War Film Genre: Paths Of Glory Versus Full Metal Jacket

Nearly every filmed produced is characterized by having at least one film genre, with a unique set of traits that characterizes each film by making it unique from one another. Paths of Glory and Full Metal Jacket are both motion pictures that arguably fall under the war film genre but use different techniques and stylistic features to achieve a similar approach and common themes. The two films are not only geographically different from one another, but they portray different cultures and time periods that are formed. Since their has been a considerable amount of time between the two films, observing the two pictures highlights the main difference between war films from the past and form the present.

Paths of Glory was set in 1957 while Full Metal Jacket was set more recently in 1987. Hence, both movies have a similar genre which is war but portray this genre each in its own unique way and execution. Paths of Glory took place during WW1 in the trenches and showcases the dark sides of war while Full Metal jacket took place during the Vietnam war also showcasing the dark side of war. Both films portray various similarities and differences. The types of camera shots utilized in the film are very similar, especially with certain characters. Both Sargent and General in both films are either presented with a close-up or with a low angle shot were both characters are looking down at people, portraying their dominance and power throughout. Using medium shots as well, the viewer is able to see the Sargent and General's dominance as they stare down at people with talk to with full confidence. The way that the war scenes are shot are in fact very similar, however, some differences are present as well. Firstly, both war scenes are shot with long continues tracking shots.

However, in Paths of Glory, the long tracking shot and close-ups are used to portray the character's facial expressions as they seem tired from what they are going through. This helps give a feel of a documentary footage of the war as the film is also Black and White and the director might have not had enough budget to add enough visual effects. As for Full Metal Jacket, the war scenes are edited in such a smoother way giving it a more commercial and modern view. The war effects of the film has a different approach than that of Paths of Glory. Long Takes are used in both films for example the opening scene of Paths of Glory at the battle scene and the helicopter ride in full metal jacket. The types if shots used in Full metal Jacket were sort if different than that of Paths of Glory. For example, the use of POV in Paths of Glory in the trenches gives us the perspective of Dax as he views the events that are happening in the battlefield. However, in Full Metal Jacket, the use of POV is not effectively present throughout the film.

Lighting

In Full metal Jacket, the director decides to use a mix of low key and high key lighting to portray the events of the film depending on the nature of the scene. The use of lighting varied dpoeending on each character to show their weekness and to build suspense. For example, when Private Pyle decides to commit suicide oin the toilet, the lighting suddenly turns dark and gloomy to portray the harsh event that has occurred. The use of the contrast of lighting was used uniquely to portray either bright or dark moments. Another example is after the death of Private Pyle, where bright colors and lighting were used to portray the sunny day next morning.

So, the type of lighting was used depending on the scene to create a unique mood that fits well with it. For Paths of Glory, the director decided to mainly use low key lighting to portray the harsh and tough events occurring during the war. The main contrast in this film is that it was filmed in black and white and Kubrick mainly uses natural lighting to shoot the scenes, giving it a more realistic feel to it.

As for Full Metal Jacket, it is much more modern. Songs are used all throughout the film and it encounters a more humorous mood to it, unlike Paths of Glory's silent documentary feel. The music acts as a narrator in the film as the type if music relates to the mood of the scene. There lies similarities In the sound of both films. In both films, the sound is used to build tension, fofor example the suicide of Pyle and when the soldiers go to check the dying femalte sniper. This could indicate that the intrumetnal is similarly used in both films to build tension and relates to death.

Sound

The use of sound in both films vary greatly. Paths of glory employs a lot of audio queues to create a sense of realism, thus making the audience better sympathize with the accused soldiers. There is almost no music in the film only the snare drum, during the battle itself, we only hear the gunfire and explosions. This stops the viewer from focusing on any heroic event and focus only on the intense sounds of the explosions, adding to its rawness and documentary like feel. This makes it feel as a real true war film. Kubrick uses sound to build tension especially in the scene near the beginning where the three soldiers are told to check on the ant hill. However, the use of sound in Full Metal Jacket The use of sound and music in Full Metal Jacket is much more modern. For example, the opening of the film opens with the song Hello Vietnam: by Johnnie Wright which was released during the Vietnam &ar. $he song is used when we see all the soldiers getting their hair cut, getting ready ?or boot cam% and the war. $he song is used in a humorous manner and links very well with is going on the scene without any narration. The music almost works as a narrator, e/en though there is nobody in telling us what is happening the scene the music basically explains it without the viewer seconded guessing. Both films share a lot of similarities in terms of use of camera angles and sound. However, lifhting in both films are quite different due to Paths of Glory being filmed in balck and white. Full metal jav=cket, on the other hand, tends to have a more commercial and modern approcoach while being filmed. Moreover, both movies have a different flow, Paths of Glory being more of a documentsry and Full Metal Jacket as a movie with acts asuch as Act 1 and Act 2.t

Cinematography:

A common trait of war films cinematography is shaky unsteady style camera movement which portrays the chaos and intensity of the scenes that take place during the battle field. In the case of director Steven Spielberg, he has effectively made use of this film technique to portray the chaos that was occurring during WW2 and the pain and intensity the soldiers were going through at that time. In Paths of Glory, during the battle sequences, the camera keeps pace with the soldiers but in every other way, the shots look like old trench warfare footage from WW1. Unlike common war films, the camera work in this film tends to be less frantic and more smooth. For the opulent mansion for the high ranking officers, we see wide shots in the exterior and wide shots In the interior as well. We are seen every valuable piece of furniture and luxury the officers have. However, in the trenches, the shots are titer.... tight suffocating and wee see the

soldiers as stuck, trapped... Close ups are used for the audience to be able to vividly and clearly study the soldier's facial expressions of tiredness sorrow and pain. On the other hand, the movie Saving Private Ryan tends to have a different approach in film. The film tends to have the common shot techniques that are mostly used in war films. the chaotic movements and skillful positioning of the camera give the audience a feeling of actually being on the landing craft and a part of the strike force. High angled and wide shots are used with such significance when used to make the audience aware that the attack force is much large than it seems. In addition, close ups are also used to be able to see the character's painful expression they are going through at these tough times. Still, despite the differences that both movies have in terms of cinematography, the common use of close-ups to display character's emotions and long tracking shots are what relates with to on e another and categorizes them as they are essential to any war film.

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Lighting

As for the lighting, both films share common dark and gloomy lighting to portray the toughness of the both WW1 and WW2 wars. During the movie Saving Private Ryan, there is one type of lighting that is focused on throughout the film which is low-key lighting. During the film, the dark scenes helps the audience feel the anxiousness and suspense that is going to occur later on. There additionally is one section where they utilized a three-point lighting style several times throughout the movie. As they showed close ups of Captain Miller, we are able to see his face shadow and feel the drama he was battling with himself. This films lighting style fits its theme perfectly. The director was going for an older more classic feel as though it was all originating from memory and from a far past. Hence, bringing this lighting gave the motion picture the feel and tension they were searching for by making it look genuine like an older movie reel. If they would have chosen a different type of lighting style like high-key lighting, they would not have had the capacity to get the incredible shots and make it feel life like. Bringing in high contrast colors and lots of lighting would have made the film seem less realistic. Paths of Glory was filmed in black and white making it seem more realistic while Saving Private Ryan was more commercial and modern.