

Grandma's Memories

According to film theorist Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "film is fiction" (865). When viewing a documentary film especially, the viewers must question what is true. Since a filmmaker is closely invested in every aspect of production, he or she has the power to construct his or her own reality. For Marissa Kitazawa in her documentary *Grandma's Memory* she constructs the history of her grandmother's life story as well as establishing her own relationship to the piece. Kitazawa is able to achieve an ethical relationship as a filmmaker as well as maintain the personal connection with her grandmother the subject. The topic of the piece is one that is near and dear to her heart and Kitazawa is able to utilize it to create a touching masterpiece.

Like all documentaries, there are several points the viewers must be conscious of concerning the ethical relationships. Even in the most basic elementary component—the filming—we must examine the relationship between the filmmaker and the subject. Unlike traditional documentary, Kitazawa mixes her grandmother's memory with her own personal connections. In the beginning sequence, we can see this connection when Kitazawa uses a voice over. With the voice over, she uses a shot with overlays of her grandmother and herself performing Odori. After that sequence, the documentary appears to take on more of a traditional form. Similar to many Pedro Loureiro's piece *Bridge to the Rising Sun*, *Grandma's Memory* is composed mostly of memory, with a few exceptions. Most of the shots, also like Loureiro, are composed of the talking head.

deemphasize the shot and its composition. Since film is an art, Eisenstein believed that “in the realm of art this dialectical principle of the dynamic is embodied in CONFLICT [sic] as the essential basic principle of existence of every work of art and every form. FOR ART IS ALWAYS CONFLICT [sic]” (Eisenstein 24). This is why Kitazawa decided to juxtapose the ballerina and herself dancing in conflict with the images of the atomic bomb. By including her own montage, she claims the piece as her not as well as stating that this is not your typical traditional documentary and it is much more than just documenting her grandmothers life for this artist.

According to David Mura in “Internment of Desire:”

Those of us who come from marginalized cultures are often bequeathed fragments, brief bits of the past, and nothing more. There are no unbroken threads, no fully developed tales or histories. There are too many secrets and occlusions; there are too many reasons to forget the past. And there are forces which do not want us to remember, do not want us to take those fragments and complete them to restore them to some fuller life. (293)

This is exactly what Kitazawa attempts to do in her piece. She takes fragments of her grandmother’s memories in order to reconstruct the past. In addition to that she also takes fragments of images as she constructs her montage sequence. Through all of this, it reminds the audience of Kitazawa’s active role in the construction, as well as her dominate presence within the piece.

Kitazawa is able to master a positive balance between the personal relationship between granddaughter and grandmother, history, and memory. She is able to achieve through editing her own personal message within her piece. This is only one of several installments Kitazawa plans to pursue. As she continues on in her college career, she is hoping this project will transform in her senior thesis. After taking Japanese American Autobiography with Professor Miyake, Kitazawa has realized the need and importance of

WORK CITED

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