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Tarantino unchained

Presentation

I have always loved cinema. Since I was little my father would bring me to watch any Disney animated movie and I really enjoyed them. As years passed, my likes evolved and movies such as the *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* sagas had a great impact on me. Then I discovered Christopher Nolan, Ridley Scott, Guy Ritchie, Scorsese... and a new world of cinema appeared in my life and it made me realize it was what I really wanted to do in the future.

Then *Reservoir Dogs* appeared and it changed my way of seeing things. I ended watching all Tarantino's movies and never would be the same again. The way the directors sees things, and then represents them in his movies, it's a completely different way from the typical Hollywood cinema. He had a huge impact on me, and I wanted to know how he did it. That's how appeared the ide of making the research project about Quentin Tarantino.

Objectives

When one sees a film by Quentin Tarantino one unconsciously knows that is one of his works. But, what makes Tarantino so Tarantino? This project aims to identify

and analyze the most relevant traits of Quentin Tarantino's films.

Other objectives are:

—Find the connections between the movies.

—Relate the semblance of his productions to the action movies spaghetti westerns from the 70s, find the movies which Tarantino was inspired by and examine how accurately he uses those references in his films.

—Account the number of deaths and bullets shot in each film, and which weapons were used.

Methodology

After a thorough research on the filmography of Quentin Tarantino, and a previous study of his personal style, seven of the nine movies of the director -*Reservoir Dogs, Pulp Fiction, Kill Bill Vol. 1, Kill Bill Vol. 2, Inglourious Basterds, Django Unchained and The Hateful Eight*- were selected. This project does not include *Jackie Brown* and *Death Proof* because they are not as well known as the others, and the fact that people can easily recognise the films and have a little idea of them in their mind was determining. Tarantino's original idea of considering the two volumes of *Kill Bill* as a single unit has been respected in this project, because that is how the director wanted the film to be and because it makes the project more simple and not that repetitive.

The first step of this project was watching the movies selected in order to make detailed notes of the characteristics they have in common. The films were analysed following the order in which they were released, so new things appeared as they did in the time. To gather all the information, we determined which were the most common aspects of the director, and noted when each one appeared in the films: the use of the panoramic camera, an exaggerated use of blood, characters with criminal tendencies, small talk, Tarantino's cameos, connections between films, common actors and non-lineal plots. The number of shots fired and deaths in each film have also been recorded.

After the gathering of information the project was divided in three parts.

The first part analyses the characteristics of each film individually so that they can be seen more clearly and films are not confused with the others.

The second part includes a bibliographic research of the different weapons used in the films by the main characters, after each death and shot that appear on the screen had been counted and noted down.

The third part of the project bases its research on the films that most influenced Tarantino. It tries to find out about the aspects from those films that can be found in Tarantino's work.

Results

Analysis of Tarantino's film

Tarantino's films display common characteristics. Some of them are only used in specific movies, but they stand out for being easily recognizable as Tarantino style. They are:

—*Use of the panoramic camera.*

In most of his scenes he uses a camera movement which consists of moving the camera in any direction, with the camera static on its axis.

—*Exaggerated use of blood.*

This is the characteristic that most represents Tarantino. In all his movies, there is always a scene (or more), where blood is spread over the whole scenario.

—*Characters with criminal tendencies.*

Most of the characters that appear in feature films have a relation with crime or they are criminals such as hitmen, bounty hunters, robbers, traffickers...

—*Small talk.*

They are five-minute conversations, talking about a topic that is irrelevant for the plot of the film and a comic connotation.

—*Tarantino's cameos:*

In all the films Tarantino appears acting as an irrelevant character, whereas in others we can hear his voice narrating the film, or talking on the phone, for instance.

—*Common actors:*

For Tarantino, this is the base of his productions. Some actors appear in more than three of Tarantino's films: Samuel L. Jackson (*Pulp Fiction, Jackie Brown, Kill Bill, Django Unchained, The Hateful Eight*), Michael Madsen (*Reservoir Dogs, Kill Bill, The Hateful Eight*), Harvey Kietel (*Reservoir Dogs, Pulp Fiction*)

—*Connections between films:*

In many of Tarantino's films we may find references to other of his own films. They are not direct connections, but there are some semblances between the movies or between films that are set in the same period of time. For example, Vic Vega in *Reservoir Dogs* is the brother of Vincent Vega in *Pulp Fiction*.

—*Invented brands:*

Different products used as props in his movies are brands were invented by Tarantino to leave his own mark. Some examples are: Cigarettes Red Apple, Big Kahuna Burger, Jack Rabbit Slim's...

Non-lineal plots:

Non-lineal plots are of the most characteristic treats of Tarantino's films. His movies usually go back and forward in time, so you can have different perspectives of the plot.

—*Conversations where the speaker is not shown:*

This method is very commonly used by the director, so you can see how the one who is not speaking reacts to the conversation or what the character does during it.
—*Trunk perspective camera:*
Most of the car scenes use this method. It can be from a human or an object perspective, but always with a low angle shooting, looking to the characters.

