

Analyse how at least TWO of the following were used to help you understand the main message or idea.

Camera work / Editing / Special effects / Music / Lighting / Acting / Sound effects

Stanley Kubrick's critically acclaimed examination of the American involvement in Vietnam, "Full Metal Jacket", highlights the way in which raw recruits have to, to a degree, lose their own individuality in order to become effective "killing machines", or Marines. Kubrick employs lighting to help show this idea, as well as the acting of the soldiers' characters.

The distinctive first half of the film is set at the Parris Island training facility in the USA. This first act documents from day-one the basic training that the recruits must endure in order to make the grade and join the "brotherhood" that is apparently the U.S. Marines, a very ironic idea that we discover later on in the film is as much a club where the fittest survive, not a community that cares for its "brothers" who struggle.

From the opening shot, Kubrick employs naturalistic lighting in the barracks of the recruits. Strip lighting is visible on the ceilings, but at no stage is it used. Set alongside stark white walls the atmosphere created from the lighting here is a cold, sterile one that offers no warmth or comfort at all. This is perfectly in keeping with Kubrick's message for the first half of his film, that the Marines-in-training have to strip themselves back from their personality, their warmth, their humanity in order to be of use in the army.

To further enhance his idea that individuality needs to be crushed in order to be a soldier, Kubrick employs a drill sergeant to make the recruits' lives hell. Lee Emery plays the ironically-named Gunnery Sergeant Hartman, a shouting and swearing machine whose job it is to completely sap the personality out of his charges. For the first 7 minutes of his on-screen debut, the viewer watches on as Hartman proceeds to hurl an unrelenting barrage of shouted insults and verbal assaults at his trainees. By shouting constantly, and expecting shouted replies, Hartman is already sapping a distinctive personal feature of his recruits – their voices, everyone sounds the same when they shout. Hartman, the only representation of the U.S. Marines during this episode, is a bully, a racist and a completely negative influence in this film; he is a static character who is a catalyst for change and he acts his part perfectly – by the end of the first half of the film he has succeeded in almost completely draining the individuality and humanity from his Marines-to-be, much to their detriment in part two.