

**A Dissertation
On**

**FRAMING AND COMPOSITION IN FILMS OF
WES ANDERSON**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of
BA Journalism & Mass Communication program of
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*FRAMING AND COMPOSITION IN FILMS OF
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*has been submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirement of the
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CERTIFICATE

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“Framing and Composition in films of Wes Anderson”
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Place: Vadodara
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation titled “**Framing and Composition in films of Wes Anderson**” is an original work prepared and written by me, under the guidance of Dr Javed Khatri. Assistant Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication program, Navrachana University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication.

This thesis or any other part of it has not been submitted to any other University for the award of other degree or diploma.

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Devrajsinh Parmar

I whole heartedly dedicate this work

To

My friends, family and my guide.

ABSTRACT

Framing and composition in Films of Wes Anderson

Wes Anderson's mise-en-scene is one the most striking of any contemporary filmmakers.

This research explores the various techniques used by the filmmakers in his movies "The Grand Budapest Hotel" and "The Darjeeling Limited" by studying individual frames from those films. The techniques and how they help enhance the narrative and help the director create the fantasy world in his movies which he is known for. Comparison of his style across these two films and the evolution of his style will also be explored through semiotic analysis and studying various aspects of his mise-en-scene.

Keywords: character, colour, composition, framing, narrative.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Wes Anderson's early life, his influences in cinema which helped him shape his style of filmmaking he is known for, and various aspects of his filmography are being discussed here. His visual language will be studied by taking two of his films as case studies *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) and *the Grand Budapest Hotel* (2011).

1.2 Overview of Wes Anderson

Wes Anderson is an American filmmaker born in Houston, Texas in the United States. He was born on May 1, 1969. He studied philosophy from University of Texas at Austin. He has directed 9 feature films. His first film was released in 1996 named *Bottle Rocket*; his new feature film "*The French Dispatch*" is set to come out sometime in 2020. Anderson's films are known for having a very distinctive visual style which comprises of symmetrical framing, vibrant production design and costumes. His filmography consists of both live-action and animation films. His films draw the viewers attention to its unique visual language and he uses these tools to create a distinctive fantasy world in his films.

1.3 Mise-en-scene

Mise-en-scene is a French term word which means "staging". The use of set, props, composition, actors, costumes and the lighting and its arrangement before the camera in a

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way which tells the story is mise-en-scene. All of this is guided by the director of the film. Every director has a style in which they approach mise-en-scene in their film in a way which helps the telling of the story. When we talk about a director's "style", we refer the way they arrange their mise-en-scene. We can identify the director of a film through a way he does a certain type of lightning, or a certain kind of actor placement or their set design - this is all a part of mise-en-scene.

1.4 Wes Anderson's mise-en-scene

Wes Anderson is a director known particularly for its unique and almost consistent mise-en-scene across all his films. He likes to keep the composition of his frames very symmetrical, he likes to frame his actors in the centre of the frame and likes his set and props very vibrant and colourful. Wes Anderson, in his films, uses mise-en-scene to convey the story information but also uses it as a stylistic mark across all his films.

1.5 Wes Anderson's influences

Wes Anderson was born and brought up in Houston, Texas and one his greatest influences in cinema is the American filmmaker, Martin Scorsese (Penner, 2018). Anderson has had a friendship with Scorsese which led to various film recommendations given to Anderson by Scorsese, and introduced him to filmmakers like Satyajit Ray. Anderson borrows the use of slow motion photography from Scorsese, from his film Mean Streets (1976) in his film The Darjeeling Limited (2007) and others (Penner, 2018). Although his technique is quite overused in filmmaking, it has been used by both filmmakers to accentuate the emotional state of the characters in a non-clichéd manner. Scorsese is known straying away from strict realism with regard to the treatment of his films and such can be seen throughout Anderson's filmography as well. Although the visual language in the films of both filmmakers is quite different, both of them give a formalist treatment to their films. Anderson tends to go a step further and emphasize more on the kind of way his films are treated and make it more

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noticeable. Satyajit Ray is also one of the influences of Wes Anderson we can see it up-front in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) where he uses a lot of music from Ray's films and even puts a painting of the director in the background in one of the frames. It was Satyajit Ray's films which inspired Anderson to make *The Darjeeling Limited* (Bose, N/A).

