

Evaluative Analysis – Ben Gaunt

The complete narrative of the sequence I created is intended to be a depiction of the protagonist's alienation and social deprivation, taking a British social realism approach with the use of expressionistic elements to create emotion.

My protagonist is a Kid representing the disaffected youth, named Miles, who lives with his single father. His father is an abusive alcoholic, distraught ever since the death of Miles' mum. With Miles having no mum and a broken dad (who is struggling with addiction and working through emotional trauma), his main passion is skating, which he puts all his focus into. This causes miles to start failing school and his dad finds out about this, causing him to abuse miles. My 3.5-minute sequence sees Miles come home, face another bout of abuse from his father and breaks down. During this sequence It is revealed that Miles' mum is no longer with him, through death or leaving the family. This adds character development and explains the decline in his mental health. Miles then sneaks out the house and ends up getting run over. The sequence ends here at a blackout and the spectator is left wondering if Miles survived or not. The narrative would continue after this with Miles surviving and the police end up finding out about his dad who gets sent to prison and Miles goes into foster care.

The colour grading of the sequence uses a bleak, blue colour tone to shed the world in a colourless and dull version of reality to amplify the effect of key issues such as loss and abuse through the eyes of Miles who is struggling with this. I decided to use artificial lighting instead of natural lighting (the typical lighting effect using in British social realism) to gain the emotive effect of the sequence.

The sequence is in the style of British social realism, mostly through the narrative, whereas my filming style is more divergent from this. An inspiration I used was Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* (1996). Boyle diverts away from some traditional aspects of social realism by using expressionism for the emotional impact. Using realism Danny Boyle used shots such as long takes and long shots. He also includes social themes such as the underrepresented working class and the mood of the 90s represented through hedonism in the movie. He also focuses on keeping the dialogue realistic for the location using Scottish vernacular. Expressionistic elements incorporated by Danny Boyle include his use of artificial lighting to invoke more emotion to the spectator. He also drops the traditional elements of realism when creating his fantastical sequences, such as Renton overdosing and sinking into the carpet, also the famous toilet sequence. The stylised mise-en-scene conveys the heightened sense of the characters.

Some examples of this inspiration shown through the sequence:

Long shot to establish setting.



Low level shots of Charles drunk and Renton overdose. Taking inspiration from a drug addict overdosing, I portray the dad in the same way by showing the alcoholic being too drunk.



I was also inspired by the British social realist short film *Wasp* (2003) by Andrew Arnold, incorporating a variety of wide close ups in my movie to demonstrate the emotions of the characters through their facial expressions rather than use of voice, for example, the close ups on Miles's and his dad's face and using close ups on some important parts of mise-en-scene such as the alcohol to highlight its significance. The use of a handheld camera in this inspired me to use this cinema verite technique, creating a sense of verisimilitude and establishes the social realist credentials of the film.



The sequence has a familiar trope of an abusive father in films. Examples of these include *The Return* (2003), *Pellet* (2000), *Honey Boy* (2019), *Miss Violence* (2013), *When We Leave* (2010)

The theme of abuse from brother (Ian) in *mid90s* (2018) by Jonah Hill, is shown through my protagonist's father.



Mid 90s was an important inspiration at the beginning of my creative process when creating a narrative. The original narrative contained a skating montage, Miles' shoplifting and then getting arrested in the sequence. However, the ending of both narratives is the same with the dad getting arrested and Miles going into foster care. It is heavily based around the culture of skating, the film combines the beauty of the sport with the dark consequences of the hedonism of the youth. It was important to me to keep some aspects of this in my film, which I represented through the long take of Miles skating away and the mise-en-scene of the skateboard, with Miles carrying it with him almost everywhere to highlight its importance to him.



Stevie having breakdowns, inspired me when making Miles' breakdown scene. I Filmed from high angle to imply how miles is vulnerable and weak and instructed my actor to act sad and angry at the same time as if he is struggling to contain his feelings, showed through the extreme close ups on his facial expressions.



Mid 90's also uses a key theme of alienated youth which can be seen in the sequence with Miles being shown as isolated. The film *DONNIE DARKO* (2001) also inspired me using this theme.

