

Part 4, Submarine Case Study: Aesthetics

Task 1: Key Image analysis



Fair dealing © Submarine, Film4 Productions

What is the significance of the opening shot?
 What does the mise-en-scene tell us about Oliver? Consider who/what Oliver has 'chosen' to put on his wall. Consider the colours and what they signify.



Fair dealing © Submarine, Film4 Productions

What is the significance of the closing shot?
 What is Ayoade's message here? Again think about the changes in location and colour pallet.

Task 2: 2 weeks of lovemaking, (00:23:42 – 00:26:37) a scene analysis.

What is Ayoade trying to achieve in this scene? How do the aesthetic choices create meaning?

Read the article attached to help you explore this idea:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/submarine-is-director-richard-ayoades-coming-of-age/2011/06/07/AGvFYkNH_story.html?utm_term=.95b186cdd960

“The idea was that there were two strands,” Ayoade explains, “an ‘internal’ score, a Mahler-esque kind of romantic view” that uses old-Hollywood strings to convey the drama in Oliver’s head. Turner’s pop songs, on the other hand, “exist physically in the world” on a mix tape the hero’s father makes for him.

Ayoade emphasized these fourth-wall-breaking moments. “There are [places] in the book where he’ll say, ‘I imagine Big Band music playing at this moment’; things that suggested that kind of self-consciousness. I was trying to keep all those references filmic rather than use some of the literary ones that existed in the book.

“The idea is that the film is somewhat directed by him,” Ayoade continues. Oliver thinks of himself “in a tradition of protagonists and, therefore, would view himself filmically.”

- Fireworks are a recurring motif in the film and appear at moments of passion and confusion. What do you think they symbolise?
- The isolated and abandoned locations are a juxtaposing mixture of natural and man-made locations, the beach (the same place as the final scene), the river, the fairground. What do these places suggest about Oliver? Jordana and their relationship?
- ‘The super 8 footage of memory’, In this montage within a montage we have a glimpse of how Oliver sees himself, as the ‘hero’ of his own film, the hipster filter style implies that this is a ‘home movie’ but who is behind the camera filming? The Characters look at the camera, breaking 4th Wall. How are the audience positioned?
- What significant colours are used in the scene? When and why? why fade to blue and seagull sound effect to exit the scene?
- The cinematography has near-constant movement and slow motion to create a dreamlike effect. Why?
- This scene is a music video style montage, from a tape given to Oliver from his father, this track is from Arctic Monkeys. Why was this song selected?

Task 3: Character and colour.

Yellow, blue and red are the 3 distinctive colours repeated throughout the film, they are even on the poster.

What colours are used in the Mise-en-scene (costume, location, props) with which characters and why?

This article might help you formulate your ideas:

<http://berlinfilmjournal.com/2014/05/7-features-in-the-films-of-richard-ayoade/>

“Colour palette

The colour seems to be the separate element of director’s works. Dramatic comedy or thriller, Ayoade somehow manages to leave something unchanged: cold shades (for the London weather) and blue colour (idealism, fortitude and dreams). *The Double* skilfully uses “Dostoevsky’s yellow” (the colour of psychological destruction, instability); while in *Submarine* youthful rebellious spirit is embodied by Jordana’s red coat and romance by the purple sunset.”

Task 4: Influences and inspiration:

Richard Ayoade has constructed a distinctive aesthetic that draws inspiration from Wes Anderson’s ‘Indie’ style.

- What similarities can you identify from these images?

https://www.rexfeatures.com/search/?kw=wes+anderson&js-site-search_submit=Go&order=newest&iso=GBR&lkw=submarine+poster&viah=Y&stk=N&sft=&timer=N&requester=&iprs=f

- Watch the following scenes from Wes Anderson’s *Rushmore*. What are the similarities and differences?
 - The Payback scene: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sL-kvgOGmzc>
 - The Yearbook scene: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKTzseniZzs>
 - The Gentleman scene: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_jWsEIEpn4

Wider reading regarding Ayoade’s influences:

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2011/mar/12/richard-ayoade-submarine-antiheroes>

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2011/mar/21/submarine-richard-ayoade-teenage>

<http://www.indiewire.com/2011/01/sundance-11-submarine-director-richard-ayoade-responds-to-wes-anderson-comparisons-120683/>

Task 5: Exam practice.

Component 1, Section C

- (a) Identify one example of lighting used in your film. (1)
- (b) Briefly outline what this example of lighting typically suggests. (4)
- (c) Briefly explore how your example of lighting is used in one sequence. (5)
- (d) Explore how cinematography and lighting help to create the film's 'look'. (15)

Refer to at least one sequence in your answer.

In your answer you should refer to:

- Camera shots and movement
- Framing including lighting
- Relevant aspects of mise-en-scene

Component 1, Section C

- (a) Identify one example of lighting used in your film (1)

High Key back lighting

- (b) Briefly outline what this example of lighting typically suggests. (4)

The halo effect is created with strong high key back lighting, and suggests angelic innocence.

- (c) Briefly explore how your example of lighting is used in one sequence. (5)

In the '2 weeks of lovemaking' montage Jordana and Oliver run through various locations that juxtapose each other, some are natural locations, some industrial, but they both have the constant of the 'Halo Effect' created by high key back lighting, this flare effect creates an angelic glow suggesting their love is innocent and pure.

- (d) Explore how cinematography and lighting help to create the film's 'look'. (15)

Refer to at least one sequence in your answer

In your answer you should refer to:

- Camera shots and movement
- Framing including lighting
- Relevant aspects of mise-en-scene

Ayoade creates a dreamlike world for his characters to inhabit, this is evident in the '2 weeks of lovemaking' montage where Ayoade uses warm filters to create an 80's home movie look, like old super 8 footage. The audience are reminded of the innocence and promise of first love but the use of 'Halo effect' lighting but this dreamlike bubble that the audience are

invited into can also distance the audience the characters somewhat as it appears so fantastical, in combination with Oliver's Voice Over/ Internal diegetic where he proudly states that they 'bully the weak' makes this scene a bittersweet reflection on adolescence and first love. In this scene we have lingering close ups of Jordana suggesting a romantic attachment and deep connection. But I think that this scene is through Oliver's 'Super 8 memory' so it is his perspective of the moment and her romantic attachment may not be as strong as implied with the intimate close ups.

The audience are challenged further when Oliver breaks the 4th wall and looks at us, creating an intimate and challenging relationship, I do not think he is a 'likeable' character, and yet like Jordana we 'forgive' him.

The look of the film relies on a restricted colour pallet of yellow red and blue, Oliver's mother, Jill , wears 'buttoned up' pale yellows, beiges and creams, so she appears 'washed out' and ghostlike. Sally Hawkins' performance is that of a fragile awkward woman disappointed and frustrated with her life. The colours surround the mise-en-scene of locations we associate with her, like the house. Oliver is surrounded with Blue, his duffel coat and room primarily demonstrate this association, blue suggests his idealism but also could imply coldness towards his character. Jordana's character has a red motif in her character design, this connotes her rebellious spirit. In the final shot we see Oliver and Jordana in silhouette against a pale purple sunset, which is a combination of all these colours, implying that the characters have matured somewhat.