

Harry Motton

1.2

'Casablanca' (Michael Curtiz, 1942) and 'Bonnie and Clyde' (Arthur Penn, 1967) are ~~to~~ films, both made by Warner Brothers, that ~~totally~~ epitomise the times in which they were made. The directors used techniques popular during the time to create unique visual styles, but more than that, they addressed aspects of the narrative, themes that were more than prevalent during the time. Good intro, could add some specifics

'Casablanca' is a symbol for classical Hollywood and focused on many topics that greatly influenced each and every member of the audience. One of these is how gender is represented. The film conformed to societal constructs on what it meant to be a man or woman in 1940s America. The first, and most notable, of these expectations is depicted through our lead, Rick. ignore Early on in the film the audience sees an anonymous hand sign a cheque. The camera cuts to then dolly back wards and pan up, ~~to~~ revealing Humphrey Bogart, as Rick, smoking a cigarette and playing a game of chess. The audience is immediately presented with a stereotypical 40s American man playing chess, a sophisticated and complicated game, which was then widely regarded as a game too complex for the basic female mind. The signing of the cheque is a symbol of ^{5 days before pearl harbor} patriarchal, financial security - something expected of a man in the times (handling business, that is). ~~This is it~~ Although elements of expectation for men were maintained through to the 60s and depicted in 'Bonnie and Clyde', female characters became much stronger and assertive representation shifting for the better. A prime example of this can be seen in 'Bonnie and Clyde' when the Barrow gang meet for the first time. They begin to take pictures in front of Clyde's ~~brother~~ stolen car until Bonnie is encouraged to pose for one. She walks confidently to Clyde, taking the cigar from his mouth and poses in front of the car with a pistol at her hip. The scene is ~~well~~ well-lit with natural sunlight, as

the camera tracks ~~Duraway's~~ every move. This sequence is a key one ~~for~~ regarding gender representation, as it presents a strong female character, sometimes interpreted to ^{see her} 'take' the ~~masculinity~~ from Clyde's very mouth, an action ~~is~~ still considered during the 60s as a fairly risqué move. Penn encouraged the depiction of such characters as it supported the Feminist Movement of the 1960s which made such ~~transcendence~~ ~~strides~~ of the film way ahead. ~~Good. just a little more film from would be beneficial.~~

Each film ~~reflected~~ their times in other ways, also. One most prevalent was how it commented on the conflict that America was involved in. In 'Casablanca's' case, America was deep in WWII due to the bombing of Pearl Harbour a year prior to the release of the film in 1942. Now, due to the influence of the OWI, 'Casablanca's' depiction of the ^{US} military and what it meant to fight ~~for~~ the country was greatly manipulated. At the very end of the film, we see Rick say goodbye to Ilsa, convincing her to get on the ^{departing} plane. They converse ^{outside} ~~in a~~ ~~low-key~~ airport hangar (actually shot in a Warner Bros studio) while the ~~camera~~ ^{editing} abides by the popular shot-reverse-shot technique. ^{great} Rick says to Ilsa "I'm no good at being noble but it doesn't take much to see that the problems of three little people don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world" as the camera holds a ~~excellent~~ close-up on Bergman's teary face. Rick, a cynical, arguably selfish man, presents an idea that is desperately relevant to the American audience. The idea is that if a cynic can understand the state in which the world is currently in and puts his selfish desires aside, then the American public should be able to ~~too~~ - its an encouragement (arguably a piece of propaganda) ~~for~~ ^{most likely} the men of the US to help and fight ~~for~~ their country. However, the presentation of war in this film vastly juxtaposes to that of 'Bonnie and Clyde'. The release of 'Bonnie and Clyde' was simultaneous to the ~~conflict~~ of the Vietnam War and so Penn saw it as an opportunity to make comments on the ~~situation~~.

The last sequence is where his voice is most prominent and effective. The last sequence shows Bonnie and Clyde being ambushed by the local sheriff and his accomplices. It's shot entirely in slow-mo (until the last shot) and shows the leads being unremorsefully shot far more ~~even~~ excessively than necessary. The scene is lit with natural sunlight so that no inch of the ~~characters'~~ bodies destroyed, bloody bodies of the lead characters is shown in the dark - it's all got the audience to see. What Penn was trying to do with this ^{just little} ~~obscurely~~ ^{more} ~~obscurely~~ violent sequence is accurately depict the reality of conflict and how undignified death can be when it's at the hand of a rivaling human - it's another vivid reflection of the time on the film. An excellent paragraph ^{successfully compares with} ^{films.}

Finally, 'Casablanca' is reflective of its time through racial representation and how characters of ethnic minorities are used to function in the narrative. A moment in the film where these subjects are addressed or used is when Rick's bar is introduced. The camera is ~~held~~ ^{held} through the front entrance and panned across the new and unorganized setting, giving the audience the impression that they ~~are~~ are walking through the bar themselves. Now, due to the global situation, Morocco was seen and used as a different environment to what it was before of what it is now. Then, Morocco was an embarkation point for refugees to wait while trying to attain a visa to travel to the US in order to escape the dangers of the war. Thus, it became an oasis of cultures and ethnicities, entirely reflected by the bar, ~~with~~ the scene had extras of all ethnicities and colors, one of which being Sam, the piano player. Sam is instrumental in reflecting the treatment of black people during this time, as they were discouraged from joining the military and forced to work as servants or in low-paying jobs. ~~He~~ He is an embodiment of the black community, dramatically contradictory

A very mature and sophisticated point.

to the depiction of black people in 'Bonnie and Clyde'. The 1960s marked a time of which the Civil Rights Movement ~~strengthened~~ extremely strengthened, fighting for national (and eventually ~~the~~ global) equality between races. And so this new era of films, the era of the auteur, was sometimes used as an opportunity to support the campaign for equality. In 'Bonnie and Clyde', this is achieved through the character of Davis. Davis is a minor character, one that is encouraged to shoot the house owned by the civilian bank. A wide shot introduces him, juxtaposing the close-up that is used to ~~present~~ display the joy caused by minor destruction to the property of the establishment - an establishment built upon racial discrimination. It's only a fraction of the narrative that is used to shed light on the ever-present issue, but one that is greatly effective. Very impressive.

And so in conclusion, both films ~~of~~ entirely reflect the times in which they were made. They encompassed institutional ideologies and techniques, as well as addressing political, social, cultural and historical issues. Both ~~of~~ are prime examples of how film can be used to greatly influence and impact audiences.

I'm tight for space here Harry, but this is a truly excellent attempt. All the more so considering this is your first formal attempt. Rich in detail and mature perceptible observations. Clear evidence that you've been engaging with class content, but also working independently too. Just a little more film form would be beneficial, but this is a minor issue, what is a really impressive attempt. You've set the bar high! Well done and keep working hard.

A