

First Essay

Akira Kurosawa Analysis

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Japanese 310-01

March 13, 2014

✓ Akira Kurosawa at the age of 26, after the death of his brother, was given a chance to become an assistant director after being recruited by the film studio Photo Chemical Laboratories, also known as P.C.L. (Kurosawa, pg. 89). During Kurosawa's first five years as an assistant director, he worked under numerous directors such as Kajiro Yamamoto who was by far the most important and influential figure in his development as an assistant director. During Kurosawa's career as an assistant he was taught that a director needed to know how to direct actors and give appropriate instructions to the crew members (Kurosawa, pg. 106). Kurosawa's talent was recognized and nurtured by Yamamoto and he quickly promoted him to chief assistant (Kurosawa, pg. 97). Akira Kurosawa gained his knowledge and skills from the years that he worked as an assistant director and especially from when he was under the supervision of Kajiro Yamamoto. Kurosawa directed 30 films in his 57 years of career as a film director. Throughout his career he also wrote a memoir which he titled, *Akira Kurosawa Something Like an Autobiography*, the book covers about his personal life and his career struggles and accomplishments. Kurosawa's work stood out from other films for the reason that he was a "hands-on" director and was involved in every aspect of his works. His unique working methods, style and themes can be seen through his book and great films like *The Hidden Fortress*, *Sanjuro*, *Red Beard* and *Dreams*.

✓ Kurosawa's unique style of working on his films kept him very involved during the filmmaking process. Kurosawa directed and edited most of his films (Kurosawa, pg. 104). As seen in most of his movies Kurosawa portrayed himself as a male-oriented director. Most of his storylines involved the works of male actors, especially when it came to his main character he only hired men; for instance, in the movie *Dreams* he was the main character. In every scene Akira Kurosawa was the main character; for example, on the Village of the Watermills scene we

saw him as a young man roaming around a peaceful village where he met an old wise man (Dreams). Not only did Akira Kurosawa use male actors to play the role of his main character but he also worked with the same group of people, he was very known for that. Kurosawa tended to hire the same actors multiple times; for example, the actor Yuzo Kayama was hired to work in the movie Sanjuro and Red Beard (Kurosawa, pg. 26). Kurosawa was rarely impressed by actors but in the case of Toshiro Mifune he was overwhelmed (Kurosawa, pg. 161). In fact, he actually enjoyed working with Toshiro Mifune so much that he ended up being part of 16 of Kurosawa's films, playing as the main character in most. Like stated before, Kurosawa enjoyed working with the same pool of creative technicians, crew members and actors. For example, his art director Yoshiro Muraki worked with him in all of his films (Kurosawa, pg. 174). All in all, Akira Kurosawa had a unique way of working with his crew members during his filming career and it was reflected through his films.

✓ With regards to Kurosawa's filming style and themes it varied from themes like the relationship between master and disciple, nature and weather and some violence. Most of Kurosawa's films were either related to his life experiences or about lessons or values to be learned. For instance, in the movie *Red Beard* his theme was focused on the relationship between an older and younger man, master-disciple relationship. The idea of the movie was for both of the main characters to learn through experience and example, this was clearly an expression of Kurosawa's life experience as an assistant director for Kajiro Yamamoto as his teacher and Akira being the student. The movie *Dreams* was easier to relate to Akira Kurosawa for the same reason that it was about a collection of eight tales that were based upon actual dreams that he had. By way of example, the scene called crows from the movie *Dreams* was based on an art student finding himself inside the world of Vincent Van Gogh's artwork, Kurosawa was a lover of

Vincent Van Gogh (Kurosawa, pg. 71). Another example of two movies that can be related to Akira Kurosawa's film style are the movies *The Hidden Fortress* and *Sanjuro*, both of these movies involved some type of comedy which was Kurosawa's preferred movie genre (Kurosawa, pg. 6). The movie *The Hidden Fortress* is an action-adventure comedy-drama movie about two greedy peasants escorting a princess and her general and the struggles they went through. The movie *Sanjuro* is a samurai comedy involved a crafty samurai helping a young man and his fellow clansmen save their uncle. All in all, Akira Kurosawa stated that his contact with the movies as a child did not have to do anything with him becoming a film director later on in life (Kurosawa, pg. 6). In conclusion Kurosawa was a great film director whose unique style and life experiences were reflected through his movies which allowed him to become one of the most significant and influential filmmaker in the history of cinema.

✓ In summary, Akira Kurosawa became a great film director of 30 films throughout his career. He became the great film director that he was thanks to his father's strict attitude towards films, which encouraged him to do his best to become the successful man that he was (Kurosawa, pg. 6). He enjoyed doing what he knew best and was always hands-on on every aspect of his films, from directing his actors to editing. Most of his movies reflected a unique style, working methods and themes. Some movies delivered a Japanese cultural message or some had to do with real life or personal experiences. Akira Kurosawa did not like talking about his movies but instead he stated that everything that he wanted to say was in his films (Kurosawa, pg. 172). To conclude, Kurosawa's book talked about his life and accomplishments as a film director and through his films we were able to see his creativeness and unique style in his work.

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