Saving private ryan

Saving private Ryan was first released on September 11th 1998 and was directed by Steven Spielberg, a famous director widely known for his other outstanding films that prove for him to be great at his job.

Some of these famous titles include Jaws(1975), E. T(1982), Jurassic Park(1993), Minority Report(2002) and many more. Saving Private Ryan is a war film set in the period of World War II , rather than concentrating on the aspects of heroism and action-adventure this film portrays closely to realism as throughout we witness scenes of an intense magnitude, scenes of death the way it was, actual weaponry used and the setting in Normandy where the war really did take place. The film is brought together strongly by the actors of the film who performed their characters and roles very well. Possibly the main character of the film Captain Miller is played by Tom hanks and plays a very important role in the storyline of the film, leading his ' squadron' on a mission to find the private Ryan and as the film goes on it has much to tell about Captain Miller which keeps the audience interested and focused on the movie.

The role of Private Ryan is played by Matt Damon, he is a soldier whose three brothers have died in combat and as such has been requested by a higher authority to be pulled out from the war and sent back home to his mother. Other main roles include Sergeant Harvath played by Tom Sizemore who we come to understand is close to Captain Miller and is quite loyal to his duty at war. Private Reiben played by Edward Burns whom has some conflict with the others in the film when his feelings anger him and he does not agree with a decision by Captain Miller. Private Jackson played by Barry Pepper, a sharp-shooter with the sniper rifle he is a strong catholic who

believes he serves the will of God and that God is his aid on the battlefield. Lastly Private Upham played by Jeremy Davies who is a late addition to the squad, he accompanies them on their mission for Private Ryan when they require a translator, he is very panicky and clearly not one for combat in the film, more of a technical person. The film achieved five academy awards including best director in 1999.

The techniques used in the film include realism through handheld cameras, an example of this being when they stormed the beaches of Normandy, the camera was shaking about as though handheld and this made us feel as though we were there in the middle of it like another soldier was holding the camera, recording the battling themselves. And battle scenes seemed very realistic too through blood and death occurring at anytime to anybody, at one point in the movie Captain Miller was speaking to another about tactics to get around the oppositions defences when he turned back to the man to see his face concaved gruesomely. Another technique was the film used unsaturated colour which had the effect of making events that were perhaps saddening and disturbing seem more-so colourless, lifeless and cold. The film opens showing an elderly man pacing forwards ahead of a group of people who we immediately imagine to be his family members. We see both American and French flags at this scene symbolizing a peace between the two. The music accompanying this scene is a calm patriotic melody which would make us think more-so that there was a peace now, making the viewer feel calm.

We're then shown that the man was rushing toward a gravesite as we see a breath taking number of graves, rows and columns which we recognize to be

the gravesite of those whom had died in a war, the shear number has the viewer quite stunned with thought. The elderly man reaches a particular grave at which he falls to his knees before, his family are still close behind him and seem to express some concern by calling out to him. The camera at this point is perfectly still from a higher angle view down upon the man and showing his family several feet behind him. The camera just at a still further portrays a calm mood. Then the camera focuses on the elderly man's face and slowly progresses into an extreme close up onto his eyes. His eyes seem to fill with thought and possibly memory and the patriotic background music seems to rise dramatically.

The transition from present to past then takes place and we are brought to a scene of ocean waves crashing up against iron hedgehogs. The sound had gone from calm to violent crashing, this gives an impression of a turn of events and we recognize that we must have been brought into the past by the fact that the man was elderly. Through most of this opening scene we notice there is little to no dialogue at all. This has an effect of enhancing the visual occurrences and background music as they are all there is to concentrate upon.

The image of an endless row of iron hedgehogs signifies a long line of danger. We than have a long-shot of several soldier boats, the camera acts hand-held shaking with the boats upon the surface of the ocean. There is no music but the sound of waves which come across as loud and aggressive accompanied by the sound of the boat's engines, also a coarse and rough sound, so the audience is feeling a bit nervous about what these sounds may

be building up to as they seem far from peace and tranquil. We then see an extreme close up on Captain John Miller's hand which is shaking somewhat.

We then see Captain Miller's face in a close up and the camera begins to alternate to the other soldiers faces one by one. It is steady and smooth, quite close to their faces. Their faces show fear amongst other mixed emotions. We hear soldiers throwing up, most probably from the nerves and their reactions to bombs going off which is stern fear. As the boats reach the shore of the beach their doors are opened and soldiers begin to jump out into the water going under, some being instantly shot and some being killed.

There is no music but only the sound of gunshots, rifles, explosions, battle orders, screaming and shouting. This high mixture of sound effects instantly makes the viewer think ' chaos' accompanied by the camera actions which seems to speed through multiple scenes of soldiers being attacked, we have close ups and both low and high angle shots. The camera at this point becomes very shaky, fully enhancing the ' handheld' effect. This has the effect of making the viewer feel as though they were right there amidst the battle chaos. This further enhances the effect of ' chaos' upon the viewer. An example of one shot being a soldier swimming desperately to reach the shore but being shot through the chest as he reaches the shore, quite disturbing.

This entire chaotic scene is quite a contrast to the previous scenes in which the camera seemed to be steady and calm, the effect of this contrast is shocking the viewer as it seems so sudden and abrupt, that mixed with the shear level of violence. As the camera falls underwater with all of the

infantry that were jumping in we immediately notice how the sound is fogged by the water:- it becomes quieter but the sounds are still there, here we see gunfire bullets piercing through the water and seemingly slowed down but still with enough force to rip through the skin of many soldiers. As a bullet makes contact with an underwater soldier we hear a sort of pressurized splashing noise as a sound effect. As some of the soldiers die the camera loses focus on them and moves onto those who are still alive, this continues awhile showing that when some die in war it still continues, the effect of this is showing the horrific aspect of war that when some die, even then it will go on.

