

OUR FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

Yasujirō Ozu's *Tōkyō Monogatari* (1953) is often considered one of the best films ever made. In Portuguese cinema, it inspired João Botelho to make his 1986 film *Um Adeus Português*. This audiovisual essay attempts to explore the films' similarities and expose the hearts of both their stories, which are, at their core, simple and moving depictions of families.

Keywords: Audiovisual essay; Yasujirō Ozu; Family; João Botelho.

1. INTRODUCTION

During my first year of studying Cinema, I was introduced to Yasujiro Ozu's masterpiece, *Tōkyō Monogatari* (1953), and it became one of my favourite films of all time. The simplicity of its narrative, coupled with the stoic theme that prevails throughout its runtime, made me gain a new appreciation for the art of filmmaking.

Later that year, for the class "History of Cinema", students were instructed to pick two or more movies from a given list and construct an audiovisual essay that explored the similarities between them. In the catalogue, there was a film called *Um Adeus Português* (1986), made by João Botelho, that caught my attention. After watching it, I was struck by its similarities to Ozu's piece. Furthermore, it seemed to me that the film tried to fill in the gaps, in a way, for its predecessor. The older picture only hinted at the tragedy in a family's past, while the 80's feature turned it into one of its focal points.

Because of this, I deemed it a worthwhile effort to compare these two films with an audiovisual essay while emphasizing the moving story they both share.

Evidently, I wanted to accomplish three goals, so I divided the video into three parts. In the first instance, the narrative context that both films share (the death of a son in war) is presented. The second part should show the similar journey the characters go through. Lastly, the final part exhibits obvious resemblances in framing and *mise-en-scène*.

2. CREATIVE PROCESS

To achieve my first goal, I prepared the initial sequence of the audiovisual essay, that was meant to give context to what happens in both films. I wanted the soldier that dies to tell a story so the spectator could form some bond with him.

This backstory was the hardest part of the entire work process since I had to manipulate sound and video in a way that was entirely new to me, and it was actually the last thing that I accomplished since it took so long.

In order to satisfy my second goal, I had to take into account the emotional story that both films share. Firstly, it's a tale about a family with a tragic background- the loss of a loved one in war. An elderly couple, still mourning, decides to visit the rest of their family since they live far away. Still, none of their children pay any attention to them, only the widow of their deceased son appreciates the elders' company. To add to that, I found that the narrative arch of the father, mother and widow characters in both movies were quite similar and the relationship between them was almost identical.

Because I cared so much for the parents' perspective in the films, I decided to tell the story through their eyes. Both motion pictures have many similar scenes, so I only had to be careful and select images

that were alike. After that, I could draw parallels by using a side-by-side montage and allude to several dramatic moments in the narrative: the parents grieving their loss, their children ignoring them, the widow cheering them up and, finally, the mother's illness. This way, had the spectator seen *Tōkyō Monogatari* and *Um Adeus Português* or not, they could understand the state of mind of these characters.

To finish this segment, I took the definition of "side by side" to heart and made the spectator stare at the two halves of the screen separately. To me, this emphasized the difference between João Botelho's open ending and *Tokyo Story*'s emotional last moments.

Throughout this first moment of the audiovisual essay, I tried to accent the highs and lows the characters experience with the use of music. I chose an original song that the artist RADWIMPS composed for the movie *Your Name* (2016), by Makoto Shinkai. For example, when the track is calm and quiet, the parents' life is slow and monotonous. When the widow first appears, the strings come in and the entire video gains a lot more energy.

For the second goal, I gathered frames of both movies that resembled each other into different folders, dividing them into sections like "camera angles", "framing", "character movement", "scenery", "objects" and "shot composition".

In my mind, it would make more of an impact to see these shots stacked on top of each other, so there was no longer any use for the "side-by-side" montage.

