

1A: What aspect of the sequence stood out to you? Are there any formal/stylistic features that are pronounced in the sequence?

We found the lighting and music to be particularly distinct aspects of the sequence, overbearingly contributing to the innate nature of horror films. Lighting emphasizes the shot's nature—one filled with shock and suspense. The elements of hard lighting and low-key lighting are representative of a darker undertone, creating sharp shadows that evoke feelings of vulgarity and violence. With these lighting choices, only a few of the subjects are being highlighted, directing the focus to the main character, Ryosuke, while everything surrounding him is essentially pitch black. By creating uncertainty with the audience about the surroundings, the darker patches of the screen actually draw attention. We find ourselves seeking a jump scare or a horrific figure coming out of the darkness.

The exhibit dramatic sound is certainly excessive, but builds suspense and surprises the viewer, presenting us with elements consistent with repulsion and thrill. At the beginning of the sequence, we find Ryosuke on a phone call with the opposing end saying, "Help," in an ominous tone. The sound of the voice on the other line was overwhelmingly spatial, which for us, created a feeling of thrill and foreshadowed horror-filled following scenes. Later, we find ominous opera music dominating the scene in the "forbidden room." We found it important that the non-diegetic sound is very exaggerated.

1B: How do these features/aspects affect your experience of the sequence and the mood of the scene?

The lighting of the sequence directly influences the experience of the viewer by creating a mood of suspense. Lighting focuses the viewer's attention on the more important aspects of the scene while the shadows work to make the sequence more ominous. By keeping a majority of the screen shrouded in darkness, the filmmakers work to construct building suspense for the viewer, attempting to shock and potentially frighten the viewer. The darkness creates this sense of suspense for the viewer, as they do not know what lurks in the shadows. An example of this is seen when the main character, Ryosuke, walks back into the dark room after exiting to find his friend Taguchi standing in the corner. However, this effect can also backfire. The audience knows that this is a horror movie, so they would expect something to happen in the dark, because that is how most horror movies operate. The exaggerated ominous opera music that we find in later scenes of the sequence is typical of other horror films, in that it evokes the cinema of attraction, but more specifically, a cinema of repulsion.

The setting of the sequence also contributes to the overall mood and experience. The sequence changes locations a couple of times, but each location looks somewhat similar. When

the main character discovers the sign informing him of the forbidden room, the setting is absent of bright colors. The final setting in the forbidden room has concrete walls, focusing the viewer's attention on the red markings that cover one of the walls.

2: How does the sequence portray the main character and his actions? What do you learn about the character?

The main character is constantly in the focus of the frame, centered in the camera or lit up in the middle of a black backdrop, and the multiple close-ups of his facial expressions allow the viewers to take a glimpse into his developing insanity throughout the sequence. His movements are panicked and rushed, made very obvious as he scrambles to unplug his computer after receiving the message saying "Help me". He also is portrayed as acting on impulse and instinct rather than reason, such as when he sees the black mark on the wall and leaves, but then returns moments later to see a vision of Taguchi, despite having no reason to come back.

We think that the character is definitely devolving throughout the sequence. Considering the rapid pace of devolution, we think it's possible that the main character has a tendency to doubt himself, made especially evident after seeing the ghost of Taguchi. It could also be argued that the main character is very curious or reckless with his actions as he removes the red tape around the door of what is presumed to be the forbidden room.

3: What is the film genre? Would you say that the film is typical of the genre?

The film is a horror movie. We would say that this film is pretty typical of its genre. The dark lighting and ominous music contribute to the suspenseful tone that people usually associate with horror films. The dimly lit rooms and environment create a feeling of unknown and suspense, especially since only a few areas of the shot are illuminated by light. Most of the time, the audience cannot see the entire shot, which adds to the effect that something could be lurking in the shadows.

This film is also typical of the genre as it attempts to surprise the viewer through the element of shock. Compared to other horror films, *Pulse* builds suspense through the aforementioned characteristics such as lighting and sound. Furthermore, when the main character consciously decides to remove the tape from the door and enter the forbidden room, the decision is very typical of other cliché horror films. You could say that dramatic irony is present in this sequence as it is in other horror films. Since the viewer expects something bad to happen when the character enters the forbidden room, it could be argued that this embodies dramatic irony. In other horror films, similar events happen as characters enter situations that the viewer knows will end badly.

Bonus: Which film is the sequence from?

The sequence is from *Pulse*, a 2001 Japanese horror movie.