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### Real Love

In the movie *Ugetsu* by Kenji Mizoguchi there is one technique that the director uses to make the themes of this film more meaningful. That is the long shot. This is where the object or main focus of the shot is small compared to the size of the screen. Typically, they seem as though they are in the distance. Kenji Mizoguchi uses this technique many times throughout the film. Though most notably they are used during parts of the film where one of the main characters is experiencing pain in some form, whether physical or emotional. Though, to understand how these shots work, one must know what has happened throughout the movie. It follows Genjuro, his wife, Miyagi, and their son. As well as Tobei and his wife. Both gentlemen dream of something greater. Genjuro dreams of making money from his pottery. While Tobei wishes to become a samurai. Though unfortunately at the time this movie takes place there is a war and the two men try to use this to get the things they want. While they are successful it comes at a price to the women they love. It is with this story that Kenjo Mizoguchi uses long shots as well as nature in this movie to extenuate the pain of the characters.

In one of the scenes Genjuro falls through a screen door, swinging a sword until he is ultimately lying on the ground. In this scene though the viewer learns that the woman he had fallen in love with is not real. Well, not anymore at least, Lady Wakansa is actually a spirit who came back to this Earth to understand and experience like a real woman would. For Genjuro this

is when he awakens and remembers that he must return to his wife and child, who he had previously forgotten about. He can be seen trembling in fear as he wants to return home, but he is being told that he must stay and live with her forever. Though he ultimately runs forward, grabbing a sword and using it to escape outside, falling through the screen door and ultimately ending on the ground (*Ugetsu* 1:20:06). Along with Genjuro being on the ground, a tree and the manor are also viewable. This tree covers most of the screen causing some parts to be hidden. Along in the background there is fog around the manor and Genjuro. The area around the manor is also shown. This movie is also shot in black and white so there is no color in the movie. However, with the tree in the foreground, it makes the left side of the scene completely black. The branches of this tree also seem as though they are reaching across the screen onto the other side. Along with that the two branches create a sort of circle around Genjuro.

Kenji Mizoguchi chose this to be where a long shot would be because it allows the viewer to understand how Genjuro was feeling in this scene. He has just learned that the women who he had loved for an unknown time, is really a spirit. Lady Wakasa's Nurse, Ukon, tells Genjuro "So we returned to wander this world. Our hopes were fulfilled. She met a good man like you and found a love that happens only once in a lifetime. Now, when she has at last found joy, you speak of returning home, never to see each other again" (*Ugetsu* 1:18:46). To him this house and Lady Wakasa are evil. They are not alive, they are just spirits that were only there to find Lady Wakasa love. Though Mizoguchi shows this idea of them being evil to the viewer with nature that is in the shot. Mizoguchi chose to have a long shot here opposed to a close up shot of Genjuro as he wanted the nature around the manor to show the viewer more of what the house and the women were. The tree in the shot is what helps the viewer understand Lady Wakasa was not who she said she was. This tree is the only part of this shot that is pure black. The other dark

parts of the scene are more of a dark grey or even a lighter color. But this tree is pure dark black and as stated earlier it seems as though it is creating a circle around Genjuro. This black color was a deliberate choice to show the viewer that Lady Wakasa was evil and did not intend to ever let Genjuro leave the manor. He was supposed to forget about his wife and child and stay there for eternity. The idea of him staying forever is shown with the tree making a circle around Genjuro as he lays on the ground. This represents Lady Wakasa trying to hold on to him still and not letting him go. She still wants Genjuro to stay with her and not to leave. She truly loves him even though he now fears and remembers that he has a wife that he must return home too. Though the viewer can see that he is scared of these spirits.

It is also after the long shot of Genjuro lying on the ground that there is a close shot of his face. Now this close shot slowly becomes a long shot (*Ugestu* 1:20:40). But it is here that the viewer learns that the manor in which he had been living had actually not truly been real either. The manor had been destroyed months ago and everything that Genjuro thought he knew was not real. There was never a noble woman that he loved, he never lived in a manor, and he did not have any of the pottery that he had made there. Everything was a lie, and he realizes here that he forgot about his wife and child. He forgot the real women he loved all for some thing that was not real.

The use of a long shot here is what allows Kenji Mizoguchi to use nature in this way. Had this been similar to western films there would not have been any long shots and more close-ups on the actors. These types of shots do not allow many movie directors to use the nature and surroundings of the actors to help portray the messages of those movies. This movie tries to make the viewer understand that life is important, and they do not always need the best and greatest things available. Genjuro did not truly know what he had until Miyagi passed away. He

had thought he needed to be rich and make pottery while not worrying about money. All he truly needed and wanted was his wife, but he learned that too late. This is further expressed at the end of the movie where the viewer hears Miyagi speaking to Genjuro. She says, “You have finally become the man I had hoped for” (*Ugetsu* 1:35:27). This shows that Genjuro has now become a man who focuses on his family and not money. In this scene he can be seen taking care of his son while making pottery. He is no longer just focused on the pottery like he was at the beginning of the movie.

Throughout this movie the viewer sees the struggles and challenges faced by the main characters in this movie. While some of the ideas are more concrete in this film, some are not. Kenji Mizoguchi uses long shots to convey more of an understanding about his characters’ pain. It’s with these long shots the Mizoguchi can use the surroundings of the character to show the pain and struggles of his characters as they learn what it was that they truly needed out of life.

Works Cited

Mizoguchi, Kenji. "Ugetsu." *YouTube*, YouTube,  
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