formal presentation		3	2
J abstract		1	1
K holistic judgment		2	2
Total out of 36		20	19

Name of first examiner: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____

Name of second examiner: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____