1.6 A brief about *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007)

The Darjeeling Limited is one of the early films in the career of Wes Anderson. It is a film about three American upper-class brothers who are on a journey across India. The three of them are not on good terms with each other and hence decide to take this trip to "find themselves" as Francis, one of the brothers called it (Bose, N/A). Their father expired recently and their mother resides somewhere in India and has become a monk leaving their family, they are also on a quest to find her. They find a hard time living with each other as their thoughts contradict, they cut each other's statements and taunt each other. They go through a lot of wild experiences in India and eventually in the second half they become less materialistic people and less selfish than they were in the beginning of the film. The trip was more about filling in the lack of communication between the three brothers Peter, Jack and Francis.

1.7 A brief about *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2011)

The Grand Budapest Hotel is a story about Monsieur Gustave, a concierge at the Grand Budapest hotel and the lobby boy Zero Moustafa. (Bick, 2017) M Gustave was a well known concierge and attracted many guests due to his charming personality. He had many affairs with old ladies who came in to stay at the Grand Budapest. With the death of one such client, Madame D, Monsieur goes through a rollercoaster ride and faces many conflicts as she names all her property to her lover, Monsieur Gustave and her cruel family try to steal that from him; this is the main storyline of the film. Throughout this journey, with Monsieur is the lobby boy Zero with whom he forms a great friendship. Zero belongs to a foreign Asian nation and Anderson through this character shows the injustice, and the loss that one faces during the time of war; even though the film is set in an imaginary time period in an imaginary country. The

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film unfolds within three different timeframes, functioning like a storybook. These three time frames are distinguished visually through different aspect ratios. 4:3 ratio for old time period, 2.39:1 ratio for what seems like the 1960-70s since that ratio was popular at that time and 1.85:1 ratio for the modern day (Bick, 2017).

1.8 Wes Anderson and auteur theory

The auteur theory says that the director is the author of the film and the unique style and voice of the director is persistent throughout the body of work of the director. Although there are any definitions of the auteur theory given by many people around the world, this is the general understanding we derive from all those interpretations. This theory was first coined by French critic Francois Truffaut in the magazine Cahiers du Cinema. Wes Anderson is a filmmaker whose stylistic mark is very significant and stands out to the viewer (Penner, 2018). Moreover, the kind of subjects Anderson deals with throughout his filmography is very similar. The way of symmetrically composing his shots, use of rock music, use of bright production design, his carefully planned camera moves, etc. remains throughout his filmography and it gets more recognizable as Anderson makes more films (Penner, 2018). Whatever be the subject matter, the director's unique voice and his way of working is eminent and recognizable throughout his body of work, making him a modern day autuer.

1.9 Criticism in Wes Anderson's work

Wes Anderson typically makes films about upper class American people and is less likely to focus on people belonging to different ethnicity or economical backgrounds. He has an orientalist point of view in his 2007 film *The Darjeeling Limited* where he tells the story about three Americans in India and does not put much emphasis on Indian characters (Bose, N/A). Filmmakers are free to present their worldview in their films but presenting a culture through the lens of the west and only using it and its people as a means to advance the story is unfair in a way. Orientalism can also be seen the use of classical Indian sitar music in many Hollywood films when anything related to India is to be shown as (Bose, N/A) exclaims, "

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From the early days of cinema, Hollywood has provided fertile ground for engendering Orientalist cultural assumptions through the production of films using exotic locales and femme fatales, such as the Orientalist fictions of George Melies, the Douglas Fairbanks film *Thief of Bagdad* (1924), Paramount's *She's a Sheik* (1927), and Universal's *Arabian Nights* (1942) to name just a few in a rich history of cinematic peddling of the Oriental."

1.10 Types of shots

The shot is defined on the basis of the amount of human figure or subject the director includes in the frame. The shot has nothing to do with the distance between the camera and the subject. A medium shot of a person can be taken from 6ft away or 16ft away from the subject. As long as the frame retains the qualities of a medium shot i.e. from the head to the waist, it qualifies as one. The same shot can be taken on a 28mm wide lens or a 600mm extreme telephoto lens. Wes Anderson likes to shoot his medium shots or even closeups on a 40mm anamorphic lens, it is his signature style used across many of his movies like the *The Darjeeling Limited*, *Rushmore*, *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (Dorey, 2009).



(Image 1a: Anderson uses the 40mm anamorphic lens in his 2007 movie *The Darjeeling Limited* to do a tight medium shot of the three brothers.)

