

Comparing the endings of jaws and psycho essay sample



Jaws and Psycho

Suspense is a state of anxiety or uncertainty. Directors put this in films to keep the viewer on the edge of their seat and they are trying to get the viewer guessing what's going to happen next. This is important in the horror genre because if you killed off the killer straight away there would be no film so they keep you in suspense from the beginning.

There are different types of films in the horror genre. Psycho is a psychological horror and Jaws is a horror disaster film with lots of blood and gore. They were also made at different times. Psycho was made in the 1960s by Alfred Hitchcock in black and white, this was a low budget movie whereas Jaws was made in 1975 in colour by Steven Spielberg. This was a very high budget film, to make it sell to a blockbuster audience, this film was also in colour.

I have chosen to do the ending scenes from Psycho and Jaws because the ending of a film is the most important because if a film has a bad ending it spoils the whole film even if the rest of the film was good. It is also the part of the film viewers remember as they leave the cinema. It also has the greatest impact.

Psycho

Having heard nothing from Arbogast the detective, Lila and Sam have decided to go and look for him at his last known location: the Bates Motel, unaware of the sinister events which have already taken place there. When they arrive at the Bates Motel they get checked in then they go to cabin

number 1 where Marian was staying. They are snooping around, this is keeping us in suspense because Norman could walk in at any time or he could be watching through his little spy hole. They find a little piece of paper with a sum on it, they found this in the toilet this was a ground braking scene because never before had there been a close up of a toilet, the little piece of paper proved Marian had been there.

In the next scene Lila walks up to the house. The house is totally overpowering compared to Lila, Hitchcock uses a high camera angle here to make her look even smaller. In the same scene Sam is in the office talking to Norman the owner of the bates motel. During these scenes its cuts between the two, these method is used to add more tension in by making you want to know what's going on in the other.

Lila goes into the house and immediately goes up stairs looking around the room where `mother` came from to kill Arbohghast. In this room she looks around looking at all the clothes this still makes the audience think `mother` is still alive which cant prepare us for the ending! Lila is looking around and catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror and it scares her because she thinks its mother and we get a fright at this point. In this scene we can tell what Lila is think about by the music in the background.

Meanwhile, Norman hits Sam over the head with a vase and knocks him out. Then Lila hears him walking up to the house so she runs down the stairs then she sees another set of steps leading to the basement, she doesn't know weather to go down these but she does. At this point we are in the edge of our seats because we know `mother` is in the basement and if she doesn't

go down Norman will catch her. She goes down to the basement, this is dramatic irony because we know mothers down but Lila doesn't.

Lila goes down she sees `mother` sitting on a chair, she spins the chair round slowly and we see it is a corpse, this is the scariest point of the movie because you were totally not expecting it. After she spins `mother` round she flings her arms up in the air and hits a light, which is swinging now because you cant see properly so this adds more uneasiness. She also screams when she throws her arms up. Then suddenly we see Norman running in, in a dress and a wig he also has a knife but then Sam comes to the rescue and puts Norman in a headlock and controls him. This was quite a big twist because you were defiantly no expecting Norman to be the killer. Later on in the police station we find out that Norman thinks he is his mother.

This is a very downbeat ending. This film doesn't need a happy ending because its not aimed at young audience and it wouldn't tie in with the rest of the film. I didn't really like the ending because I think it would have been better if you just saw Norman running in then Sam stopping him/her then it ended because then you would be left guessing why! I think that would be a lot better ending.

Jaws

So far 3 people have been killed and we still haven't seen the shark properly yet, this is because Spielberg still doesn't want you to see how big the shark is yet. Brody the main character who is a detective, this is a similarity to

psycho because there is a detective in psycho. In most suspense films there is a detective.

Brody calls in the help of Quint who is a shark angler and Hopper who is a scientist who studies sharks. We are on the boat and all 3 of them are talking, they are all very drunk. Spielberg puts this in to develop the characters and to make us sympathise with them.

Then suddenly we see the yellow barrels pop up in the background, earlier on Hopper attached the barrels to the shark. But Brody, Hopper and Quint don't see them this is dramatic irony because we know they are there but they don't. This is technique that Hitchcock uses as well, this is a very effective technique because you want to shout at the TV to warn them. The shark attacks the boat and Brody is about to radio for help but Quint smashes it up. We think he is mad since that is the only means of help they've got. There is a slight resemblance to psycho here because Norman is mad. I think Quint smashes the radio because he has taken a lot of time and effort to find the shark then as soon as they find it there will be a lot more ships try and catch it and he won't get the praise for catching it.

Next day when the shark returns Hopper decides to go underwater in a cage, with a harpoon gun with a dart filled with poisons. We think he is very brave like Lila and Sam from psycho because they all have gone past what they had to do. But when Hopper goes down in the cage we know something very wrong is going to happen because it always does in the horror genre. Then suddenly we hear the shark's music, which is the same all the way through the film, every time we hear this music comes on we know the shark is near.

Hitchcock also uses music in psycho when Lila is looking around `mothers` rooms. When the shark attacks Hopper who is in his little cage, he nearly rips the cage up instantly and in addition he drops his gun as well. Then the shark rips the cage in half but Hopper escapes and hides at the bottom of the sea behind a rock. When the others pull up the cage they think Hopper is dead but we know he is not so this is more dramatic irony.

The viewer is on the edge of their seat by now because they are wondering now if they are going to kill the shark and if they do kill it they are wondering how.

Now the shark swims up to attack the men on the boat and it gets stuck on the end of the boat this tips the boat up at nearly a 90 degrees angle. Quint is holding on for dear life at this point, but he loses his grip and falls straight into the shark's mouth and the shark bites him in half and then gobbles him up. There is a lot of blood and gore in this scene to make it appeal to teenagers because they like those kinds of things. The shark now tries to attack Hopper, Hopper picks up the first weapon that comes to hand and it is an oxygen tank for diving, he hits the shark a couple of times then he drops it in the shark's mouth by accident, we think nothing of this but it becomes very important in a couple of minutes. Spielberg uses a lot of very good camera angles in the last couple of scenes, which makes you feel that you are there, some of them are very clever and must have been very hard to shoot.

The boat is sinking now, Brody climbs on the top of the mast and we see the shark in the distance coming towards Brody and we think it's going to kill him, but Brody shoots at it a couple of times and misses, then he checks his

ammo and sees he only has one bullet remaining and with his last shot he hits the oxygen tank from earlier and it blows the shark up.

This is similar to psycho because Sam runs in and saves Lila just in time and Brody shoots the shark just in time and with his last bullet. Now that's what you call luck.

Just after he shoots the shark, Hopper pops up and they have a laugh and a joke then they climb aboard two barrels and swim for shore with happy music playing in the background this has changed from earlier when there was scary music in the background. This is a totally different ending to psycho because psycho is a scary and strange ending and jaws ending was a happy and very cheerful ending. Jaws ended like this because it was aimed at a family audience and if they had an ending like psychos it would scare the little children. I preferred the jaws ending a lot more than psychos, simply because it was a happy ending.

Read next:

A Cultural Analysis of the Film Enemy of the State