

Analyze the different techniques used in the openings of sommersby and of mice an...

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Creating a successful film often lies in creating a successful opening. By using different camera angles and lighting styles, as well as music techniques the director can set the scene and alter the mood in any way he wants. Here I am going to analyze the different techniques used in the openings of both films as they progress. Credits *Sommersby* starts with an air of mystery to it. We are shown this perspective by the lighting styles and camera angles that used.

The camera shots show close-ups of firstly a man who we assumed is dead then of another man whose face is shrouded in a shadow of which enables hardly any of his face to be seen at all. This enables us to question his identity and also question the relationship of him and the other man. The music is also suitably grim but is of fairly poor standard, however the music does suggest the time period as the music is slightly patriotic. In the next scene the music fades and we get another close up of the man's face and hands.

The hands are shown as they have importance as it is clearly shown they are covered in blood which when linked with the previous scene allows the viewer to jump to a rough conclusion to what has happened. The music is cut to show us that this is a seriousness of the scene. The close up scene soon fades we are taken to the credits, which are played over scenes of this man traveling through different climates, the variety in the climates shows us that he is traveling of long distances. This also asks us the question was he going and why is he going.

The camera still has not shown us a clear image of this mans face, which still gives us an impression of mystery to the character and also shows us that the character is probably deliberately trying to conceal his identity. The camera also pauses at the point when the man passes what looks like a group of soldiers. This emphasizes there is some important connection between the character we have been shown and these soldiers which helps us as viewers to try and fill important gaps in the profile of this character. In direct contrast 'Of Mice and Men' is played out in a completely different style.

The credits are immediately at the beginning and there are no scenes played underneath it only a blank background. Similar to Somersby however, is the music. Whilst 'Of Mice and Men' music is of a higher standard it sets the scene for the movie. The music is very sad and solemn which can immediately tell us that this film is not going to be a happy film . As the credits continue further we get sound effects that immediately tell us roughly where this scene is set. The noise happens to be of a train so immediately us as viewers are told a) the scene is on a train and b) the characters in the film may be traveling.

The camera pans in showing us light coming through gaps in the carriages, this captures the same dark atmosphere as shown in the opening of Somersby but through a different technique. To add to this gloomy effect the music fades so that only the sound effects can be heard. The director has done this to such an effect that it sort of brings us into the movie and lets us feel the cold, dark, and harsh sounds that anyone would be hearing at that

time. This brings user involvement into the film and is also relevant in the next few seconds in experiencing the thoughts of the characters.

As the credits start to fade the music starts up again and the camera pauses in front of an outline of a figure. The lighting here is used in the same effect as 'Sommersby' where it does not reveal the character but allows us instead to ask questions about the character instead, for instance why is he traveling on this train and why is he lurking in the shadows. And this effect is obviously used in the same context in 'Sommersby' when we see him with the body for the first time. The music then changes dramatically and immediately the credit scene ends and the movie moves on.

This effect of the music changing dramatically also highlights the point that the movie is continuing along a different path as opposed to the music in 'Sommersby' that tends to stay constant throughout the opening. It also gives the effect that this maybe a flash back due to the sudden changes in scene and location. Opening In 'Sommersby' continues on to a new location. The location is obviously vastly different so we can say that the character may have traveled a great distance. The music is still shown as grim and adds tension and emotion to the scene.

The scene focuses on the firstly a close-up of the hand being wrapped in a handkerchief. The angle is displayed as a first person view so as to give us a better perspective of the characters feelings, and the obvious close-up of the wrapping of the handkerchief shows us there is some relevance in the scene. We are then shown a third person shot of him taken the coat of he has been

hidden under, which shows us that firstly he feels ready to reveal himself and secondly that he had a uniform on showing a connection between him and the soldiers.

We are then shown the first full picture of him. The music is now suitably brighter to obviously help lighten the characters mood. We are then taken to his first meeting with another character. The music fades to suggest that this maybe quite an important part of plot development. We are also shown the main character through the other characters eyes to show that at that point the concentration of that character would have been minimal. As the scene carries on the music changes to being much more confident which shows us that the tense atmosphere at the beginning of the scene has faded. Of Mice and Men' once again changes to a different style. The music firstly has become more frantic and the scene first shows a women running. At this point she has no part in the story yet the camera follows her so that we know that it must link to the plot somehow. We are then shown to characters running away from the camera. Immediately this tells that because the woman was running toward the camera they are running away from each other. This type of camera work is not used at all in 'Sommersby' as it tries to capture a different mood.

However as the chase scene ends the same first person view as shown in Sommersby is implemented to give us a clearer impression of the characters thoughts feelings at this time. To conclude it is obvious that both films implement similar styles however to get the correct mood they want they have often altered techniques to suit that scene creating the same sort of

mood but in different ways. This kind of variation adds variety to the film and makes it much more enjoyable to watch.