The full shot and extreme full shot shows all of the character from to toe and typically are used as establishing shot to give the viewers a sense of space of the scene. Since the advent of wide angle lenses, these shots are typically shot on wide lenses, but these shots can be taken on a telephoto or a medium lens as well.

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(Image 2a: A long shot of three characters in The Darjeeling Limited)



(Image 3a: An extreme long shot with three characters standing on top of the mountain in The Darjeeling Limited (2007))

A close-up or an extreme shot is a type of shot which only shows the character from their shoulders up. An extreme closeup may only show a certain part of the characters face i.e. cut off the head or the chin a little bit, or a shot which frames only the eye etc. The extreme close-up shot is seldom used in films of Wes Anderson. Anderson uses close-up shots quite frequently during key points of the narrative.



(Image 4a: A close-up shot of Jack right before the rope-bridge was about to tip over in the Darjeeling Limited (2007).)

1.11 How the lens affects the image

The lens has two primary characteristics that affect the image: focal length and aperture. There are many other technical aspects that affect the image but those aspects are not relevant with this study. The focal length of the lens is measured in mm. Lenses are divided into three categories with respect to their focal lengths: wide, normal and telephoto. A wide lens will have a larger angle of view, thus it will show more of what's front of the camera. With the wider angle of view, medium shots or close-ups will be shot with very little distance between the subject and the camera (Dorey, 2009). Wide lenses more used more to establish a scene and show a location in its entirety. A subject when framed with a wide lens will often have some distortion and it won't reproduce a human face as we see through our eyes, thus medium and close-up shots are often framed with wide lenses during key points of the narrative to show tension.

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(Image 5a: A shot taken with a wide lens to show the entirety of the location.)

Medium lenses are lenses with a focal length between 45mm - 60mm. These lenses, especially the 50mm lens creates the image which has characteristics normal to the human eye. When the human face is framed with a normal lens, it would not have many unnatural artifacts. Normal lenses are used extensively while shooting a conversation to do over the shoulder shots.



(Image 6a: A close-up shot of Jack taken with a medium focal-length lens.)

The telephoto lens has a very narrow field of view, it creates a very flattering image of the human face since it has very little to no distortion. The camera is usually at a distance from the subject while shooting with a telephoto lens. The focal length of telephoto lenses range from 70mm-600mm or even more.

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(Image 7a: Telephoto lens used to take a three shot)

Aperture is an opening in the lens which determines the amount of light which enters. Aperture also determines the depth of field the image creates. Aperture is measured in t-stops, the lower the t-stop, the shallower the depth of field is. A shallow depth of field means the things in the background and foreground with respect to the point of focus will be more blurry. Apart from the field of view, the focal length also affects the depth of field a lens creates. A wide lens with aperture $t4$ will have a greater depth of field than a telephoto lens with $t4$ aperture. The wider focal length does not compress the background as much as a telephoto lens, i.e. a wider lens shows more background irrespective of the aperture.



Image 8a

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Image 9a

Image 8a shows much more of the background since its shot with a wide lens while image 9a shows very little since its shot with a telephoto lens.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The following studies provide an insight into the style of filmmaking that Wes Anderson has developed over the years and the filmmakers he has been influenced from. Concept of framing and cinematography and the way Anderson incorporates them into his work is also being talked about. The filmmakers film *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) is being criticized and called "orientalist" and a study of his later film *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2011) is done.

2.2 The Allusive Auteur: Wes Anderson and His Influences

The representation of characters who are writers in Anderson's films are a representation of Wes Anderson himself. His worldview is similar to that of his characters, as Timothy Penner (2011) says, "Anderson's approach is an amalgam of his four writer characters. He seeks to find a balance between the events of his own life and the art that inspires him, which will allow him to create situations wherein the pain of real life is never overly far from redemption. Like an avid filmgoer who returns to the cinema for a chance to escape the reality of life, it seems that Anderson returns to making films with the hope that he too will find the redemption that permeates his films." We see the hints of Anderson's influences throughout the *mise-en-scene* of his films. Example: a painting of Satyajit Ray hung

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in the background in the train in *The Darjeeling Limited* and his use of classical Indian music from Ray's films itself.

