

Silent Era

Objective:

You will identify a minimum of five technical elements specific to the Silent Era.

Due Wednesday, 9/23/20

Technical Elements

Closely read the article below, "Innovations in the Silent Era," and identify five technical elements specific to that era. Write your findings in complete sentences as a journal entry. You must use proper grammar, spelling, and sentence structure in your work. You should have one complete sentence for each technical element that you have identified.

Innovations in the Silent Film Era

The Silent Era of cinema was a time of innovation within the industry. Many new devices and techniques were tried and proven, while many others simply did not provide the desired effect and became either novelties or forgotten altogether. The inventions were not the only part of the silent era that were taking great strides. Acting, props, and quality substitutions for sound in silent films were continually being reinvented.

Acting during the Silent Era was not as it is in movies today. A silent actor was usually a pantomime, an actor who uses facial expressions and gestures to tell the story to the audience without the benefit of dialogue. When dialogue was absolutely necessary to carry the story, an inter-title was used. This is a device used only when the picture must have it to keep the story moving along. The screen displays a written card with some dialogue or even onomatopoeia, "SPLAT!" "WHAM!" "BUZZ!." If the hero runs out of a burning building and the fair maiden says to him, "My baby is still in there! She's on the second floor!" viewers need to know this as an audience as he rushes in to save the day and her baby.

Another critical aspect of early film-making was the musical score. The pace of the music portrayed exactly the pace of the action on the screen. Most early musical scores were performed live and only a piano was used to keep the pace of the story going. The music was critical to the flow of the action on screen and greatly enhanced the experience to the movie-goer. Musical score composers are paid handsomely today, and you often see a music video "tie-in" before you ever see the movie.

Cameras of the era were cranked by hand and although most camera operators of the time tried to keep a pace of 16 frames per second (fps) this is relatively impossible to sustain for any prolonged period of time. By watching one of the old Silent Era classics, the viewer can easily tell that the projection speed was not constant. Action was often shown in early silent films through the use of a sequence of still shots that gave the optical illusion of movement.

Finally, lighting was a major part of the silent era. The close-up, long shot and panning were developed through the silent era. The use of lighting techniques added to the mood of a piece that could at times replace the absence of spoken word.

Rubric

Consult the rubric to see how your work will be evaluated:

Subtopic: Technical Elements

SCORING RUBRIC

With these criteria, the lowest possible score is 0 (meets no criteria for evaluation), and the highest is 20 (clearly meets all criteria for evaluation).

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION RATING COMMENTS:

The student identifies 5 technical elements from the provided essay.0-#

The student writes one complete sentence for each of 5 technical elements in a journal entry.0 -#

The student uses proper setting, grammar, capitalization, and sentence structure in the journal entry.0 -#

TOTAL POINTS:/ #20