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Movie Comparison

The film “Gladiator” is a historical drama film that was written by David Franzoni William Nicholson and John Logan. On 5th May 2000, the director Ridley Scott unveiled their R-rated film in theaters worldwide. (*Gladiator (2000) - IMDb*). Owing to the exceptional performance of the leading cast, along with the depiction of the Roman Era through various cinematographic skills, the film won five Oscars. On the other hand, “Glory” is a film written by Kevin Jarre. It is an American war film that was directed by Edward Zwick.(*Glory (1989) - IMDb*). The film depicts the Civil war and the contribution of African-American soldiers, along with the discrimination and issues they faced. Although, both films are well-rendered and as emotive war drama in which cinematography is combined with Ridley and Edward’s intimate styles that evoke immediacy along with fear in the audience. However, both films have a few differences as well.

While discussing Ridley Scott’s Gladiator, it is a marvelous accomplishment of the director in recreating both the golden age of “The great Roman Empire” and unexplainable brutality with which the state conducted its business. The film starts with the paintings of two gladiators that are locked in mortal combat, with the sunlight streaming into the battlefield along with a vast crowd baying for blood (Albu 185). It is not hidden after watching the painting that what appealed to the director to make the movie, the painting portrays an advanced society with rich culture, yet underpinned by the immense cruelty and violence. In the opening battle scene, a deluge of arrows along with exploding fireballs and chaos of the melee, the director puts the audience in a state of shock. In this battle sequence, the star general of the Roman army named Maximus Decimus Meridius, who is betrayed by the emperor of the time named Commodus, is forced to become a gladiator. To take revenge for the murder of his child and wife, against the emperor, he plots a plan that ultimately, makes him a hero of the people. He confronts his nemesis on the battlefield of the Colosseum. The main reason for the conflict between Maximus and Commodus is because Commodus’s father wished Maximus to succeed him, as according to him, only he was fit to rule the Empire (Barker 171). However, after listening to his father’s wish, Commodus murders his father and then announces himself the new emperor. After announcing himself as an Emperor he murders Maximus's wife and child while selling him to the gladiators. After training, Maximus returns to Rome intending to challenge the emperor and make his place in the heart of people. After coming to Rome, Maximus starts fighting local champions to make his way to the Emperor. On the other hand, Commodus is unable to take his place in the heart of the people. Due to this, he decides to challenge Maximus as according to his perception, if he can win a fight from Maximus, he can prove himself the rightful emperor. He also tries to injure Maximus before the fight, yet Maximus tries his best to win the fight and take revenge from Commodus.

In the movie, the character Nielson Lucilla is confusing, as she was allies with her brother and wanted to show her support, yet emotionally she is pulled towards Maximus with whom she shared a history of romantic courtship with. Another character is Reed who also emerged as one of the most interesting figures as his journey from ex-gladiator to a slave is worth to watch. However, the character Crowe, cannot be neglected as he portrays a dominating and decisive man of action who never bowe-down in front of anyone. Although, the story is powerful yet the sets created by Arthur Max adds elements of reality in the film. Although, the CGI shots of Maximus afterlife are contemporary than the old Rome and ancient world, however, the battlefield along with the ancient weapons grabs the audience's attention. While discussing the music, Hans Zimmer catches the menacing majesty of the brutal Empire. Also, the stunt work that is shown in the film is thrilling and captivating. Particularly, the part where Maximus fights with the retired champion in the battlefield with crowd roaring makes the audience wonder who will win the fight. The film, in short, can be explained as a battle between good vs evil and as in almost every typical Hollywood movie the good always wins, in this movie as well the good wins.

While comparing the film Gladiator with the film Glory, it is clear that both films contain some action and fighting scenes that grasp the audience's attention. However, the film Glory is unique in the sense that it highlights the contribution of Black soldiers who are ignored constantly by historians. The films open with a brief introduction of the Civil War that is considered as the bloodiest battles of all time. The film revolves around the story of 54th Massachusetts Infantry that is the first black regiment (Stoddard 27). The contributions of Black soldiers who were slaves and freeman makes the film worth watching as without this concept the movie can be categorized as a sentimental conflict between good and evil like the film Gladiator in which Maximus and Commodus fight to regain power.

In the opening scene, Shaw finds himself injured badly because of the fight. However, after returning home he finds that the government is planning to form a regiment comprising of black people only. When offered the command Shaw immediately accepts the offer while convincing other friends to join the regiment. The most interesting part of the film was the sets that make a film look authentic and operatic. However, the film liberal-mindedness is a bit overbearing as the characters are defined as a noble black man, angry black man, and empathetic captain rather than depicting them as common people with conflicting motivations. The first two hours of the film depicts the training of the soldiers and how they combat racism.

The Irish sergeant-major is responsible for training the black regiment. Although, the sergeant insists that he is being strict on them because he wants them to succeed and not because he is racist but his attitude is not convincing enough. At first, the soldiers perform multiple menial tasks such as burning an unprotected town but then Shaw convinces the army to utilize Massachusetts 54th in combat. Although, the lead character was Shaw and the film can easily become one-sided but instead of presenting only Shaw’s views Zwick successfully presents five distinct points of view (Stoddard 27). It is obvious that the main movie is solely based on racial inequality yet the achievements of the black soldiers are also shown successfully. The film also aids in bursting the myth that black people are treated equally especially in the North. Although, it is undeniably true that slavery was abolished yet the racism flourished continuously. There are plenty of instances in the film that shows how black people are discriminated against. For instance, in the film, White Union soldiers believe that Shaw and his army are incapable of performing well on the battlefield rather they are good at performing menial tasks. Due to racism, Shaw’s men are working on a lesser salary than the White soldiers.

For a motion picture that is made on a relatively modest budget Glory can be considered as a great film. Specifically, discussing technical aspects of the film can be considered as a masterpiece as the weapons used in the battlefield and the destruction due to war makes the audience familiar with cruelty and, violence that occurs during wars. Although, the sets used in the film Gladiator are also very realistic yet there are many instances in the film that contradict the ancient Roman time. In contrast, the film, Glory highlights the time of War by not only sets but the costumes that the army men are wearing in the film especially the shoes that soldiers are shown wearing (Stoddard 27). This makes the film look more realistic as the audience can emotionally attach themselves with issues such as racial inequality and pay gaps.

In the film glory, the theme of brotherhood is shown when Shaw’s team members gather to sing songs and pray before the assault on Fort Wagner. In the film Gladiator as well the theme of brotherhood is shown when Gladiators train Maximus so that he can take revenge from Emperor Commodus. Also, like Gladiators, the actors in the film Glory played their characters very well. Particularly the actor Denzel Washington, who brings anguish to the Trip, a man who gets put down constantly for telling truth. Like Gladiator, the film Glory is also based on good vs evil concept however one important message that is highlighted in the film is that heroism is uninfluenced by color. The film has a similar ending like that of a gladiator as in both the films it is shown that heroism is the quality that lies within an individual as is not associated with the status or ethnicity (Dalby 439).

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