I used a lot of obtuse and strange angles such as Low-level shots, inspired by Danny Boyle. These are an example of the realistic elements in the sequence, and I used low level shots to display a lot of the important mise-en-scene. The mise-en-scene of the alcohol and rubbish lying around the room is used to imply that of an alcoholic is similar to Boyle's depiction of used needles and drug paraphernalia used in *Trainspotting* to depict the drug addicts, connoting a life sunk low. The overall mise-en-scene of the front room makes the room look empty and minimalistic, like Tommy's flat in *Trainspotting*. I based the sequence in the suburbs in a house that shows off a deprived environment from the inside using mise-en-scene. This was to show how my protagonist is living a very disordered life of a working-class citizen, just like the characters of *Trainspotting*.



The clothes worn by my characters in the sequence are ordinary clothes, such as how the characters in *Trainspotting* wear ordinary clothes. This is to make the characters

more relatable to the spectator. I used a failed essay to show how Miles' life is getting negatively impacted by the social issues around him and how he is presented as a disaffected youth.

The cinematography in the sequence creates meaning. Whilst a lot of the shots divert away from realism, I did take some aspects of it, such as long shots and long takes which enable the spectator to identify with the events on screen. Other realism attributes I used in the sequence was the use of a handheld camera to make the scenes seem more realistic for the spectator, as if they are a part of the sequence. A key scene I used a handheld shaky camera with is at the end of the sequence where the pedestrian is running to attempt to save the kid from the oncoming car. This is to add to the energy of the scene and for the spectator to feel as if they are also running to help the already hurt enough kid. This is like the effect created when the handheld camera was used in the similarly high energy opening scene of *Trainspotting*.

The soundtrack I used in the opening of the sequence was the instrumental version of 'curls' by Madvillain, Madlib and MF doom. It starts the sequence off with high energy straight away to absorb the spectator and create a happier mood, ready to be contrasted with the opposite mood created later on. I also used the instrumental version of the song 'My kind of Woman' by Macdemarco. This contrapuntal sound creates a happier and lighter mood contrasted with the darker atmosphere of the rest of the sequence. I wrote a rough script for my characters, however most of my dialogue was improvised with a prompt. This use of improvised language is an example of realism.

I used continuity editing using styles such as shot reverse shot and j cuts to make the sequence flow better. An example of continuity editing is shown using match on action where Miles punches his bed, and his punch continues through into the next shot in the sequence.



The ending of this sequence is designed to be an unexpected shock to the spectator. It utilises a range of effects, such as quick cuts from different shots such as close ups and medium shots to add energy to the scene. The quick cuts, gradually increasing in speed to increase tension. A blackout is used to signify that Miles has been hit with a car, stopping the music as it happens to make it more impactful. I also included a quick sound effect of a car screeching to make this more recognisable, as well as a quick white flash with hints of red to connote blood and pain. After the impact, I made the song continue from where it left off but more muffled and with a faint sound effect of sirens wailing in the distance to foreshadow an ambulance coming, the effect created from this is to continue showing the world from Miles' point of

view and how the sound of the song is mirroring Miles' pain. I then use another blackout with the music continuing and included a voice over of the pedestrian calling emergency services, followed by the faint sound of sirens which slowly fade out leaving nothing but the music, symbolising how Miles is fading with the spectator not knowing whether it's either into unconsciousness or death. If I were to make the longer feature film, as a simple explanation, Miles would have just survived after being sent to intensive care, the police would find out about his father and arrest him, then Miles would be sent to a foster family, ending the film with a positive narrative resolution. This effect I wanted to create was successful as some spectators I presented this scene to either said they experienced a lot of emotion at the end or cried.

If I had a chance to make this sequence again or make the sequence slightly longer, I would add in the skating montage which would have taken a lot of inspiration from the shots used in *mid 90's*. This would reflect more of the culture of skating in the sequence and how it can be used as a means of escape from everything going on in Mile's life. I also had a limitation of technology. I hope that in any future projects I create, I will have more professional control over lighting with access to a wider range of lighting tools in order to create more of the effect I envisioned. The only microphone I could use was the one on the camera meaning that some shots may be louder or quieter than I wanted them to be, as well as some background noises being incorporated into the audio that I didn't want. I also didn't have an extremely high-quality camera or access to equipment such as drones which limited some of the shots I wanted to create. In the scene where Miles gets abused by the father, I signified this through a quick blackout to represent time passing. I used this rather than the shots I filmed of the abuse because it did not have as much visual impact as I expected it to have and disrupted the flow of the film.