

In this essay I will be analysing the cinematography and mise en scene of *Easy Rider* 1969 in contrast to *For a Few Dollars More* 1965 to compare two different genres and ideology. This focusses on the genre of Spaghetti Westerns and Road Movie. The cool man who remains unshaken in the Western and the desperate man of the Road Movie. Depending on what you believe in, one might take more of a liking to you. I will also delve into the theoretical elements of the films and what they mean in the bigger picture.

Easy Rider is characterised by documentary style cinematography. The characters are constantly on the move throughout the movie with long flowing hair and wild beards, an unconventional film which defied the male idealism at the time portrayed in films such as Westerns. It challenges America's racism and xenophobia, giving an accurate portrayal of America at the time. *Easy Rider* 1969 was created at the time of New Hollywood where there was a big counterculture, which films such as *The Graduate* 1967 created a stir that was popular with the zeitgeist youth. Characterised by a new wave of auteurist filmmaking influenced by foreign and experimental directors (Campbell, 2019). It also has a vivid interpretation of an acid trip that looks like something inspired by the Russian Montage Movement. The film has a lot of rapid flashbacks/flash-forward transitions between sections, which suggest moments in time being interlaced like strands of wicker (Zoller Seitz, 2010). This creates a disorientating effect which communicates the 'on the move effect'. *Easy Rider* 1969 uses an abundance of scenic shots of American landscape in natural light, creating an authenticity which is further enhanced by lens flares and heavily improvised dialogue. The metaphorical message is communicated by embracing errors for a documentary feel to show the freedom of shooting out in the real world as opposed to a studio "box". This coincided with the current audience that challenged the social taboos of xenophobia and the traditional status quo.



The cinematography of Sergio Leone's Spaghetti Westerns has a little more attention to detail, by creating depth in the foreground and background by placing the characters in unlikely places. The visual department collaborates with the set design to reveal little details that immerse the viewer in

the world and time period. The colours are often highly saturated orange skin tones and pale browns in the dry desolate landscape, this makes them look weathered and part of the landscape. It also uses dutch angles to create a feeling of unease in anticipation that something interesting is about to happen. There's also a great use of music, which compliments the actor's movement and tells the audience how to feel. It does this by giving each character his or her own theme tune. Leone's editing style is to cut on the look to create tension, such as when a shootout is about to happen. He also uses this technique to distract the audience until its revealed.



Once Upon a Time in The West is said to be Leone's masterpiece, this is an example of how Leone cuts on the look. This unknown character is waiting at a quiet train station, suddenly a drip falls on his head.



He looks up to inspect it, where it cuts to create tension. The hierarchy of knowledge is shifted to the character, as the audience we want to know what he's looking at.



The source of the drip is revealed to us.



It cuts back to a close-up to show us what he thinks about it, he puts his hat on and the drip is less annoying. This little sequence doesn't end up being relevant to what happens next in the story, but because this is the opening scene it humanises the character and makes eerie silence interesting. We also have another anonymous character who is playing with a fly that keeps landing on his face. This little interaction is humorous and keeps the audience guessing who to root for and what's going to happen next.



In this little sequence this anonymous character has caught a fly in his gun barrel, he holds it close to his ear to listen. Suddenly the train comes whistling down the track, revealing a point of interest of what could happen next. This happens as we're listening to the buzzing of the fly, the high frequency train noise comes as a surprise to us; keeping the audience engaged.



Perhaps what differentiates the two genre's the most is Leone's disagreement with the hippie ideology, quoting "I am against drugs and hippies... I am violently against their attitude". This is seen in his films that have a profoundly western idealism. With a moral ambiguity in good vs evil, Leone didn't see the concept of bad vs good; more so every man for themselves. Having film connections in the Italian film industry, he worked as a fifth assistant for De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves 1948*; which had affected his documentary style of filmmaking. Typical Westerns would display the time period as wonderful idyllic landscapes, whereas Leone would interpret it as harsh and dirty. He does this by showing a more brutal interpretation, with more rugged looking characters. The traditional Western would show their heroes as clean shaven, and the villains as shabby. What makes Leone's *Fistful of*

Dollars 1964 movies different is that he removes that good vs evil ideology. He also shows a lot of graphic violence to create a sense of realism and enhance the brutality of Leone's universe.

