

# Analysis of film techniques used in "a beautiful mind"

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Throughout the film 'A Beautiful Mind', director Ron Howard successfully manipulates a range of film techniques throughout the biographical drama to assist in developing understandings on powerful ideas about mental illness. Through the depiction of central character, John Nash's anguish, Howard aims to educate responders of a life with mental illness and the power an illness has over the mind in distorting reality as well as thoroughly conveying Nash's mathematical genius and the effect mental illness can have on an individual and their relationships. Howard utilises film to explore the unique way in which John Nash perceives the world through his mathematical genius.

Nash is first depicted as different from his colleagues in the outdoor lunch scene where his fascination with patterns is revealed through detailed close-up shots of cut glass patterns connecting to a colleague's tie. The light effect on the tie is the first of a series of motifs that visually replicate Nash's ability to see solutions in a flash of inspiration as well as his tendency to see the world in patterns, revealing Nash's potential to imagine and hallucinate. Howard highlights that Nash's peculiar view of the world is shown to contribute to his social isolation. Dialogue confirms that Nash is different, socially inept and arrogant through his biting accusation towards fellow scholarship winner, Hansen, of 'getting used to miscalculation'. This exposes Nash's fear of failure and his need to matter, achieve and gain recognition.

Consequently, Nash is seen to isolate himself due to his consumed idea of finding a "truly original idea" that differentiates him from others and allows his ambition for success to manifest. Howard challenges the preconceptions

of responders by generating a representation of a delusional world of a schizophrenic, to prompt understanding and insight into the distressing realities for these patients and those around them. It is in the treatment scene Howard confronts the responders that all of Nash's closest friends and life events have been a lie, ultimately conflicting understandings of reality. It is through this shocking revelation Howard reveals that Nash's brilliant mind is as susceptible as anyone's effectively debunking the popular view of what mentally ill patients are like. The extent of this illness is revealed through close up shots of restraints and on Nash's distressed face, revealing his fear of the insulin treatment evoking empathy within responders.

Meanwhile, there's a voiceover of Dr. Rosen's voice, "Imagine if you had suddenly learned that the people, the places, the moments most important to you are not gone, not dead, but worse... have never been. What kind of hell would that be?". This ultimately invites responders to reconsider how they define reality and question their natural perceptions of the world. The close-up of Alicia's harrowing realization is cross cut to real pain endured by Nash on the hospital bed. This effectively allows the responder to see Nash get shock therapy, as well as the distress this situation causes for loved ones. Howard effectively takes the responders on a journey to gain insight into schizophrenia by providing insightful allegories to invoke self-reflection. Additionally, the idea of truth vs reality is portrayed through the extensive use of filmic techniques to convey Nash's inability to decipher the truth due to his mental illness. Tension is built at the beginning of the "delusions" scene by the use of pathetic fallacy and oblique camera angles as John walks

through the door with his son creating a sense foreboding, suspense and danger ultimately engaging responders.

Handheld camera shots follow Alicia as she races up the stairs in fear for her sons' life to where there is a jump shot of their abandoned son in the bath. Howard inaugurates Alicia's fear through close-ups of her screams in disbelief "There is no one here" as responders witness the result of John's erratic behaviors becoming unpredictable and dangerous. Howard conveys how a schizophrenic sufferer can be provoked to violence through verisimilitude as he shows Alicia's truth of Nash talking to himself juxtaposed with Nash's truth where he feared Parcher injuring his wife and knocks Alicia down trying to "protect" her. Responders begin to understand how others perceive schizophrenics, and although the responder understands what Nash has done, it's imminent that his inability to decipher between allusion and reality weighs heavily on his dynamics with other characters. This encourages the responder to understand impacts of mental illnesses and their debilitating nature.

Conclusively Howard's film 'A Beautiful Mind' shows the power and strength of the human mind. It is through the cinematic techniques, music and editing process that responders are able to share the world of John Nash and gain an insight into the reality of schizophrenia and its power over an individual. This film evidently displays genius and the sacrifices someone must make to have a "beautiful mind" and the idea of mental illness as an obstacle to building and maintaining relationships.