

Perspectives of World Cinemas (DE 410)

Film Review by Himanshu Upreti (173059004)

# AKIRA KUROSAWA

## Rashomon



Director - Akira Kurosawa

Release year - 1950

## Plot:

The RASHOMON is a Japanese movie directed by Akira Kurosawa in 1950. It is a Japanese crime drama, that is produced with both philosophical and psychological overtones. The movie revolves around the different narration of the event that is the killing of a man.

The movies start with raining and scene of a gate where woodcutter and priest have taken refuge under the Rashomon city gate to protect themselves from the heavy rain. Another man joins them under the gate. Meanwhile, woodcutter keeps on saying, I don't understand anything about the incident happened. The man showed interest in knowing the incident asks him to narrate it.

The whole movie revolves around who is telling the truth. Woodcutter starts narrating the story. Three days ago he has gone to the forest to get some woods and there he finds a body which he reports to authorities and they both were called for giving their statements. Woodcutter narrates the same thing that when he went to get wood he saw the body and authorities also captured bandit Tajomaru who also testify himself. After Tajomaru the samurai's wife appears and she tells a story then the samurai himself testify and then the Woodcutter tells real story which he has not told authorities.

Tajomaru's Story: He tells when he was sleeping in the forest, a couple passes by him but he ignores then but he gets the glimpse of the wife. He tricked the samurai and tied him up. After seeing her husband tied up she tries to protect herself with the help dagger but finally, he seduces her. To protect her honour she requests him to kill his husband, on the request he opens the samurai and fights with him, finally kills samurai. Meanwhile, the wife runs away and bandit tells himself fool because he has left the dagger behind which was very costly.

Wife's Story: She tells court authorities after raping the Tajomaru leaves her behind and then she frees her husband. But because of cold look of her husband she asks him to kill her to be at peace but he keeps on looking the same way finally she faints and when she wakes up, she finds that his husband is killed by dagger, tries to kill herself but failed.

Samurai's story: Samurai uses his wife's body as medium and tells authorities his story, he tell that after Tajomaru raped her wife he insisted her to become his wife which she accepted but asks bandit to his husband. By hearing that Tajomaru thinks very down for the wife and asks his husband whether he wants to kill him. In between these she tries to run and Tajomaru runs to capture her but he comes up empty handed and frees him. After that samurai kills himself with the dagger.

Woodcutter's Actual Story: Woodcutter has actually witnessed the whole incident but didn't admit this in front of authorities because he didn't wants to get involved. He says that Tajomaru starts requesting the women to become his wife, during this she managed to free her husband. But husband refused to fight for his wife on which she questions the manliness of both and ignites the fight Tajomaru runs away and Tajomaru takes the sword of samurai and leaves from there.

Back to the gate: While the woodcutter telling his story there comes the sound of small child. All three go near him, suddenly the common man steals the belongings of child which the woodcutter opposes. From woodcutter's story commoner is able to figure out that he has stolen the dagger.

## **Analysis of the movie**

- The use of sound is very good. According to Kurosawa by adding music to scene it does not add to its effectiveness but it actually multiply.
- The idea of telling the story in the narrative way was marvelous. The scene cutting is used to transition from one scene to another scene. The acting of bandit is very nicely done by the actor.
- The narration to the police and authorities is very peculiar. In no shots, the police is shown to the viewers.
- It feels like to much use of still camera. The narration scene is evidence of that. And there no as such studio system is used.
- The whole twist in the movie comes up with the dagger, the precious dagger was not found at the crime scene though in some of stories of people it was present in their narration.

## **Conclusion:**

Akira Kurosawa constructs this film as being part of our internal psyche. By this movie Kurosawa has shown the nature of humans in which each one of them tries to make themselves as the center of story even though if they have to lie for it and these nature remains same even after the human die which he shows in the movie via the spirit of samurai. It also advances the false idea of an "I". The point is that we all see the world from our own biased perspective. The problem is that we don't know that we are biased. We think our own perspective is the uninterpreted self-evident truth.