

Skyfall (Mendes, 2012, 12A)
Knowledge Organiser

| Characters | |
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| Name | Contribution to Aesthetic/Context |
| James Bond | Postmodern icon created. Bond is the Hero of Britain and the rest of the world. Deeper, humane and darker Bond. We see Bond in an unfinished developing state. |
| Silva | Mirror image of Bond. Both created by M. |
| Eve Moneypenny | Stronger woman and larger part in the narrative |
| M | The 'creator' of Bond. Stable, dependable presence. Relationship between controller and controlled |
| Q | Represents the new digital age |
| Serverine | The traditional 'Bond Girl'. Vulnerable |
| Patrice | Expendable Villain |

Institutional Information

Director: Sam Mendes
 Writer: Neal Purvis and Robert Wade
 Cinematographer: Roger Deakins
 Music: Thomas Newman
 Editor: Stewart Baird

Themes

Relationship between controller and controlled – between Bond and M and between M and Silva and between Silva and Bond. Key elements especially camera angles deliver clues as to who is being controlled

Aesthetics

Beautiful and glamorous. 'Dancing silhouettes, cold blues, the warmth of fiery reds, oranges and yellows. It is beautiful' and 'a mix of real world dirtiness and beauty'.

Virtual world vs the dirty realistic world -Blue/Orange colour scheme

Mirrors/doubles and reflections/symmetry – Connection between Silva and Bond. Mirror images of each other. How the virtual world reflects the actual world

Britishness – 'Keep Calm and Carry On'/'Cool Britannia'. Makes Britishness cool and slick

Influenced by the Nolan, the director of the Dark Knight. Made a recognisable character darker and grittier. Mendes has also taken elements of 'old' Bond and turned him into something new and darker. More realism to the aesthetic of the film. Colours are less saturated.

Influence of Film Noir style – lighting uses deep shadows and silhouettes. Film Noir are dark and downbeat American crime and detective films. Literally means 'black film of cinema'

Roger Deakin, the cinematographer, **uses symmetry**. Framing of Bond and M in the centre suggesting stable and dependable in the face of a changing chaotic world

Beautiful film with lots of establishing shots to take in the environments around the character

More **complex character** of Bond. He is darker and more emotion and we should take him seriously

Nostalgic – Almost back to basics and references to older James Bond Films.

Context

Social: Society is ensuring that the representation and treatment of **women** is improving. Two strong female characters in Eve and M with larger influence on plot. However, there is still a reflection of the Bond tradition of having women in the film for the 'male gaze'. Old Vs New, traditional Vs modern.

Historical: Explores the contemporary threat of **cyber terrorism**. Fit with the celebration of Britishness of the **Olympic Games**. Iconography that is familiar to fans. Make **Britishness cool**.

Cultural: Not linked to any Fleming Novel but Casino Royale and Skyfall wanted to get Bond's character '**back to Fleming**'. Darker, dangerous and more emotional.

Political: **Is MI6 relevant** in today's world of globalization. Everyone is operating internationally so do we need an agency, just for the UK. MI6 and Bond are both destroyed but then rebuilt.

Technological: Filmed in high definition and then **converted to IMAX**. Film asks if technology is the cause of the problem or does it help to fix the problem. Old vs New. Gadgets are back to basics and are more realistic

Institutional: **50th Anniversary of the Bond Film**. Shows Bond being resurrected. The Bond film is an institution in its own right. Reflected in the nostalgia of the film with the old Aston Martin and the simple Walter PPK gun. Still high production values with big stars and sophisticated expensive cinematography – still making it a Bond Film (which is an institution in itself)

| | Techniques | Effect |
|----------------|--|---|
| Cinematography | Establishing/Long Shots | Reveal glamorous and beautiful locations or create a sense of spectacle. Shows the characters to be isolated sometimes within their surroundings. Used to introduce the characters of Bond and Silva. |
| | POV/CU/MS/HA | Emotionally engages them and immerses the audience into the action. |
| | Low angle 'straight at the viewer' shots | Add to the sense of danger and the audience are placed within the action sequences. The opening action sequence. |
| | Hand Held Shots | Sense of action and allows the audience to feel it during the crash at the market. Unstable nature of the shot creates tension between M and Bond in the living room scene. |
| | Symmetrical/central framing | Forces us to compare characters such as Q and Bond and Silva and Bond. Central framing shows that M and Bond are stable and have a sense of control even though they may be overwhelmed by their surroundings. |
| | Lighting – dark, silhouettes | MI6 are working in the shadows. Eerie atmosphere. Forces us to take the character of Bond seriously. Opening sequence and the skyscraper fight with Patrice. Also used in the montage sequence when Bond is removing the bullet from his shoulder. |
| Sound | Old Bond theme but in a new way | The version of Bond is unfamiliar. Newman uses old and new reflecting the theme of 'old vs new'. We hear a slight hint of the theme tune but then it turns into something else. The Motorbike chase over the rooftops in Istanbul |
| | Dialogue – Jokes and sarcasm | Bond is still in control and is calm enough to make jokes in difficult situations. 'We weren't using that' and 'what makes you think it is my first time' when being interrogated by Silva. |
| | Ticking Rhythm | Time is running out |
| | Use of brass instruments | Similar to 'A Dark Knight' Brass instruments give the feeling that Bond, like Batman is rising up from the ashes. He is being rebuilt as a hero. |
| | Diegetic Sound | Use of diegetic sounds to link scenes together and draw us away from one place to another. We often hear the sounds first before we go there. London Rain into the river than Bond falls in. Plane noise before we go to the airport. |
| Mise-en-Scene | Blues and Orange tones | Blue indicates the 'virtual world' of cyber-crime in Shanghai and Greys in London. The technological ages. Oranges are gritty, dirty reality of espionage. Dusty Istanbul chase sequence and the fire at the mansion. |
| | Bond's changing costume and makeup | Shows how in control he is and how comfortable he is in his environment during different stages of the film. Smart grey suit shows control and professionalism. Washed out look at the beginning to hint that he has lost his edge. Slowly gets it back through the film. Contrast his costume to Q's in the art gallery. |
| | Actors Facial Expressions | Look for Daniel Craig playing Bond with a darker emotional range than other versions of Bond. Silva's macabre and menacing performance establishes him as sinister and malevolent. Severine's trembling tension of her nervous smile as she describes Silva. |
| | Props to enhance themes and messages | Use of the 'Old Warship' Painting in drive home the message that the old way of espionage is being 'towed away for scrap' and the new technological age of espionage is upon us. This is a clever metaphor and the audience will then hopefully see this as a deeper, clever film aesthetically. |
| | Nostalgic use of Props | Old Aston Martin and the Walter PPK gun to create the cool iconography of Bond. Old fans will relive and be excited by the use of props they have seen before. |
| Editing | Cross-Cutting | Between Istanbul, London and Eve in the Jeep. Forces us to compare gritty way of spying being assisted by the new technological way of spying |
| | Cuts between LS/ELS and MS/CU/POV | Uses shots that create spectacle and then shots that immerse the audience in the action. Doing this creates a sense of tension and excitement for the audience. |
| | Cuts to CU | Emotional, character driven film. The facial expressions are characters reaction to situations are important. |
| | Continuity Editing | Editing is used to ensure the narrative is moved forward. |
| | Montage | Montage is used a couple of times to move the story on and show a passing of time. Bond recovering from his injury, Setting up the mansion for the final battle etc. |