

Trailer of memoirs of a geisha essay sample



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Trailers are not thought of simply as bits and pieces of the actual movie, but as a condensed version which transmits the essence of the movie to the audience without actually revealing the whole 'heart' of the story. In the trailer the outline of the movie is displayed but it is not showing enough to ruin the unknown parts that make the movie appealing. Trailers use a varied combination of effects to awake the audience's interest. In this essay I will analyze how effects are used to show emotions and symbolism. A memorable trailer, in honour of a memorable book!

The trailer of 'Memoirs of a Geisha' has manipulated both colour and sound in the trailer marvellously, the timing and combination adding to make one superb trailer that convey the spirit of the film. A geisha is not thought of as a simple prostitute, but rather as an artist that manipulates the art of being a woman; which is usually mistaken with sexual aspects by man. But geishas are different from street prostitutes because they reveal a dignified application of femininity through the art of conversation, the manipulation of senses by practiced looks and the playing of musical instruments, to name but a few examples.

This art needs years of practice and dedication, and is not undertaken lightly by the women. The movie 'Memoirs of a Geisha' shows the true meaning of being a geisha. It shows both the painful and rewarding parts of a geisha's life. This begins in the first scene of the trailer. The story is told by a geisha, who shares the story of her own life. She is presented in the first scene as a mature young woman, probably in her mid twenties, but whose experienced face tells a different thing!

She seems to have learned more than her years could have limited her to. The background is a never ending cloudless blue sky and calm sea that immediately transmit peace, but there is a great contrast with the close up on her face. Her naturally dark, silky hair blows against her face, as if slapping her to wake her into some sort of reality. The colours used are cold but peaceful- light blue and sea green. Her face is extremely pale and she seems to be thinking very deeply. She doesn't make eye contact with the camera therefore we cannot read her feelings.

This image of both peace and wilderness is changed as a bird view of where she is standing appears, showing the white, pale figure standing in the middle of a chain of ragged mountains. This is an image of extreme vulnerability. A single white figure with the huge and majestic background closing in on her. The image of vulnerability is a very attractive one in Japan; however even though she does seem to appear powerless when confronted with the forces of nature around her, she can even be distinguished in such scenery!

This gives the audience an indirect image of her, something which will be later be recognized throughout the film and of course in Japan's society. Her voice, throaty yet delicate states: ' A story like mine has never been told... ' This quote explains that what we are about to see is unique and confidential and is revealing mysteries of a world not yet found by westerners- a world full of exoticism and refinement. Immediately after we hear her delicate voice for the first time, the cloudless sky disappears and a black background emerges.

It describes the film as an 'unforgettable best seller' which makes the audience want to see the movie. However the geisha starts telling her sad yet mysterious story at once. She does not speak but the images shown in the trailer tell us a lot more than any person could tell with words. The colours, the sounds (diabetic and non diabetic), the speed of the shots and the mood changed. The main colours used are black, grey and navy blue showing that the mood is not very cheerful and that something sinister is about to happen.

We see a little girl being dragged away by two rich men dressed in black, wearing elegant hats and coats. The next camera shot is very special. It shows us a short, powerless old man standing in front of his minuscule, tipsy house. We see him as if we were the little girl who was trapped in metal cage. This emphasizes how invaluable she seemed to those rich men who treated a little, delicate girl as if she was a wild animal. The old man seems to be shocked by what is happening but he also seems to have complied with the fact that he is losing his daughter.

A close up to the girl's face is shown, while she is trying to reach her father with her hand. She is crying and screaming but there is an older girl behind her holding her, symbolizing a mother figure. We have not seen the older girl before but those who read the novel will understand straight away that it is her older sister. These scenes are extremely emotional as there is nothing worse for a parent than losing his children and nothing worse for a child than being dragged away from her parents.

The non digetic sound is a rhythmic music which is not very fast. However the beats blend in marvellously with the changing of camera shots making them appear more emotional and faster than they actually are. The digetic sounds are very touching as we hear the naive girl cry and scream in agony while she sees her house and dad fading away in the distance. After these scenes the mature geisha speaks for the second time. In the same time we see a long shot of a train crossing a bridge. The colours have changed again showing a calmer atmosphere.

The rhythmic music stopped and all we can hear is the throaty yet delicate voice of the mature geisha: ' I certainly wasn't born to the life of a ... geisha'. When she says the word geisha the image of a beautiful, proud Japanese woman materializes. This is the first time we see a true geisha wearing the makeup and the kimono. The image fades away slowly as we hear the voice of another girl, who explains what actually happened in the previous scene: ' your family sold you to this house... '. Now we understand that the girl has been sold as a servant to an ' okia', a geisha house.

The girl continues her speech: ' you live here now! '. A birds view illustrates a big, crowded and dirty town- showing us that she would never be able to escape and go back on her own. The non digetic sound is once again a rhythmic music but this time it's far less powerful due to the fact that the shots are not emotional any longer. We can see the beautiful geisha again, this time wearing a red, silky kimono. The colour red makes her stand out showing us that she will have a significant role in the movie.

