

How the directors of
'gladiator' and 'saving
private ryan' create
the opening of ...



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In this The film is about a heroic Roman soldier who has lead his men to many victories. However he is captured by the Roman Empire and turned into a slave who has to entertain the public. As an outcome of his training as a fighter he tried to use his skills and strength to fight for his freedom. ' Steven Spielberg' directed ' Saving Private Ryan' in 1998. ' Spielberg' has directed some well-known films such as, ' ET,' ' Munich,' War of the Worlds' and many more.

' Saving Private Ryan' is a film about a general named John Miller, who, like ' Gladiator' leads his men into battle during the Second World War. However this is slighter different to ' Gladiator' because the soldiers don't really know what will happen to them. They are very inexperienced men and are extremely young. The film begins with a re -creation of the D-day battle, a group of soldiers are then told to go on a Mission to save one man Private James Francis Ryan. The beginning of ' Gladiator' starts off with the general, Maximus (Russell Crowe), walking through a cornfield, running his hand through the corn.

The camera angle shows a ring on his left hand, this signifies that he is married. During this scene there is a light sound of children playing. Maximus imagines all of this to prepare him for the battle that lies ahead of him, to reflect on his inner feelings and this is a place of piece and joy for him. ' Ridley Scott' shows that he is filming in the 20th century because wedding rings were not exchanged in 180AD but by showing the ring ' Ridley Scott' manages to put a message over to the audience without having to film ' Maximus' with his wife.

In contrast to this 'Saving Private Ryan' starts with them approaching the beach in boats, The general (John Miller) is again mentally preparing himself for the battle like 'Maximus' in 'Gladiator'. 'Again like 'Gladiator' 'Spielberg' uses a close up of 'John Miller's' hand, however the hand is not as clam and graceful as in 'Gladiator' it is shaking vigorously as he grasps his drinking canteen. This implies that 'Maximus' is a more heroic, experienced, over confident fighter than 'John Miller' who doesn't know what is going to happen when the boats land.

Both films show that 'Maximus' and 'John Miller' are in charge of a group of men but in different ways. The opening scenes of 'Gladiator' show 'Maximus' walking through a tunnel of his soldiers, who individually acknowledge him and show their gratitude and respect. Alternatively in 'Saving Private Ryan' as they are preparing for war in the boats none of the soldiers show appreciation to 'John Miller' as they are all thinking of themselves and show little if any outward sign of respect just fear and trepidation. Dialogue is an important factor in modern day films.

In both films there is little dialogue in the opening scenes, but what is said is very important and is very effective. 'Maximus' uses very little speech in the opening scenes he relies on his actions. He reassures his soldiers with little jokes and comments: "if you find yourself in green fields with the sun on your face, do not be afraid for you are in Elysium and you are already dead!" This shows confidence and courageousness amongst 'Maximus' and is comforting speech towards his men, he is preparing them to die as heroic warriors.

In contrast ' Miller' says very little but does give little orders instead of words of comfort: " The rallying point is anywhere from here. " This speech is not very comforting and entails fear amongst ' John Miler. ' In comparison Maximus does use some speech that is commanding, " On my command unleash hell. " ' Miller' tells his troops to, " Move fast and clear those murder holes, ill see you on the beach. " The similarity of the speech between both ' Maximus' and ' Miller' is that they both have short but commanding words and people around listen.

Sound FX plays a major part in films, but in both ' Gladiator' and ' Saving Private Ryan' there is little of it because there is much action. However the sound that is used it very effective and well used. For example, at the beginning of ' Gladiator' when ' Maximus' is walking through the cornfields ' Ridley Scott' uses sound effects such as children playing in the back ground and laughing, this makes the audience believe that he has children and he is leaving them for battle, this shows that ' Maximus does have feelings and emotions. In ' Saving Private Ryan' there are lots of sound effects in this film but at the beginning of the film ' Private Ryan' is looking at ' Millers grave' as an elderly man reflecting on the war. ' Spielberg' uses the sound effect of waves crashing onto the beach followed by the sound of gunshots. This gives the impression of what the atmosphere was like. The music in a film is one of the most important features, it adds depth, emotion, feeling it also shows how the character at is feeling.

The beginning of ' Gladiator' opens up with a crying melody; this reflects the emotion as a flash back or dream of homeland - a safe place. It is

mysterious, sad and tragic music. The beat picks up later to create tension
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and changes to a quickened pace as the battle prep. On the other hand, the opening music to 'Saving Private Ryan' is when 'Private Ryan' is visiting 'Millers' grave, the music at this point is sad, slow, and the sound of the trumpets creates the feeling of loss. As 'Private Ryan' cries the music fades and goes into the next scene.

Both films show the same type of camera views at the opening. Although as the film progresses 'Ridley Scott' chose to focus mainly on 'Maximus' whereas 'Spielberg' has tried to take into account all of the characters and to give a different view of what people thought. In 'Gladiator' 'Ridley Scott' shows an extreme close up of his hand and blinks the body, this could be to show his calmness, confidence or just that he has feelings and is married. Furthermore in 'Saving Private Ryan' the opening scene is also an extreme close up of the American flag blowing in the wind.

Visual effects are used all the time in both of the films especially in 'Saving Private Ryan' is an excellent example of how visual effects can be used in the scenes, when all the soldiers are coming out of the boats and they go under the water, getting shot, 'Spielberg' manages to make you feel as if you are a soldier and you are at war. In 'Gladiator' the visual effects are used when 'Maximus' moves his hand through corn, the hand is moving in real time but the corn is moving in slow motion.

In conclusion I found that both directors involved the audience and created great films. I personally believe that in the opening scenes of 'Gladiator' were not as horrific as 'Saving Private Ryan' and therefore may have lacked in gaining the interest of all the audience. I think 'Spielberg' created more

empathy by using more visual effects and sound effects; also it was more horrific in that they showed you how people actually died in the WW2 and how people were so helpless.

References:

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