

Compare the opening of zeffirelli and baz luhrman



Baz Luhrmann and Zeffirelli both interpret the play differently, as they both had different target audiences. Baz Luhrmann made a modern version to appeal to teenagers. He wanted to get them interested in Shakespeare, and create a different opinion of Shakespeare. Whereas, Zeffirelli aimed to capture a slightly wider audience. He aimed to recreate the time in which Shakespeare intended the play to be set. He would make the date apparent through set designs and costumes. Baz Luhrmann's version was more modern; for example he used guns instead of swords, in the fight scene, in order to attract and capture his audience.

However he kept the original script, so he didn't detract from the actual play and create a completely different film. He used cars and petrol stations, as apposed to a town with market stalls. This helped to make the action faster and more upbeat. As Baz used guns instead of swords, the word sword was in scripted on the gun, to make it easier to understand, with the original text. On the other hand, Zeffirelli wanted to keep as close to the time of Shakespeare, as possible. He set it in a town centre, with market stalls around.

Zeffirelli wanted to get across the clear division of the families. You were either a Montague or a Capulet, there was no in between, I think this shows how damaging and serious the violence was. When the bell was rung in the town, it displayed the clear involvement of the whole town,, it also shows the rivalry and hatred between the families, when they raced out with swords, when the brawl broke out. In Baz Luhrmann's version the prologue was repeated in different formats. In the first format of the prologue, there was a blank screen, at the beginning, which built up the suspense.

Then a few seconds later, a television screen, with a news reporter, zooms in. The reporter is reporting the brawl as the latest piece of news. There is an image of a broken ring, which symbolises a relationship with a bad ending. The second format of the prologue is from a birds eye view, over the town. There is an image of a person lying dead on a mattress. This signifies the seriousness of the brawls and it shows that the families will go to any lengths to hurt the other family. Also there were images of fire, police and ambulances. This gives the impression of a corrupt society with no order.

There is a large image of two buildings, with the names Montague and Capulet, clearly on the top of them. In the middle of the two buildings there is a statue of Jesus, this image signifies the direct competition between the two families. I think it also represents judgment and that at heart; both families want the same things. The last format of the prologue, text was flying across the screen. It was flashy and bold, which made it eye catching and easy to read. There was then still close ups of the main characters, with their character name beside it.

This made it easy to follow and clear who was who. Baz Luhrmann used bright colours for costumes and lively, fast, exciting music, which helped get the audiences' attention. Whereas Baz Luhrmann has used loud, fast music, Zeffirelli has used the complete opposite. In Zeffirelli's prologue he has used calm, peaceful music and he has used woodwind instruments, to create renaissance- style music. There is a voice over speaking the prologue. Like Baz Luhrmann, Zeffirelli has used bright colours. There is an opening image of the market, which sets the scene.

It gives the impression of a town caught up in and gripped by hatred and rivalry. There is an angle shot of a Capulet's legs and their costumes, this straight away emphasises the period. In Baz Luhrmann's fight scene, there is a sign, in the petrol garage saying 'Add more fuel to your fire,' this has a double meaning. There is a close up of the heel grinding the cigarette, shows the rivalry and hatred. Also the close up of Tybalt's eyes show the hatred he has and his anger, whilst at the same time displaying his pleasure in angering the Capulet family.

This also creates suspense. The sound of gunshots and helicopters, indicate that someone has been hurt. Zeffirelli's fight scene is set in the town centre. When an 'onlooker' says 'Look at them', it gets the audience to focus on the rivalry, objectively, rather than being drawn in. the close ups of expressions, emphasise the hatred and disgust in each other. When they trip up an old man from the other family, it shows the cruelty of the brawls. Before Tybalt enters, there is no music, in order to show his importance. The close up of his eyes also shows his confidence.

When the two sides are running into town from their different sides, it shows the clear divide of the two families. At the end of the brawl, when the prince enters, there is a low angle shot of him, to show his status. There is then a long shot of the big crowd to show the extent of the violence. In conclusion, they are both effective and successful in appealing to their target audiences. I think that Baz Luhrmann appealed to his teenage audience well, and I think he achieved his goal, as he made it fast and it was action packed. It was exciting and upbeat, in order to attract and grip his teenage audience.

I think it gets teenagers to rethink their impressions about Shakespeare and start to understand more about his plays. However I think it differs from what Shakespeare intended and possibly relates a different message about Shakespeare (which may be a good thing however, it makes him seem like something he is not and Baz Luhrmann can't make a new and more exciting version of all Shakespeare's plays!) I think Zeffireli was very successful in recreating the period of Shakespeare, and he portrayed the divide within the town very well.

However I think that maybe Zeffirelli's version was a little too laid back and 'soft', as I think that Shakespeare would have intended a little more violence and a stronger sense of hatred between the two families, also I think Zeffirelli didn't really show the competition and enjoyment that the young rivals got from winding each other up and starting brawls, too well. However, I do think that both Baz Luhrmann and Zeffireli were successful in capturing the target audience, in the first scenes, and directing their adaptations of Romeo and Juliet.