2.3 Wes Anderson's ambivalent film style: the relation between *mise-en-scène* and emotion

The *mise-en-scène* in films of Wes Anderson is very specific, and the kind of emotion it conveys is very specific as well. Common things in *mise-en-scène* of Anderson's films are symmetrical framing and production design, frame within frames and bright colours. Every film of Anderson has an artificial touch to every emotion they convey, it is sometimes due to the subject matter and the treatment in each film. The framing of the shots plays a huge role, the researcher has studied the different types of shots used frequently in Anderson's filmography and the different emotions they convey. Often in many scenes, meticulous *mise-en-scène* is arranged which draws attention to it, and this treatment creates a dream like world in his movies as Sunhee Lee (2016) says, "Nevertheless, it is clear that Anderson sets a specific mood by elaborately planting emotional cues within the artificial, layered and director-governed *mise-en-scène*."

2.4 Wes Anderson, tone and the quirky sensibility

Wes Anderson's films have a "quirky" quality to them, the subject matter is not quirky yet the *mise-en-scène* with its geometrical perfection and the almost comic-like lines and acting of the characters creates an irony on which James MacDowell (2012) comments on, "That they are told from a position of adulthood, though, means these films also remind us that the pleasures of childishness can be enjoyed nostalgically, but never be retrieved." The paper does not explain how this quirky emotion is derived through composition and framing, that aspect will be studied further. In the film *The Royal Tenenbaums*, the film deals with serious emotions, but throughout the film, the artificial looking *mise-en-scène* is present throughout the film.

2.5 Wes Anderson: Contemporary Auteurism and Digital Technology

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The films of Wes Anderson deal with subject matter which is from abstract, and that is true for the events the characters face as well. But the camerawork that Anderson and his cinematographer Robert Yeoman incorporate in their films is far from being realistic. For example, the god's eye shot or the overhead shot used several times in his films draws attention to the authorship of Anderson than focusing on the characters or the story. Although, such camerawork is not always desired in films, Anderson uses such elements in his films consciously to form a unique visual language in his films

2.6 The Semiotics of Wes Anderson: Wes Anderson's Symbolic Storyworld: A Semiotic Analysis

A detailed analysis of all the films of Wes Anderson, this book also states the common techniques used in mise-en-scene of his movies. The book breaks down the narrative in a detail. This information will be used to draw conclusions on how these story elements are conveyed with the help of mise-en-scene and framing. The mise-en-scene in *The Darjeeling Limited* is a way to comment on the lives of the characters, very meticulous and well organized yet robotic in nature. A detailed study of the stories in Anderson's films will allow to derive conclusions on how his style of mise-en-scene has evolved over the years.

2.7 Cinematography: The Creative Use of Reality

The use of slow-motion is seen often in Anderson's filmography. This effect is used often during a peak time in the story, it adds more to the artificiality of the mise-en-scene as this effect draws attention to it the most. We never experience anything like slow motion in real life, and Anderson uses this technique to convey the psychological state of his characters as Maya Deren (2017) points out, "Slow-motion is not simply slowness of speed. It is, in fact, something which exists in our minds, not on the screen, and can be created only in conjunction with the identifiable reality of the photographic image. "

2.8 When west meets east: A study of representation of India in the movie *The Darjeeling Limited*.

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Wes Anderson, being a filmmaker who primarily makes films about upper class Americans, Parvathy (2011) criticizes Anderson's film *The Darjeeling Limited*. The film portrays India as a very backward and underdeveloped country, yet its an exotic land and a "place for salvation", following the stereotypical image of India. The researcher points out various scenes throughout the film where such orientalism is being portrayed. A train getting lost, a boot-polish boy stealing shoes. The film does not show affinity towards the culture of India and instead builds upon an image of India which is false as Parvathy (2001) says, "It can be concluded that the movie *The Darjeeling Limited* have been crafted using the same stereotypes that has for long defined and described India. The movie represents India clearly from an ethnocentric perspective. India is presented as all that the west is not- uncivilized, illiterate, technologically backward, underdeveloped yet exotic. When the West met East the binary is reinforced, thus furthering the western project of ethnocentrism.". The research does not show however what framing techniques are being used in these scenes which amplify the poor representation of Indians in the film. Further study will be done of "*the Darjeeling Limited*" will be done.

2.9 The Darjeeling Limited: Critiquing Orientalism on the Train to Nowhere

The film *The Darjeeling limited* apart from being orientalist, also shows a hyper-reality throughout the movie. The kind of set and props are used reflect the stereotypical image of India as Nandana Bose (N/A) argues, "It shows the innate stupidity and futility of Westerners who are naive enough to embark on a so-called spiritual journey of self-discovery through "mystic, spiritual East/India" that cannot possibly lead to anything because it is doomed to failure and nothingness from the very beginning." This whole journey of thee brothers is shown is bright colours and meticulous camera work by Robert Yeoman, which convey this hyper-reality and the excited feeling of someone experiencing India for the first time. Nadana Bose (N/A) adds, "intricate wood-carved interiors; the chaotic, congested scenes of traffic, both human and vehicular, and the semi-urban sprawl - creates such exaggerated emphases on

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the authentic and "the real" that it enters the realm of hyper-reality. It is almost too real to be believable."