3. CONCLUSION

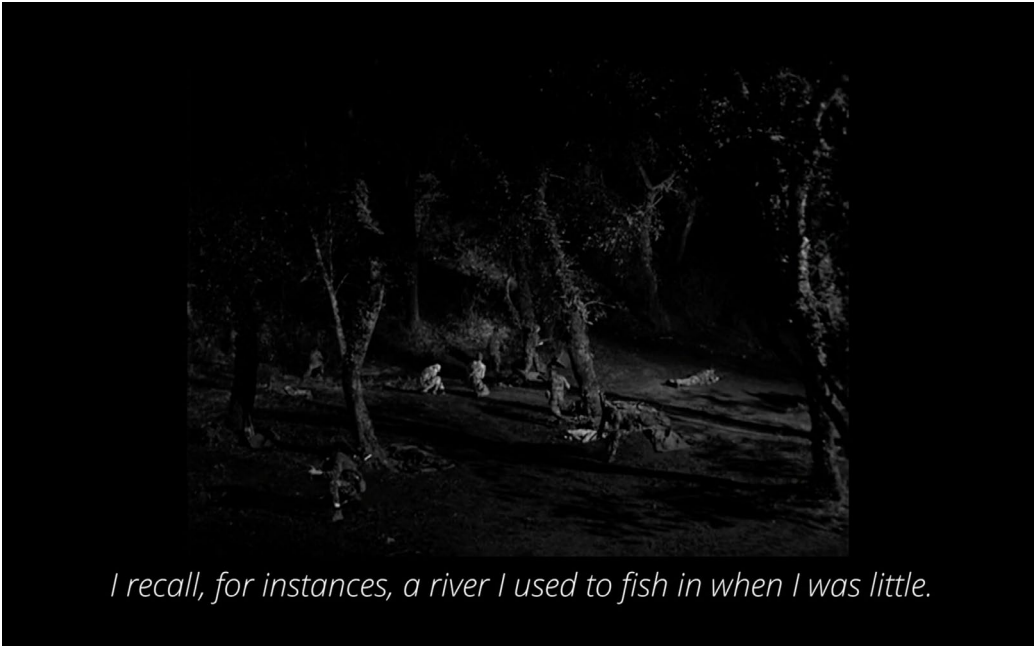
To conclude, the essay's four final shots encapsulate the things I appreciate the most about these films: Portuguese and Japanese culture/filmmaking, family ties and the stoic beauty of nature. I hope this essay reflects the respect and esteem I have for both motion pictures and gives the spectator an urge to experience them for themselves.

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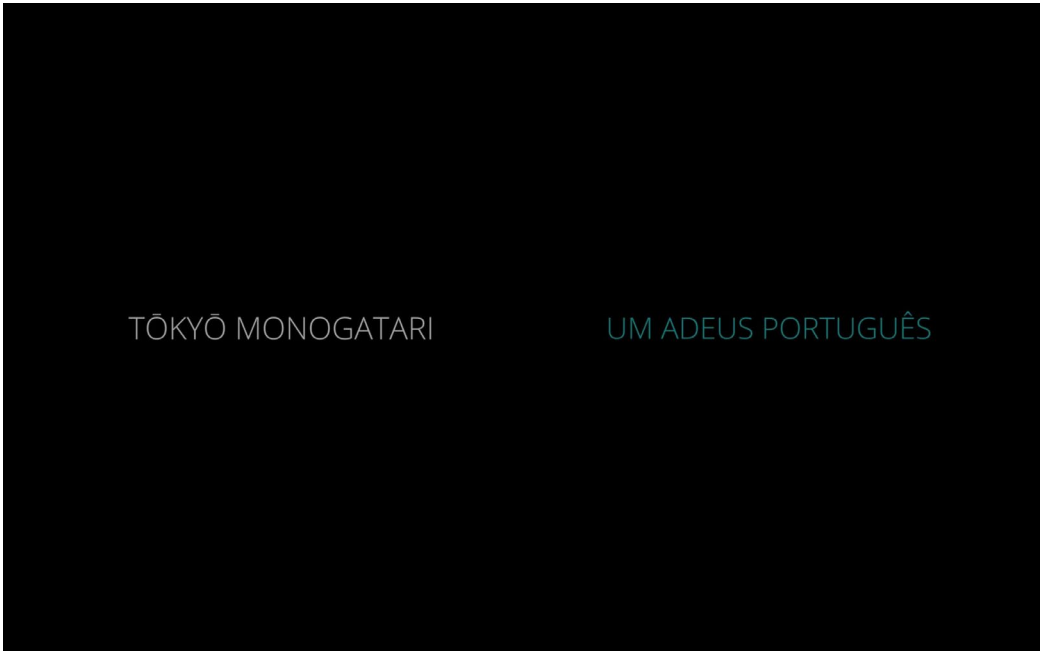
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And so I fish in it again, along its entire course.











I'm really sorry for you.









