

Opening sequence to "lord of the flies" essay sample



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The scene opens with a plain, blue screen, we become aware that this is water. All is silent at this point. The camera stays still as what seems to be a man -the captain of a ship, sinks past the camera. The captain seems to be bleeding from his nose. He sinks down out of the camera shot. The camera is still in the same position; all we see is the bubbles of the sinking captain's breath. The only sound is an eerie, non-diegetic, whale like sound in the distance. A boy swims into view; down past the camera in the direction of the captain, he drags the captain back into the shot. The camera then tilts upwards to follow them.

Suddenly, the camera jump cuts to a water level view of lots of boys struggling for their lives. There are many mad screams and desperate cries for help. The dialogue is indistinct but gives the effect of panic. The Boys are literally swimming for their lives, as we can see from this close shot, many boys are unable to swim. There is a contrast between this and the last scene, the first scene was calm and quiet but the second is very hectic and loud.

Another jump cut takes the viewer under the water. Again a mid shot shows more boys struggling to survive. There are sound effects of muffled screaming. The lighting is low-key; this creates the fear that the boys would have felt. Using these effects makes the viewer more involved and part of the action. The camera arcs round, it is as a point of view shot because it seems to be through one of the drowning boys.

A cut to above water again shows us the boys struggle to swim. This water line shot is very like the above water shot that we saw before but this is in a

different location. Again, this may be a point of view shot. I believe this may have been done by the director to trick the viewer into a false sense of security because we see the same shot twice. Then the constant screams of the boys are interrupted by a loud bang! This sound effect is like a gunshot, followed by a hissing. On the screen, we see a black, round, rubber life raft appear. Throughout the past few seconds of film, the camera has stayed in the same position, while water splashes against the lens. The raft is a sign of safety; it is recognition that the boys might survive.

There is a jump cut to " Lord of the Flies" the main title in the centre of the screen silver textured words on a black background. The credits, one role at a time fade in to the centre of the screen, then fade out. This sequence is accompanied by a non-diegetic military drumbeat. This use of sound may indicate that the boys had a strict military like upbringing. It is also a reference to the war, which we later find out about, although this opening has no direct references to war. The music then changes into a flute instrumental.

Once the credits are over the music becomes much more sad and mournful. The camera cuts to an eye level, long shot as an island fades into view. The sky is grey with natural lighting and the non-diegetic sad music sets a dull scene, which makes the viewer wonder what is to come of the island.

With a jump cut of the camera to a position on the island, we see a mid shot of trees and the surrounding landscape. It is probably a crane shot which pans across an opening giving the effect that the island is moving. During this shot, the non-diegetic music is still setting a sad atmosphere. As the

camera pans across the black life raft comes into view and we see boys jumping out.

Opening sequence to " Lord of the flies". 1963-Peter Brook

In this opening, the first thing we notice is that the director has chosen to use black and white still images. The first still image is of an old stone building, which we believe to be a school. The camera zooms in on the photo as the ambient sound of a bell rings throughout. The bell is indication that this is a school. It also indicates order and structure of life because people act upon the indication by the bell.

Now, on a photograph of teachers the camera again zooms in. Silence. The camera cuts to a still image of boys all seated in a classroom, hard at work. This shows a strict order. The camera begins to tilt from above eye level down to the floor. The movement of the camera compensates for lack of movement due to the use of still images. As the camera is moving, there is an ambient sound of a teacher lecturing the class. The camera cuts to another still image of the same class but from the front. The camera moves from a close up on one boy, the camera the zooms out to many boys working at their desks.

The camera moves over the top of a still image of boys in a canteen. Sound effects of talking and general canteen noises become apparent. The camera moves across the photograph then tilts towards the ceiling of the canteen. The movement of the camera gives the effect that it would be a crane shot if the situation was not a still image. We see a jump cut to a landscape, still image of a choir singing. The camera pans along the photograph, we hear

faint, ambient choir voices, singing in the background. The camera stops at the end of the photograph with only one choirboy in shot. The ambient choir voices persist as several credits appear beside the boys head.

A still image of a ball hitting a cricket bat cuts in, followed by an ambient clapping. To inject movement the camera quickly cuts to a still image of cricket spectators sat in chairs the clapping persists. Again, white credits appear over the photograph. A drumbeat begins. The camera cuts to an unidentifiable object as the camera tilts up the image we realise that it is a kind of nuclear weapon of mass destruction. This is Peter Brooks first reference to war. The drumbeat continues.

A jump cut to another still image of warplanes in the sky is another reference to war. Once the camera tilts down the image, we see Big Ben, which the planes are flying over. We hear the sound effect of a bell, which represents Big Ben. As the bell strikes the shot changes and the camera zooms out on an " Evacuation board" where we see children, carrying gas masks. Once the camera has zoomed out, it beginning to zoom in, on a gas mask holder. Now a strong element of war is apparent. Again, we see a still image of planes in the sky as if they are flying. There is a cut to a low shot of more planes, flying in a formation. The non-diegetic drum beat as continued throughout but now becomes more intense. We see a still image, long shot of a plane flying in the sky with clouds behind it. More white credits appear over dark clouds. The dark clouds give a frightening war atmosphere.

A map dissolves in over the image of clouds. The drumbeat continues and becomes vigorous. We see a point of view shot from inside the aeroplane

looking out over the wing. Abruptly it cuts to a mid shot of the whole plane, from the outside. Then suddenly back to the inside, returning to the exterior mid shot, again to inside looking over the wing. This creates lots of activity and confusion, creating movement to succeed the still images. To add to this the drumming has become even more extravagant. The camera cuts to an image of a plane face on. To create a falling effect, the camera is spinning to make the plane look like it is spinning towards the ground. The next still image is of a plane half-submerged in water on the coast of an island. More credits appear over this shot. The final still image that is of a palm tree with the sky behind, on top of this appears more white credits. The palm tree suggests that the island is situated in an exotic location.

Comparison of the two openings

The thing that is noticeable when watching both " Lord of the flies" Media Studies - Happy, Texas (Mark Illsley, 1996)