The camera continues to follow the soldiers who remain alive until they reach the shore and rise out of the blood-drenched ocean waves. There are many dead bodies just lying on the beach and some being drifted still on the water's surface, sliding up against the shore. In a sudden, when the camera comes out of the water accompanying the soldiers, everything seems to speed up again and there is a burst of sound effects including gunfire, shouting, explosions, battle orders and ' tingling' sound of bullets as they hit the iron hedgehogs. The soldiers arriving at the beach take cover behind these and we see Captain Miller now, staggering up onto the shore. He first takes refuge behind one of the iron hedgehogs also.

Himself and his squadron are rallied together and they begin to converse amongst themselves about possibilities of what to do next, a soldier or two expressing come panic and concern. Captain Miller however hasn't been paying much attention and at this moment he begins to look around the beach, the sounds disappear almost entirely, similar to the underwater

sound loss but this time it isn't water that is fogging the background sounds it is an effect almost to say that as Captain Miller is looking around the beach; seeing people dying, so much blood and people being shot down all around him, that in that moment the chaos is so much to contemplate at once that all other thoughts and senses (the hearing, sound) occurring around him seem to stop. The sounds are muted and just barely able to be heard, they seem to slow in speed to, any sound effect occurring normally is heard as though being dragged out twice as long in length, explosions and gunfire for example. We see one man walking around aimlessly and is missing an arm, he finds his arm on the ground, picks it up and rushes off in a random direction abruptly. We also see a group caught in an explosion, possibly caused by a grenade.

It would also seem that the effect of having no sound at this point makes us concentrate more fully on what we see, increasing the horror of these visual occurrences. The colour becomes slightly desaturated during this event and camera becomes less jerky, although moving through the images speedily still. These give the effect of showing how life is drained in the moment that these people are dying, the colour being ' drained' the camera being slow, ' drained', all these effects relate to one another in some way. As there is another explosion the sound we can hear, the muffled ' wind-like' sound, begins to get slightly louder and speeds up and it breaks in a sudden and we hear the explosion in full which seems huge as the sound returns to normal. One of the soldiers had been asking Captain Miller a question which he only heard being repeated as the sound returned to normal and camera resumed the handheld effect, beginning once again to shake.

" What the hell do we do now sir? The soldier questioning seems concerned that Captain Miller hadn't been paying attention or giving any indication on what to do as he ' blanked' out for that moment, this is worrying to the audience as we can understand how this soldier must feel not knowing what to do. From here there is more battle chaos, Captain Miller and his infantry make a rush forward the battle ensues. The end of the battle begins with Captain Miller standing on a hill, drinking from a water bottle. There is much contrast here to the previous scenes as before the camera shots were shaky and jittering but now its movement seems slow and steady. This shows a calm in the mood and calm in the overall atmosphere too.

The camera then begins to do a close zoom in on Captain Miller's eyes and as it does the background gunfire becomes muted. We are then taken to an image of the seawater which is tainted red with blood, we immediately know that, from the previous close up on Miller's eyes, we are seeing the red water just as Miller would be, as if being shown by his eyes. The deep red of the water is a total contrast of the surrounding unsaturated colours such as the pale grey sky and whitish-yellow sand which makes this scene more horrific as we consider how in such a calm atmosphere that the grey, white and pale colours shown could be tainted with this deep red of what comes from inside of human beings that in all respect were very likely in our minds to have been innocent young men. These thoughts caused in our minds cause us to think ' absolute terror'. The ocean's water is also notably considerably calmer, from before when it's waves crashing against the beach was much more violent showing another contrast. This simply shows that that the

earlier situation has in fact calmed and that for the time being the violence had stopped.

These contrasts in all have the effect in a way of giving the viewer a better realization that the horror of what is happening is, in fact, there. Now there is a long shot over the beach showing all of the bodies that are just laying motionless, clearly dead, the bird's eye shot of the camera helps us to perceive the amount that are lying there dead, the camera moves over these bodies very slowly giving an effect of us contemplating the amount that must have died; again, the horrific ness of this event. To accompany the scene of the water and the bodies there is a break from the muted gunfire into music, a serene melody which would seem to have the effect of making the viewer more thoughtful about what they are seeing. The camera then begins to maneuver over to the beach, trailing over the bodies, the sound of the ocean against the beach also seems calm and serene, and helps to portray the effect of making the viewer more thoughtful about what they are seeing as mentioned earlier.

The camera stops at one body and does an extreme close up of this soldier's back as it is lying face down in the sand, it's back reads the name " Ryan". We do not know fur sure how or in what way exactly, but we do know that this body will link to the main storyline of the movie in someway. This concludes the battle. ConclusionSteven Spielberg had commented he was looking for realism within the movie. " The last thing I wanted to do in this picture was use war simply as a springboard for action-adventure.

I was looking for realism all the time. " and he certainly achieved it. Through its imagery, characters, sound effects, camera effects and conception of war it certainly has the viewer thinking to themselves throughout " So this must be what it would really be like to be in a war" The film captures realism wonderfully although to achieve this it does seem somewhat horrific and disturbing at times. But in all it is a truly great film.