

Jaws Homework

TEST 1

Although it may come off as a run of the mill “thriller” or “horror” film, Jaws actually holds an important place in film history. Its cinematic style, and, perhaps more importantly, its marketing were breakthroughs in the industry. As you watch Jaws, please take note of the TECHNICAL way the movie is filmed and the plot is forwarded. Some of your questions are very specific in this assignment. At the end of the film (or even as you watch it), also keep your eye and mind open for themes expressed in the movie.

1. The opening shark attack of Jaws has become iconic. I want you to consider 3 parts of it.
 - Listen to the score, the music used. How does the music support the visual images? What tones/rhythms support what actions?
 - Look at the visual. How is this filmed...
 - high/low/flat angle? (if it varies widely, point out where and why)
 - High contrast/low contrast?
 - Close/medium/long shots?
 - Do you ever see the attacker?
 - What makes the scene memorable or disturbing?
 - This attack may be viewed as exposition. What does it set up for the film in terms of atmosphere? What does it tell you about the “monster”? (*Do NOT answer this question with “it tells you this is a scary movie and there’s a big shark.” You’re better than that*).
2. Look at the costuming/makeup of the main characters in the film. It is designed to tell you about the characters.
 - Tell me about Mayor Vaughn’s costuming; what does it tell me about him? (give me specific costume details and tie them to character)
 - Tell me about Brody’s costuming; what does it tell me about him? (give me specific costume details and tie them to character)
3. Jaws won an Academy Award for sound and an Academy Award for music. Pay attention to the sound in the film as you watch it. Notice at least one place where the actual *sound* (or lack of sound) matches or emphasizes the visual images on the screen.
4. Character introductions give important insight into who a character is and what role (s)he will play in the film. Quint’s introduction is very revealing.
 - Watch Quint’s introduction. Pick out the details/techniques (camera angle, editing, action, costuming, etc) that give viewers immediate insight into *who* this guy is.

5. The attack on the young boy at the beach is treated (cinematically) very differently from the original attack.
 - Describe a few of the differences in the way the two attacks are filmed and how the sound is used in each one.
 - Why are the two attacks so different? What purpose does each serve in the film?
6. What purpose does Hooper's character serve in the film? (i.e. why did the writer & director put him in there?) Why is he likable or not likable?
7. On the boat during the pursuit of the shark, Quint delivers a monologue about the reasons he hunts sharks. Watch the monologue carefully.
 - What does the monologue do for the film and your perceptions of Quint's character?
 - How is the monologue presented cinematically?
 - What's the distance (close up/medium/long)?
 - What's the editing like?
 - What sound is used?
 - How does that cinematic presentation make the monologue more or less effective in its purpose (what you told me in the first part of this question)?
8. One of the themes running through *Jaws* is a feeling of "us" vs "them" between the islanders and the rest of the world. This comes across in Brody's role in the film, and in the primary conflict of the film.
 - Where do you see this theme in the film (give me at least 2 places)?
 - How does this theme impact the plot of the film?
9. It isn't as obvious as the shark, but there is a definite perception or opinion of humanity built up in the dialogue and visuals of the film.
 - Tell me what that perception of people is (i.e. nice, mean, caring, cruel, rational, animalistic, wise, logical, etc), and back up your explanation with specific cinematic details from the film.
10. Pick ONE of the two following questions and answer it.
 - Who was your favorite or least favorite character in the film? Why? What specific cinematic elements helped to create that opinion?
 - What was your favorite or least favorite scene from the film? Why? What specific cinematic elements helped to create that opinion?