

Dark Effects in *Ankoku Joshi* Movie

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Abstract. Lighting is the crucial aspect of a movie since it may convey the intended message to the audience. The main goal of this research is to analysing the dark effect as an aesthetic component in the *Ankoku Joshi* movie. The theory used in the analysis of the data is John Fiske's semiotic theory combined using the Descriptive Analysis methods in this study. The main subject from this study is *Ankoku Joshi* movie. Through this research it is known that dark lighting effects are supported by other elements such as character expressions, timing, music and sound effects. The dark effect reinforces the impression of 'dark, ugliness, evil' in the story that becomes the beauty or aesthetics in the *Ankoku Joshi* movie.

1.Introduction

Dark is one part of the lighting to the effect of dark and light, in other words, the part that is not bright comes from light. In the concept of dark and light, Marga states that 'dark and light is the provision of shading and lighting effects properly'[1]. Giving light and dark aims to clarify the shape of objects so that their shape and dimensions can be felt by seen or touch.

In the television codes initiated by John Fiske, there are three levels explained in his theory, namely *reality*, *representation* and *ideology*. In the light or dark lighting found in the film is explained in the representation section where there are technical codes consisting of camera, lighting, editing, music and sound [2][3]. By prioritizing the marking system and structural aspects that can be seen visually or eye sight, the factors that are part of this representation can support dark lighting in a film. Another supporter that can make this dark effect aesthetic is where the expression of the character is part of reality[4]. Then, lighting can also determine the atmosphere of the scenes. This *lighting* is used to give a deeper meaning to the characters or the situation of the scene[5]

Film is a medium or tool that is used to convey or express ideas and stories from artists and writers to people and has another meaning as well as a medium of artistic expression. In other words, film is a medium consisting of images that move from one image to another, and has a storyline in which there are actors who can function to convey messages to people[6][7]. In film, two important things to note are picture and sound. Sound in films consists of the words spoken by the characters, then other sound

effects that accompany the images and music in the film. The important semiotic system in the film is the use of iconic signs. In other words, a sign that describes something. These iconic signs in the film give signals in the form of messages to the audience, and each signal received will be different, but if the story being played has become a form of one main meaning, then the meaning of the story is displayed.[8]. The purpose of this research is to analysing the dark effect as an aesthetic component in the *Ankoku Joshi* movie and using Descriptive Analysis method and also combined with John Fiske theory.

Ankoku Joshi is a film adaptation of the novel of the same name, namely *Ankoku Joshi* by Akiyoshi Rikako which was released in 2017. *Ankoku Joshi* when written in Japanese is 暗黒女子 which in English translates to The Dark Maidens. This film tells about the association of young girls in the literary salon club at a girls' high school. The characters in the story want to find the culprit who killed Shiraishi Itsumi as the leader of the literary salon club where she was found falling from the school's top floor to death. To find the mastermind or culprit behind the cause of Shiraishi Itsumi, her loyal assistant, Sumikawa Sayuri, asks all members of the literary salon club to gather in the room to read the story on the paper she has given to ask everyone to eat the food from her while the room is dark. The lighting in this film tends to be dark even though it is present in several scenes, but it has an effect on the mood or atmosphere of the story. Based on this, the writer is interested in analyzing the function of the dark effect as an aesthetic in the *Ankoku Joshi* movie.

2. Method

This research is using John Fiske theory and the approachment type is of objective approachment. The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method where the facts are described and followed by analysis. The research approach used in this study is an objective approach. The main data search that will be conducted in this study is *Ankoku Joshi* 暗黒女子 or in English is The Dark Maidens which was released in 2017 adapted from the novel by Akiyoshi Rikako. The stages of data analysis started with data collection, data analysis, data presentation and conclusion. Data collected in this study is limited to scenes with minimal or dark lighting.

3.Results and Discussion

In this research, it is found that the dark effect based on lighting part from *representation* level, supported by *reality* and *ideology* level, it creates the aesthetic effect from the included scene [2][3]. This is the part of the scene when Sumikawa Sayuri asks all member to pay attention to her while explaining and the part after Takaoka Shiyo read her story.





Figure 1. A series of scenes when Sumikawa Sayuri gathered all the members of the literature club into the club room
(Minutes 03.21 and 37.33)

Figure 1 is a series of scenes when Sumikawa Sayuri gathered all the members of the literature club into the club room and invited them all to eat an appetizer, read each member's short story and dessert with the aim of finding out which of them had killed the literary salon club leader Shiraishi Itsumi. At the *reality* level, Sumikawa Sayuri expression is seen. Based on the picture, she really enjoys the story from Takaoka Shiyo with relatively scary smile expression which is creating the scary atmosphere. Based on the *representation* level, The time setting represented in the movie for this scene is at night. To make the scene becoming more horror and dark, the lighting in the picture is visible with a bright spot that is only focused on the Sumikawa Sayuri character through a burning candle, supported by *medium long* and *full* shot camera angle. It states that in that scene the important role of the character is emphasized and creates a horror or scary atmosphere supported by a relatively scary smile expression from the character Sumikawa Sayuri that is radiated from the candlelight brought by her. Dark lighting with very low light intensity and contrast in the surroundings shown in the picture shows a mysterious atmosphere which is nothing is visible in the room, either around it or on the table, so that the audience only focuses on the character Sumikawa Sayuri.