Her voice is not very delicate and we can feel the anger and jealousy when she states ' this is the new arrival?! . At this point the music intensifies as the beats are stronger and the shots change faster, showing how cruel the geisha was to the ' new arrival' and all the girl had to go through to become mature and strong enough to survive in Japan's society. The close-ups of doors closing symbolize barriers that she will have to overcome to reach her aspirations in future. The beats slow down as a majestic background comes into view explaining who the director was. In comparison to the last background containing writing, which was black, livelier colours are used - such as orange, yellow and red.

From my point of view this image has a lot of meaning; the bottom colour is black but the colours lighten gradually, showing us how her life gets better as she is closer to achieving her goal. In the next few shots we meet many new characters. We meet an old woman whose voice sounds hoarse and evil. We can not see her face or her features very well because the room has a very sickly type of light. However we can distinguish her yellowish figure and her dark lips when the camera zooms in on her face as she says ' let me see those eyes!! '. At this point we can see clearly the girls special, light eyes.

These types of eyes are very rare in Japan and we understand that she will have a role that is truly special in Japan's society. In the same way we meet a man that seems to be a good person as the girl smiles for the first time when she meets him. He might symbolize a father figure. He seems to be rich but the close up of the camera to his face shows us a peaceful, noble and kind man. We meet another character, yet we do not see her; we can only hear her voice. However when she speaks the girl looks up, showing

that she is a person who deserves a lot of respect or that she is in a very high position.

Her voice is gentle and enthusiastic when she states ' you ere not a servant anymore! '. Moments after we see a character that we have seen previously but we never heard her voice. It sounds kind but throaty. As she speaks a magnificent shot of the girl running through a red labyrinth, almost reaching the end appears. It symbolizes the run and struggle of the little girl to reach her goal. Seeing her reach the end of the labyrinth while the kind and throaty voice speaks ' you... are to become a geisha! ' makes us understand what her goal was and how close she is to achieving it!

The next scenes explain what a geisha does and a few rituals she had to go through to become the famous Japanese entertainer. This is important because it shows how a geisha manipulates the senses and how hard it is to be this moving work of art. The little girl has now become a full grown young woman. The music intensifies. It is faster than ever before. The colours have changed to lighter and livelier ones showing the mood and feelings have changed accordingly. And we see the young lady manipulating fans with dexterity, walking pompously and wearing a marvellous silk kimono.

She is guided by an older, skilled geisha, ' onee-san' who introduces her to important people who will play vital roles in her life. As the older geisha speaks the music nearly stops, highlighting the importance of her words and role in the young geisha's life. Close ups and extreme close ups are used now to show the audience more clearly how she prepares for the geisha life.

There is a close up to her white painted face showing her lash less big eyes and bright red lips where she is colouring her eyebrows black.

When she is wearing this makeup or this mask she looks very secure and determined; the polar opposite to all the other close ups of her as a child. An ECU, side shot is immediately shown, where she is about to paint her white, pale lips. The older geisha continues her speech: ‘ music-the art of conversation’ and than a few close ups to her delicate hands are displayed; meaning that the hands are of vital importance in conversations as well as the eyes: ‘ a true geisha can stop a man in the streets with a single look! ‘. If before she wasn’t of any importance to anyone, now, after all the practice she can stop a man with a single look!

Therefore she is ready for a bigger audience than the man on the streets of Kyoto. The beats get stronger yet slower. We see many aristocratic people and a traditional Japanese theatre. There is a lot of contrast between colours. However the predominant one is black, making her white figure stand out. The shots change once the beats repeat, making the sound very effective. There are close ups to her feet and her hand, showing how delicate and refined she is. She is cloaked in darkness as the non- digetic sound of a shamisen is heard while the geisha performs a complicated dance.

Her rapid dance moves are accentuated by the phosphorescent blue glow that is emitted on the background, bathing her and giving her a ghostly glow. In the rest of the trailer there are scenes of happiness where light colours are used but they are always contrasted by immediate darker scenes where feelings such as anger and despair are emphasized. All the happy

scenes seem to be related to the man she meets after she is taken away from home and all the dark scenes seem to be related to the beautiful geisha. These shots show a variety of feelings such as happiness, anger, frustration and despair.

They are all related with the two characters above. The scenes are evenly distributed; so there are dark and light scenes mixed throughout the trailer showing us how sadness and happiness are mixed together in our lives and that there can't be a rainbow without rain. Music escalates into its climax as it shows rapid flashes of doubtful scenes such as her sleeping with a man, which is very degrading for a true and respected geisha, until the orchestra culminates with an extreme close up of the geishas face, emphasizing on her blue eyes. This shot is an obvious reference to the original cover of the book.

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