2.10 Faint Glimmers of Civilization: Mediated Nostalgia and "The Grand Budapest Hotel"

Wes Anderson's "The Grand Budapest Hotel" unfolds in three eras and the three time periods have been shown visually different through three aspect ratios, 1.37:1 Academy ratio, 1.85:1 and 2.35:1. In 1968, the story switches to widescreen 2.35:1 ratio since this aspect ratio was common during that time in cinemas. Change in aspect ratio affects our interpretation of an image instantly, as we see a major change in the size of the frame on screen. Moreover, Bick, Jamie L. (2017) adds, "One of the major ways in which Anderson literally employs nostalgia as a thematic device is through his use of formal techniques, namely his use of expertly-crafted miniatures to portray large-scale buildings and landscapes."

2.11 Conclusion

The filmmaker puts more emphasis in his mise-en-scene and is very particular with regard to his filmmaking process. His films generally feature stories of upper middle class / high class American culture.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

The data collection method for this research would be qualitative because study of framing and composition would involve observation and semiotic analysis of individual stills from movies of Wes Anderson, and comparison between different movie still frames to derive meaning. Quantitative method of data collection will not come in use here since no survey or need of public opinion is needed to come at a conclusion in this research.

3.2 Primary data collection

Analysis of still frames from movies: “The Darjeeling Limited” and “The Grand Budapest Hotel” will be done. Various aspects like use of colour, lens selection, composition and other visual centric choices of the director will be analyzed to collect primary data for this research.

3.3 Significance of the Study

Wes Anderson is one of the few contemporary filmmakers who has a consistent visual language in his films across his filmography. A Wes Anderson movie can be identified easily by looking at one of its images instantly, this can be said only about a few filmmakers in the history of cinema like Yasujiro Ozu. So study on his films and especially the visual language in his films is crucial.

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3.4 Objectives

3.4.1 To critically analyse individual frames from Wes Anderson films and study them.

3.4.2 Understand how cinematography and production design play an important role in filmmaking.

3.5 Hypothesis

3.5.1 The way of framing shots in Wes Anderson films is identical but each frame conveys a different meaning in context to the story.

CHAPTER FOUR

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS AND DATA INTERPRETATION

4.1 Frame-wise analysis of "The Grand Budapest Hotel"



(Image 1)

Img 1: This is the first shot of Gustave in the film and it tells the viewers about the kind of person he actually is - alone and rather lonely. His figure is almost in shadow (black) compared to the rest of the frame, which is rather vibrant. The director deliberately shows the vibrant doors in the foreground to contrast with the dark inner-self of Gustave. The vibrant, perfectly framed doors and the curtains is the kind of person he tries to be to the outside world - perfect in every sense, well behaved to everyone with mannered sense of humour. Even part

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of the frame outside the balcony is quite vibrant looking, Gustave's costume which is in fact quite vibrant is still shown dark, because the intention is to show his inner self.



(Image 2)



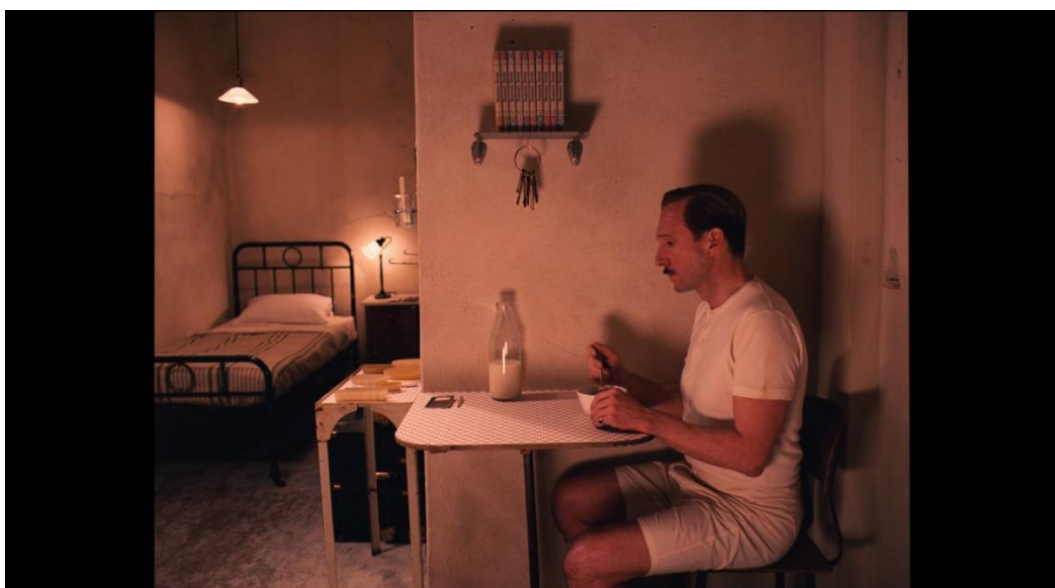
(Image 3)

