

The graduate: the revolution brought to the cinematography

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



In the scuba diving scene, Benjamin jumped into the pool. While trying to get above water, he was continually pushed back in by his father. He finally allowed him to sink down to the bottom as if he had surrendered to the fantasy world. As the image above water becomes faint, he is creating distance between himself and reality. He just sees the he is going deeper and deeper into something that he does not want to do.

As a young recent college graduate, Benjamin's impression of the adulthood and the thought of how to maneuver the real world are frightening. He is in fact worried about the future and the idea of life after college. Will he become a confident individual who make his own decisions or will he end up to be a product of his parents puppet show. During his relationship with Mrs. Robinson, Benjamin becomes lazy and rebellious compares to what he used to be. He lies to his mother about his where about during the nights to keep the affair with Mrs. Robinsons a secret in fear of his parent's disapproval. His anxiety was demonstrated a few times in the Taft Hotel. The first scene in the telephone booth, when Benjamin invited Mrs. Robinson out for a drink, he was very sweaty and breathing heavily. As he stood in the hotel lobby, the receptionist said " Are you here for an affair?" Benjamin's initial expression was of shock like his intention was revealed. And the second scene in the telephone booth after he has gotten a room, Benjamin was so nervous that he almost forgotten to tell Mrs. Robinson the room number. The fact that Mrs. Robinson was such a much older woman, old enough to be his mother, others would find him to be downright disgraceful. Mrs. Robinson characteristic can be identified with one of her costume in the Taft Hotel.

She wears a fur coat whose patterns resembles the fur of a cheetah or that of a cougar making her look like a predator hunting for her pray.

The idea of how there are certain expectation in becoming an adult is both frightening and carries a certain levels of uneasiness. Benjamin finds himself unsure of what he wants to do, but he is controlled and forced by his parents and those around him to find some greater purpose in life. When his father tells him to go to graduate school and asks him " What those four years of college were for?" Benjamin answers " You got me." His reply implies that those four years were never his decision to begin with. Benjamin is a young man who questions the values of a materialistic " plastic" society where people use each other as objects. He was brought up in an upper middle class of superficial world of American life. When his father's friend introduce " A great future in plastic" to be promising, it is indicative of his internal interpretation that his future will become dull and inorganic. It is an artificial object that is to be part of everyone's future and an eminent unavoidable way of life.

The Graduate's films language rely much on the contrast between the images of water. In a scene of Benjamin's graduation party, he is looking into the fish tank in his room. The use of water signified his overwhelming confusion of being submerged in it. And the scene where Benjamin is looking down from his bedroom window to the lit up swimming pool in his backyard, he is looking down at his parents both literally and figuratively. At first glance, the pool and the aquarium seems no more than a significant choice of setting. But a closer analysis shows that water fills a critical role as the

symbol of Benjamin's internal struggle with his insecurity of the future. His aquarium, which is protected under the roof of his parent's home, signifies a safety and familiarity of his childhood which is why he finds sanctuary in his bedroom. In contrast to him looking down to his parent's swimming pool outside that is much larger and exposed to the external element represent Benjamin's view of adulthood as frightening and uncontrollable. There are also correlations between the scuba man at the bottom of his fish tank with the scuba gear that his parent bought for him for his 21st Birthday. He is feeling like he has sunken to the bottom, lowering his values, motivations and reputation. He is alone and isolated.

The cinematography also leans heavily towards point of view. The scene in which Benjamin is floating in the pool on a sunny day and his parents and the Robinsons are staring down at him, the audience can see from Benjamin's perspective as these four adult figures loom overhead and obstructing their expression. It depicts Benjamin's lack of interest in becoming an adult. He is uncertain about life after college and is unwilling to come into terms with it. On Benjamin's birthday party, he is standing in the kitchen wearing scuba diving suite with a mask and oxygen tank in which his father had purchased for him. As he is walking out toward the pool, the audience sees shots of Benjamin's perspective as he looks through the goggle and all that can be heard is his own rhythmic breathing. This scene illustrates that Benjamin finds the advices, requests and demands of the elder to be incomprehensive, meaningless and boring. The partial view through the goggle is an indication of who Benjamin is as a person. He is an

immature young man who only sees what is merely in front of him. The image of his father encouraging him towards the pool is reflective of his adolescent being steered to a purpose of accomplishment. Although unwilling, he is walking toward the pool not wanting to disappoint his parents. He is somewhat obeying his parent's wishes, but in fact, Benjamin refuses to hear or comprehension what the adults has to say conveying his dissatisfaction with his comfortable sheltered life. His idea of living in a fish tank or under water is somehow comforting to him.

The graduate film revolutionized cinema in a way that it depicts the common American ideals and the standard acceptance of American society. It is remarkably popular to the youth generation with a huge number of young adult rebelling against their parents and the introduction to the idea of free love. This movie represents the difficulties of making important decisions that can be life changing. There will always be a certain level of indecisiveness and doubt but the idea of becoming of age is to develop self-confident and be able to stand up for ones' self. With every decision made, there will be consequences and part of growing up means having the courage to admit to our mistakes. As Benjamin did when he'd confess to Elaine that the older woman he was seeing is her mother. Benjamin bravely faced his consequences. This demonstrates that he has now overcome his obstacle of uncertainty. He has left his past and now moving toward the future. He knows what he wants in life or at least at that moment and decides to pursue Elaine despite of his parent's opinion about his decision as he says confidently " It's a decision I've made"