

Comparative Film Paper

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Subtitles and Audiences: The Translation and Global Circulation of the Films of Akira Kurosawa

Author and writer, Daniel Martin wrote about the important position on the translation and subtitling in the modern administration and acceptance of classic Japanese film cinema, with a concentration on the discography of director Akira Kurosawa. The effort of his film career was considered as one of the recognizable memorable figures and impact of Japanese filmmakers to maintain a general view and became an international film business which enhanced his visuality.¹

Akira Kurosawa and the Canon of World Cinema

Kurosawa became one of the most influential film directors of the 20th Century, it was his work, *Rashomon* (1950) to expand the entire audience to demonstrate his world in the development canon of filmmaking. The impact of Kurosawa's film focused on the world perspectives of Japanese movies became enormous. He is also one of the most researched in the East Asian film industry for many years to concentrate on the revolution of Japanese cinema.

Martin mentions his work on the Canon of the World Cinema. Martin discussed Kurosawa's discography focusing on several details as a film director: "appreciation of his films as both popular entertainment and high art, acknowledgment of his status as a transnational filmmaker, and appreciation of the universal values contained in his work."² The understandable and irreversible nature of Kurosawa's film in the 1950s became a major point in the regulation of his English-speaking viewers.

Translation and Subtitles: Theory and Practice

When Kurosawa's films extended audiences for the time in the United States, they subtitled his films which they watched in movie theaters. The presence and capabilities of these films reached their entire popularity, became very limited. People criticized on foreign-language

¹ Martin pp. 20

² Martin, pp. 21

film and the influence of the culture considered as completely combined with interpretation and closed-captioning.

The restriction entrance to films including Kurosawa's work in North America to integrate a frequent critique no matter what could guide the marketing to accept the Japanese film. For the Administration of the film industry, "the market is a known quantity—the potential audience specific in its tastes."³ World Cinema could be the combination of art and sales marketing, respectively.

Seven Samurai

Seven Samurai, a 1954 Japanese drama film that was directed by Akira Kurosawa. It focused on the ancient Sengoku era in Japanese History. The story started in the mid-1580s. It concentrated on the story of the village that farmers were desperately seeking for seven samurai to battle with bandits who came back with the following harvest to abstract their property.

Seven Samurai became Kurosawa, one of the most recognizable films; it earned a vulnerability on the level of *Rashomon* as it was published in the west. It shows and is highly participated in show business in the United States. "Seven Samurai is therefore a key film both in the canon of world cinema and in the brand identity of the Criterion Collection; the re-release was seen as a high-profile and important product."⁴

Making Men in Ghana

Making Men in Ghana features the life revolutions of eight elder men, it travels readers to change the definition of how to be a man in modern Africa. Author, Stephan F. Miescher focuses on the concepts and presumptions that establish them who became distinguished when Ghana

³ Martin pp. 22

⁴ Martin pp. 26

reached its independence. Stephan F. Miescher encouraged readers on how men arranged the social and economy of Ghana to learn how to handle their responsibilities as leaders in society.

The Boy Kumasenu

The Boy Kumasenu is a 1952 British film that reached popularity due to its influence on people's social life. It signifies the future outcome that involves colonialism and social aspects to seek freedom and justice for Ghana's independence. Ghana was formerly known as the Gold Coast during the Colonialism era from the United Kingdom.

The film explained and concentrated on the story of a young man called Kuamsemu who lived in a small village to transfer to Ghana's capital, Accra to find a better life. Kumasemu's cousin, Abgoh encouraged him to step out of his comfort zone to go ahead to experience life.

The Boy Kumasenu shows the creation of storytelling in Miescher's article. It explained about the important role in Ghana. It developed on the impact to concentrate on the history and culture of West Africa, which could be useful for many readers. "Storytelling was an important vehicle of instruction among Akan people as in other African societies. Anansesem presented normative ideas about men and women. Since most tales close with a moral statement that sets out a norm or explains the status quo, anansesem were oral entertainment with a didactic function."⁵

Compare and Contrast

The similarities of *The Boy Kumasenu* and *Seven Samurai* are in two parts: the theme and color scene of the film. They were both released in the 1950s. The colors of the films were both black and white. The theme of both films is courage and hope. They both started the film in the village.

⁵ Miescher pp. 38

The differences between *The Boy Kumasenu* and *Seven Samurai* show the same theme of the film, however, it shows in different settings. They both wanted to have better lives in their own way. *Seven Samurai* wanted freedom. *The Boy Kumasenu* wanted independence. *Seven Samurai* has subtitles in different foreign languages. The setting and language appeared in Japanese. *The Boy Kumasenu* created a film as storytelling. The language was English.

At the beginning of the play in the *Seven Samurai*, the Samurai took over the farmers' land to destroy their property to steal their crops. They became very depressed, and they wanted to solve a problem. They wanted to start a battle with Samurai for self-defense. They used swords in order to kill them to prevent their land. At the end of the play, the seven Samurai died, the farmers won the battle and had a chance to work in the garden to feed their families. It took place in the Sengoku period in the late sixteenth century.

The Boy Kumasenu concentrated on a young boy who lived in a village to seek dreams and aspirations. He sought a purpose, and he got help from his cousin for strength and wisdom in order to reach his goals, which he wanted to live in the city called Accra. He became determined to meet the criteria of his potential. He became very excited and happy to look forward to making a change in his life. He wanted him to live on his own and meet different people. He wanted to enjoy a social life. It appears during the colonialism era in Ghana in the mid-twentieth century to fight for independence from Great Britain, which the British director who was responsible for the film, wanted Actors to speak English instead of speaking their tribe languages, they had to follow the rules that British people were told to do so until their independence in 1957. It was not written in subtitles as they called it the Gold Coast during the early period in Ghana.

Conclusion

Daniel Martin explained in his article, *Subtitles, and Audiences: The Translation and Global Circulation of the Films of Akira Kurosawa* on the impact of Akira Kurosawa with his hard work and dedication as a film director. The comparison between *Seven Samurai* and *The Boy Kumasenu* focuses on the historical context of their culture.

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