Inspirations
Tarantino was fully influenced by the cinema of the 70's, so most of his films have been inspired by the ones that marked him. Although he has changed most things, and made them his own style, his inspirations can be easily recognized.
—*Django (1966)*
Django Unchained was fully influenced by this movie, and even included a cameo of the main character Franco Nero.
—*Lady Snowblood*
Directed by Toshiya Fujita, this Japanese film tells the story of a young woman who searches revenge for the murder of her family. The main character, Yuki, inspired the *Kill Bill* character O-Ren Ishii. Both plots are also very similar.
—*The Game of Death*
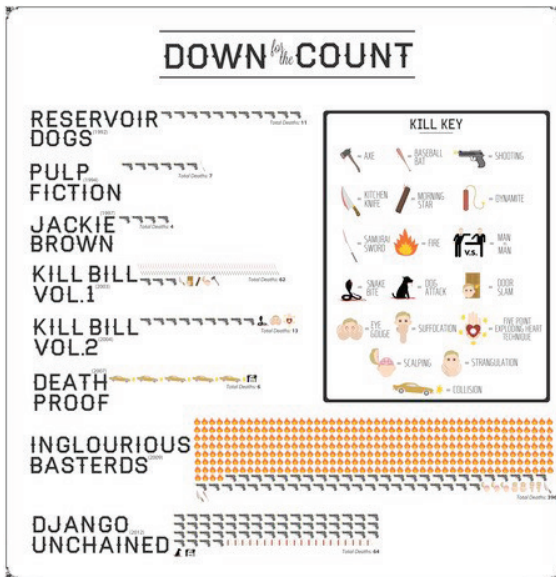
Kill Bill was not only influenced by one film. This Bruce Lee's Kung Fu movie inspired the colors of the suit of Kill Bill's main character, and also the full action scenes.
—*City on Fire*
Directed by Ringo Lam, this film inspired the plot of *Reservoir Dogs*. A police detective has to infiltrate himself into a criminal syndicate to erase it from the inside. As he enters, he becomes friend of the boss of the syndicate and sees himself in the trouble of deciding wether to help the police or his new dangerous friend.
—*The Taking of Pelham One Two Three*
This action film occurs on a train which is being kidnapped by criminals named with colors. This idea served Tarantino and he named his characters in Reservoir Dogs the same way.
—*Kiss Me Deadly*
Tarantino, honored the mysterious briefcase that appears in this movie, in his production *Pulp Fiction*.

Violence
What is the first thing you come up with when you think about Quentin Tarantino?

Blood. Guns. Shots. Death. Anything related with excessive violence. Because, although he has good original screenplays, great characters, and great director skills, what stands out most is his tendency to give us scenes filled with free violence and an exaggerated blood shedding. It might seem disgusting, but for him, it is a different way to explain the story. He sees blood and violence as characters of his movies, and tries to personalize them (sometimes in an exaggerated way) to show the public his point of view.

We will count hundred of shots in the different movies. Blood will be spread and the deaths will be the most violent the can be. All movies will have this part of exaggerated violence such as the beheadings in *Kill Bill*, or the headshot inn *Pulp Fiction*. We will also have different weapons used to kill such as katanas, guns, baseball bats, cars and even dogs. So what to violence involves, we will be fully served.

Conclusions

We can conclude that the aspects that make Tarantino so recognizable are the characteristics studied in this project: the diverse camera moves -camera that follows the character, the panoramic approaches, with a car trunk perspective, conversations where the talker is not shown- the director cameos in all the films, the invented brands, the non-lineal plots, the same actors used in different movies, the criminal tendency of the characters, the small talk and the exaggerated use of blood. The feature that stands out is small talk, because all Tarantino's productions base their plot on banal conversations so they seem more natural and quotidian. This study also proves that almost all his movies are connected, not only by characters such as Vincent (*Pulp Fiction*) and Vic Vega (*Reservoir Dogs*), but also by the theory of the Tarantino Universe, where characters from one movie like *Reservoir Dogs* could go to the theatres and watch *Kill Bill*.

It has been shown that Tarantino had lots of influences from the cinema of the past, and majorly from the cinema of the 70s and spaghetti westerns. His movies all have a base on that cinema, and the director wants to make homage to that cinema. Some of his films include scenes that have a resemblance with a previous movie, and sometimes, like in *Inglourious Basterds*, the characters in Tarantino's movie look very much like characters from the movie he was inspired by. He takes an idea from an old movie (like the briefcase in *Kiss Me Deadly)* and transforms it (briefcase of *Pulp* Fiction with a mysterious content) so it fits in the way he wants the movie to be.

All the shots, deaths and weapons used in the movie and counted in the project, together with all the limbs extracted and the bloodiest scenes, demonstrate that free violence is the main mark of the director Quentin Tarantino. He thinks it is necessary to show violence in an explicit way, and none of his productions lack a fountain of blood or a head blown up.

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