This part of the scene is showing the contain of the *yaminabe* soup and where the all of the members asked by Sumikawa Sayuri to eat those soup while stirring the soup. Also Sumikawa Sayuri explaining the name of the soup and the ingredients.



Figure 2. The contents of *Yaminabe* the main dish
(Minutes 01.44)

Figure 2 briefly represents the contents of the main dish, namely *yaminabe*, which means pot of darkness. Sumikawa Sayuri asked all of her club members to bring in the ingredients without being noticed and only she was allowed to know the contents of the pot of darkness. Based on *reality* level in the sound effect, the stirred boiling water is added to make the stirring the soup sensation is more felt. Entering the *representation* level, in terms of lighting, the room is set with low light intensity and low contrast. Also the used camera angle in the picture is the *close up* shot. In other words, it is made almost dark in this scene but can still be seen at a glance through a slight reflection of light in order to arouse the mystery and curiosity of the audience about the contents of the pot, even though at first glance one green apple is seen, it still causes uncertainty about what is seen in the pot. as well as the narration of Sumikawa Sayuri which gives off a mysterious impression as well. This part explains where Decheva Diana is trying to cursing Shiraishi Itsumi intensively using *voodoo* doll as a medium in the school backyard while dark.

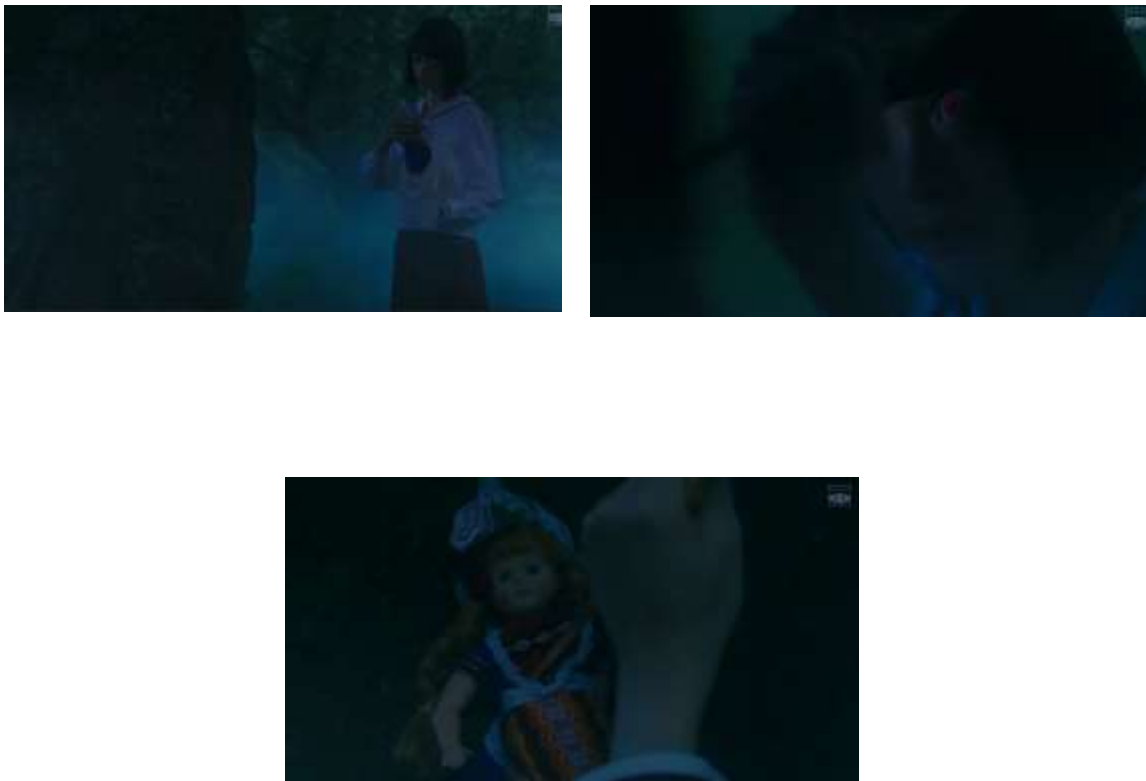


Figure 3. Decheva Diana trying to cursing Shiraishi Itsumi using a *voodoo* doll
(Minutes 55.20, 55.39 and 55.41)

Figure 3 shows Decheva Diana trying to cursing Shiraishi Itsumi using a *voodoo* doll which looks like a beautiful princess and then she stabs the doll while chanting spells and her eyes turn red and bulging. The red and bulging Decheva Diana's eyes is the part of her appearance and her expression is made to looks very scary, which is represented in the *reality* level. And then, in the *representation* level, the dark

lighting in the image is set at low light intensity at all angles including the surroundings of the character and the timing is at night. However, the contrast that is shown tends to be set to standard so that the character's scary facial expressions can still be seen and followed by knife sound effects and strings background music using a minor chord. And also, to make her expressions more intense, the camera angle is set to *full* and *close up* shot. In the scene above, it gives the audience an atmosphere that feels terrible because the character is practicing black magic on Shiraishi Itsumi.

4. Conclusion

The dark effect in *Ankoku Joshi* movie scenes is the result of lighting techniques. The results dark effect is also supported by character expressions, timing, music and sound effects. The dark effect reinforces the impression of 'dark, ugliness and evil in the story that becomes the beauty or aesthetics in the *Ankoku Joshi* movie.

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