This is a scene from *A Few Dollars More* 1965 which is Clint Eastwood's introduction to the movie. He is introduced with a mission to kill a wanted outlaw, the outlaw having such a fierce reputation that the sheriff won't confront him out of cowardice. The reward is a huge sum of cash, which further adds emphasis on the self-interested motif that there's profit to be gained.



In this Medium close-up, half his face is obscured from the hat, which has a lot of contrast and shadows to suggest mystery. The lighting is motivated from above which harshly falls upon his hat and shoulder, making him look three dimensional and creates realism. He calmly brushes his poncho over his shoulder like a proud bird washing its feathers. His demeanour with the poncho makes Clint Eastwood have an aura of cool and fearlessness, further enhanced by his smoking. The camera pans up following the movement of taking a cigar from his shirt pocket to his mouth, working as the pen to the story. He looks up to the camera revealing his hawk-like eyes, making him look like a predator; a dominant male. The orange skin tones show that he is part of this harsh desert universe, with a rugged looking beard.



He looks inside the bar, not revealing to us what's inside. Instead of running out of the rain, he calmly walks to the bar with a sense of authority. The overhead light and the rain acts as a motivated light source, with a slight haze coming from the bar creating an atmosphere. It's also working as a kicker on his shoulder revealing the outline of Clint's rugged face and tall imposing figure. The warm light behind shows a warmth that everybody is keeping themselves inside to avoid the rain, where you might find potentially find people.



The narrative immersive tracking shot pans across the bar almost working as a POV shot, like a predator looking for his target. The tracking shot has a high stability and is blocked mostly following from the upper floor to the woman walking across with a tray of drinks. A guy spans her bottom suggesting an atmosphere of rowdiness and moral bankruptcy, it is certainly a male dominated place for gambling. The colours of pale and dark browns show the environment of the people inside, living in the middle of a desert. It also makes them look to be part of the furniture.



The camera slowly tracks Clint Eastwood as he scours across intimidating people, he looks the sheriff straight in the eye and doesn't break eye contact; asserting his dominance.



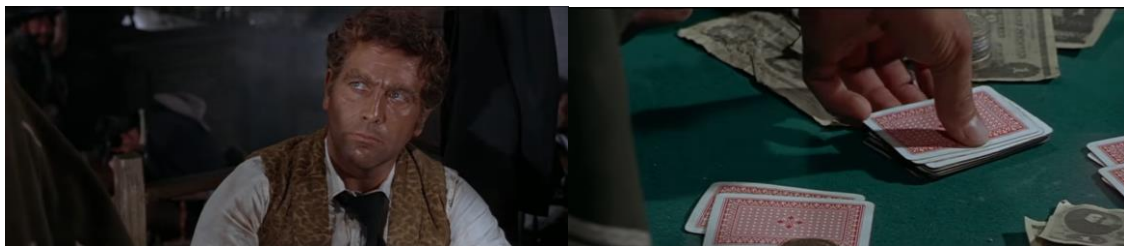
The camera tracks from a wide-angle to a two-shot to redirect the focus onto the two characters' interaction. When the sheriff passes Clint asks him "light?" which is an attempt of collaboration but ends up intimidating him with his eye contact. This tells the audience Clint Eastwood's character must be a special kind of badass to dominate the sheriff.



The lighting shows off the shape of his dark hat and masculine features, his eyes are squinted together with a piercing gaze. The Sheriff points out the bounty criminal and the shot cuts on the look to where the criminal is. This signifies that Clint and the audience know his target. The 180-degree rule remains consistent throughout the interaction, staying close to continuity.



The close-up reactions show the intimidation of Clint Eastwood, he interrupts their gambling by taking a handful of cards; the people playing ruffle their feathers and look around at each other. Once again using the cut on the look technique. One thing to point out is how 'the man with no name' being Clint Eastwood only uses his left hand, this makes the audience curious to know why he's not using his right.



