

On ***Perfects Days*** (2023)

It is not an exaggeration to say that Wim Wenders is a genius filmmaker. He is one of those rare filmmakers whose presence can “disappear” from his own films while maintaining his distinct world simultaneously. He does not rely on “style” or visual “treatments” to construct his films. Rather, he relies on the unique qualities of the medium of cinema (I can write solely about this at another time). Anyways, *Perfect Days* (2023), again, is surely one of Wim Wenders’ films that relies on the medium of cinema to construct a part of his world. And yes, there is a lot to unpack in *Perfect Days* (2023). But for the sake of keeping this brief, I’ll just write about the ending of it.

If one were to summarize the film in a single line, what would it be? “A man who lives an unchanging routined life cleaning the toilets of Tokyo sees the beauty of everyday”? That’s right. But the question I want to raise is: *if his life is a never-ending routine, then what does he look forward to?*

To answer that question, we have to touch upon the main character Hirayama played by Koji Yakusho. Hirayama is a middle-aged man who lives in the past. He goes through everyday routines listening to outdated cassette tapes, driving on his outdated gasoline car, going to outdated public bath, dining at outdated restaurants, and all that once were integral parts of the Romance of the 20th century... Simply put, Hirayama in the 21st century is outdated. The wonderful contrast is that this outdated man has something to look forward to, everyday. His tears.

I’ve heard people say that they were “moved” by the ending shot while they were watching. But I was not moved at all. Was there something wrong with my emotions? No. It was after the film had ended,

on a bus back home, that a thought came into my head: *Hirayama is a man who repeats himself everyday. So, just like the light between the leaves that appears only once at a moment in a day (referred to "komorebi" in Japanese), Hirayama's tears in his car while he drives to work is his daily ritual. It's a ritual and not a phenomenon because his tears are self-created "komorebi". He chooses to live the life he lives, chooses to be outdated, and chooses to be a man who most people don't care to think about just so he can have a burst of emotion at a certain moment in his days. Hirayama's life is a design - a system constructed by his own choice, for he himself to privately enjoy his perfect days. But, the camera intrudes.*

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