

CINEMATOGRAPHY USAGE IN FILM

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THESIS?

Soviet and American films of the 1970-1980s possess a common cinematographic style despite their vast ideological differences. In both societies, directors used similar editing and cinematography to be critical of society.

OUTLINE

- Introduction
 - Camera movement represents an important role in modern film, and in the early days of film, cameras were not able to be moved as freely. In many of the earliest films, most of the scenes consisted of a static wide camera, because it was not possible for easy camera motion or angling.
 - Framing is generally categorized into several primary components(Ideology and Cinematography in Hollywood).
 - * Angle (up,down,canted,etc.)
 - * Distance (closeup,long,etc.)
 - * Movement
 - Pan movement in the horizontal plane about a fixed vertical axis
 - Tilt movement in the vertical plane around a fixed horizontal axis
 - Track movement of the whole camera on a horizontal plane
 - Elevated shot movement of the whole camera on a vertical plane.
 - Most movements can be considered as some sequence or combination of these four basic ones (From Ideology and Cinematography in Hollywood).
 - Each of these different components of the framing can be used to effect ones interpretation of the film. For example a camera that is very mobile could infer a more fast passed scene, or something that is more frantic.
- Per Aspera Ad Astra
 - This film was government approved, it was not prevented from release, giving it the approval from the soviet government.
 - The vast majority of this film is shot at a medium distance, at eye level, with the camera oriented straight at the actors. Occasionally it will have some alternative shots, primarily when showing a landscape of a planet. Also for the most part there is very little camera motion. And when there is is very gradual, smooth, stable, and keeps the light of sight with the focus intact. But for most uses of movement, the film prefers to use cuts. Throughout the film during conversations between characters there is a large use of action reaction jump cuts.

- None of the cinematography in this film is very extra ordinary. All of the movements are are very stable, deliberate and unobstructed.
- German's Films
 - Many of German films are similar, so for now I will use *Hard to be a God*, but I will look into his other films for similarities later.
 - Much of his film appears to be filmed on a hand held camera, or at least a very mobile one. This is very different than the primarily static and stable camera of *Per Aspera Ad Astra*, which was likely on a tripod.
 - The movements in this film are often obstructed by objects in the scene, or they move the primary focus out of frame, allowing the camera to absently wander. In *Ad Astra*, this never happens, if the camera does move it is only to *keep* the primary focus in the frame.
 - Many of the scenes are long and continuous, but with a large amount of motion, to make them more engaging.
 - Both films have a number of points when the actors are looking directly at the camera.
 - The primary difference between these films and the government approved ones, is the excessive use of camera motion, and the allowance for the camera to wander to alternative objects in the scene.
- US Films
 - I need to do more research, reading through some books. But from what I have read this is my outline.
 - Western films were transitioning to become more critical of society, and attempting to break out of the norm that had existed. This is similar to German's films, as he was breaking away from the common film.
 - From *Camera Politica*: They subverted the traditional narrative and cinematic representational codes of Hollywood film making. Employed disjunctive editing and undermined passive viewing, used experimental camera techniques, mixed genres, broke down classical narrative patterns, and several more features. (17) This seems relatively similar to that of German, breaking the classical narrative, and using editing that prevents passive viewing.
 - From *The Dynamic Frame*: The camera is often considered to represent the eye of a person (???). This again seems similar to Germans use of cameras. In his films the camera is frequently intermixed with the characters, and is often interacted with as if it were another character in the scene. It even moves like a person would, unsteadily and always at eye level.
- Conclusion
 - There is a remarkable amount of similarity between German's films and US films at the time. Both are critical of the society and the government, and trying to break out of the norms of film at the time.
 - German's film employ a number of cinematographic techniques that have been documented in US films of the same time period, and he uses these techniques for similar purposes of disorientation.
 - The state supported film of *Ad Astra* is very tame in its cinematography, and does not attempt to break out of the box in any way with its camera.