This is a reaction shot to the 'man with no name', this is a warning look. They keep their cards close to their chest, each exchanging a look 'my hand is better than your hand'. When the cards are revealed, the criminal claims they didn't call a bet. 'The man with no name' answers, "your life". All the gamblers look at each other, we are now anticipating a rising tension turning into a climax. It suddenly breaks into a fight scene which Clint has easy control over using a martial arts hand chop using only his left hand. He pushes the criminal down the stairs and calmly walks down the stairs.



During this scene we see the sheriff signalling to a man having a shave that something is going down. When he arrives as backup, half his beard is clean shaven; which is Leone mocking the traditional codes and conventions of a western being that the good guy is always shaved. This little cutaway also gives the audience a shifted hierarchy of knowledge that Clint will have to fight more than on enemy. Clint kills all three of the reinforcements in three shots. Reinforcing his badass persona.



These close-ups are at a slightly down-up angle making the men look tough and intimidating. As if to say, “we own this town”; once again the orange skin tones make them look weathered and part of the environment. The dark hats make them look like tough bad guys.



He effortlessly makes quick work of them, showing incredible skill thus revealing his right hand. His right hand is led by his pistol. The close-up of the gun shooting the men shows that he lets his gun do the talking.

In contrast, Easy Rider has a different set of codes and conventions including a different style of cinematography. It's an American outlaw movie that highlights the 60's which was celebrated by the youth at the time. I am going to analyse the end scene of the movie because I think it highlights what makes a road movie.



It starts with an ambiguous quote “we blew it”. Following a scene where they acquired a lot of money, for the whole movie they went out to discover America and live young wild and free. Following a terrifying drug experience, they had to deal with small town mentality that hated hippies. They also found a hypocrisy in other people with similar idealisms, finding that just like the rest we are driven by war and money. Having discovered this, they were riding once more in the low intense sun at dawn.

Shot in a montage of insert shots of American landscapes, the cinematography is always on the move either from the perspective of the motorcycle or like you're on the journey with the two characters on a third motorcycle.



With the wild long hair and colourful shirt, they are beautifully illuminated in an intense orange light that makes them part of the landscape in the raw elements of nature. The American flag symbolising freedom. At this point in the film they have taken away an important experience, realising that people with alternative lifestyles can't make ends meet and survival is hard. The flash back flash forward cut shows that they are taking away this learning curve into the new day, realising that their dreams of freedom can only be achieved in death. The poetic deep focus cinematography makes the film like a time capsule, the candid pictures of people and surrounding landscapes immersing the audience. The lens flares adding to the realism. In some sequences the footage is playing backwards, like they are no longer movie forward but instead regressing. They drive past an industrial area, and fossil fuel gas station only adding more to the cruel materialist world. The very materials they rely on to drive their vehicles. Despite this there is beautiful cinematography of trees and water, showing that nature always wins in the end.



The music fades out and they are greeted with unintelligible small-minded Americans that are represented as idiots with bad teeth. This cutaway reveals to us that we know an imminent danger Wyatt and Billy haven't realised yet.



Shockingly, the redneck shoots him in the chest stopping him in his tracks. Thus, the road movie ends; they are no longer on the move.



Wyatt goes back to help his friend, leaving a jacket on his bleeding wound before driving fast to call for help. Billy yells out "I'm gonna kill 'em", despite his contradictory hippie pacifist nature.



The last sequence is shot like a duel between the narrow minded and the counterculture movement. The gun flashes and we see a frame of blood and an exploding motorcycle, killing Wyatt; killing the 60's and freedom idealism. The death of the America that could have been, instead of killing people in the name of oil, money, and empire.

One key difference is music, such as how Road Movies use rock music coming from a stereo to communicate wild adventure and a feeling of cool. The western man, on the other hand, does not have a stereo on his favourite steed, but what's interesting about the Spaghetti Western genre is abundance of action and less dialogue; constantly using music to intensify the duel. What they share is keeping characters on the move, which they do with tracking shots. What the road movie succeeds in that the western doesn't is the humanity and realism. It criticises the Western philosophy, a diabolical mirage of the Western dream (Agresta, 2013). The best way I could describe

it is the cool man vs the warm man. Both genres share deep focus cinematography, the western ideology rules the seas, but the road movie criticises where it falls short.

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