

How are genre and themes expressed in the films you have studied, and show that va...

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The films I have studied for this section are 'Roman Holiday' by William Wyler 1953 and 'Lost in Translation' by Sofia Coppola 2003. Initially we can see that both films are of the same genre, romantic comedy, and that they both have similar themes like they are both set in a foreign country, the characters are ex-patriots, they both have A-list actors and there is an age difference between our main characters with the man being much older than the women. So from these two films which are so formulaically similar and are made fifty years apart we should be able to see the extent to which some values may have changed over time and other perhaps not as much.

The comedy of both films shows a difference, in 'Roman Holiday' when Irving comes to the cafe where Joe and Ann are sitting, there is the miscommunication between Joe trying to get Irving not to reveal he is from the press because he is deceiving Ann, every time Irving is about to say something Joe kicks him, or spills his drink on him and it's funny in a very obvious almost slapstick fashion. However in 'Lost in Translation' the comedy is more subtle, like having a Japanese man sing 'God Save the Queen' by the Sex Pistols or when Bob gets in the elevator and he's much taller than everyone else, which I didn't even realise on first viewing. It was jokes like the latter which brought controversy to the film as racist, some would argue here is a value degeneration where we now need to laugh at someone (or group of people) whereas 'Roman Holiday' did nothing but portray Rome lovingly and the jokes were at no one's expense. The films have different styles of filming, 'Roman Holiday' is very conventional with mostly still shots and a formal structure, whereas 'Lost in Translation' is obviously hand held camera and has a more messy structure to it. This

further ties into the representation of the cities each is filmed in, Rome is the classical traditional ideal of love whereas Tokyo is everything new.

Loneliness is a theme which is common to both films, when Princess Ann is in her room and dreams of just being able to do normal things. Or the way Bob will sit at the bar on his own, in fact preceding the first time he does this is the more famous image of him from the front cover, it's a long shot that shows him alone in his hotel room and is the basis for his and Charlottes relationship: both being alone in their separate rooms and finding each other. Ann and Bob are both people of status and despite having people around them all of the time they, perhaps want to be treated differently, like a friend as opposed to someone of status. This is evident when the Duchess is going through Ann's schedule and Ann has a tantrum. Similarly when Bob is in the bar, two business men start talking to him but as soon as they start talking about all of the films he's been in he leaves. There is then a similar theme of status which has persisted over time and this makes sense as its part of the basic make-up and structure of our society, which won't have changed that drastically in fifty years.

The whole idea of sex and violence being in every film we watch has consisted to an extent with these two films, there is love interest and there is fighting. However to fit the fighting within the context of a romantic comedy in both cases it is made light hearted in some way, I would argue this is done in each films own fashion. 'Lost in Translation' which is a more realistic film has Bob, Charlotte and her friends kicked out of a club with a BB gun, the conflict aspect has been made not serious by the fact the gun is essentially a

toy while still being something which could actually happen. In 'Roman Holiday' when the secret service men arrive on the barge and a fight breaks out, there is much punching and throwing over board but there is no blood or signs of bruising, even the Princess joins in and as she's going to hit someone on the head with a guitar the band in the scene play give her a drum role. It's completely unrealistic and has turned what would have been a serious fight resulting in serious injury into fun and a spectacle which I think relates to it being less subtle in the way 'Lost in Translation' is. The difference in subtlety is down to the time each film was made in, and the sense of realism each carries.

'Roman Holiday' with its formal structure has a very edited and polished 50s proper feel to it, if for instance there were any little arguments of miscommunication between Joe and Ann they were written out, in effect. Whereas the main complication of 'Lost in Translation' Bob sleeping with the jazz singer, cheating on his wife and Charlotte being upset but with no real cause is completely down to miscommunication and misunderstanding about what their relationship was building up to and what they meant to each other. I conclude with the final difference that is evident in the structure of each film which may well represent the ideals of the time is that, in 'Roman Holiday' Joe and Ann are united against a common enemy, Ann's parents trying to find her. There is deceit between the two, Ann doesn't tell Joe she's a princess and Joe doesn't tell her he's a reporter but this is clear cut and in relation to their positions so simpler. Whereas in 'Lost in Translation' they are on their own, any joy or grief they have is a result of the way they have

interacted, there is no extrinsic reward to motivate them - like Joe trying to make a story.

This I feel shows the growing emphasis of the individual in modern society whereas in 'Roman Holiday' motives and intentions are clear cut which represents a society which liked things to be right and wrong with no grey areas in between. For example if Joe and Ann could be together it's clear they would be, whereas for Bob and Charlotte this is still a tricky confusing issue and in the long run the perfect moment they've had is probably the best thing for them.