

Analysis of directing in the final scene in ridley scott's movie gladiator

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In the final scene of “Gladiator”, we get the whole story explained to us. There is a battle scene where the soldier defeats the emperor, but is also injured and dies. A number of images from the opening sequence and from the rest of the film reoccur at the end. The first image that we see is a field of barley. It is in every way the same as the first and the second time we saw it throughout the movie, although instead of the sepia colours that was first used, now, very cold grey and blue colours are used. This effect has been used so that we recognise the image. This image has been shown to us before as a kind of memory or premonition but now the image appears with blue tones.

The blue tones tend to suggest the afterlife, that finally the soldier has been reunited with his family and is now where he belongs. Next comes the image of the gate that first appears when the soldier was being carried across the desert floor. This image is also painted in the blue tones. Whilst this series of images is being played, the theme tune from the beginning starts to play. This helps to give the audience a link back to the beginning of the film, using a sound bridge, so that the images that was once unfamiliar and unexplained are finally linked in a series that explains their meaning. This is very effective as it brings the whole movie together at a single point. Next a very curious image is shown to us. There is a close-up of the soldier’s head apparently floating over the stadium floor. This is curious as we know the body is still lying on the floor so the image can’t be “real”. It is strange still when this image is painted in “real time” colours. This leads us to ask more questions. What could the floating head represent?

Why had the director decided to leave his mark on the picture with “real time” colours? I believe that the floating body is a representation of the soldier’s spirit. He had dreamt in moments throughout the film to feel, to see, and to love his wife and child again. But smartly put together this wasn’t a new sight and the first time we had seen this, when the soldier was put into slavery, he was lugged across the never-ending sandy desert. The camera angle on these two shots was carefully and conveniently the same, instead of the soldier journeying his way through slavery and hardship he is now traveling towards the afterlife.