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Img 2 & 3: Only after few seconds before the above frame, Gustave is arranging breakfast for Madame D at the Hotel. Here he is perfectly lit, shown doing his daily chores with utter perfection, always on the tip of his toe - the self he shows to everyone around him. The vibrant production design and costumes reflect not only the atmosphere of the Grand Budapest but also the self that Gustave pushes himself to be. The urgency of this scene is conveyed through the fast dolly camera moves back and forth. Gustave being in the middle of the frame, his posture and acting conveys his authority over the workers in the Hotel.



(Image 4)



(Image 5)

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Img 4 & 5: This frame reflects the inner personality of M. Gustave. The confined space that is his room, the bleak production design which contrasts heavily to the rest of The Grand Budapest. The lack of much things in his room, with only a single bed, very dull lighting, him eating from a small bowl on his own and his plain white clothes speak about his personality that few people know about. We see a key - which must be work-related - right above the small dining table, normally we wouldn't expect something like this handy near a dining table. There is only one chair besides the dining table suggesting that he has his meals alone. Before the shot dollies over to him, a line of his favourite perfume suggests how tip-top he likes to be when at work, none of that applies when he is by himself. These things suggest a subtle split personality presented of M. Gustave in the film.



(Image 6)



(Image 7)

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Img 6 & 7: In the above two frames, camera movement and lighting conveys the emotions of Zero Moustafa. As the camera dollies in towards him, the three vertical lights on left and right side of Zero in the background light up. Those are off in the first wide frame. Apart from these practical lights in the scene, the whole overall lighting becomes darker, more intense. The change in the overall exposure, especially on his face is visible. These cues not only signify the high points in the narrative - as he is about to tell a story which matters to him a lot - but also as a conscious commentary from the director about the formalist approach of the film.



(Image 8)



(Image 9)

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Img 8 & 9: A similar lighting shift is seen in another high point of the narrative, when Zero is about to talk about the love of her life, Agatha. Zero mustafa, pushing away his favourite dish, him leaning against the chair like he's in need of some kind of support, and the sudden decrease in the exposure of the whole frame suggests a tragedy, without knowing about it.



(Image 10)



(Image 11)

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Img 10 & 11: As the director cuts to a closeup of the of Zero, there is a sudden increase in the exposure on his face reveals his tears - his love for Agatha - and also suggesting that he has to narrative the painful part of the story, as now the lighting is back to exactly how it was when he started narrating the story in the beginning. So the light on his face is suggestive of him revisiting the reality, which he not fond of, thus the tears in his eyes. These creative decisions in lighting again stray vastly from realism.



(Image 12)

Img 12: The above frame of the Grand Budapest is yet again concretizes the formalism shown during the whole movie. This is a small set of the hotel built due to production limitations, but also suggest the storybook-esque approach of the film, as if it is a fantasy world.



(Image 13)

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Img 13: In the above frame, M. Gustave is shown more significant in the frame compared to Zero, this speaks about the relation they share with each other at this point in the story. M. Gustave does not Zero very well and looks down on him like any other employee. He has no special attachment towards him. The tensed and attentive posture and expressions of Zero convey a similar feeling.



(Image 14)

Img 14: This frame shows M. Gustave and Zero sharing equal space in the frame, this signifies the bond that they share at this point in the story. Their modest acquisition of space reflects trust, this is contrast to the beginning of the story and the previous frame where Gustave is shown as a dominating personality to Zero.



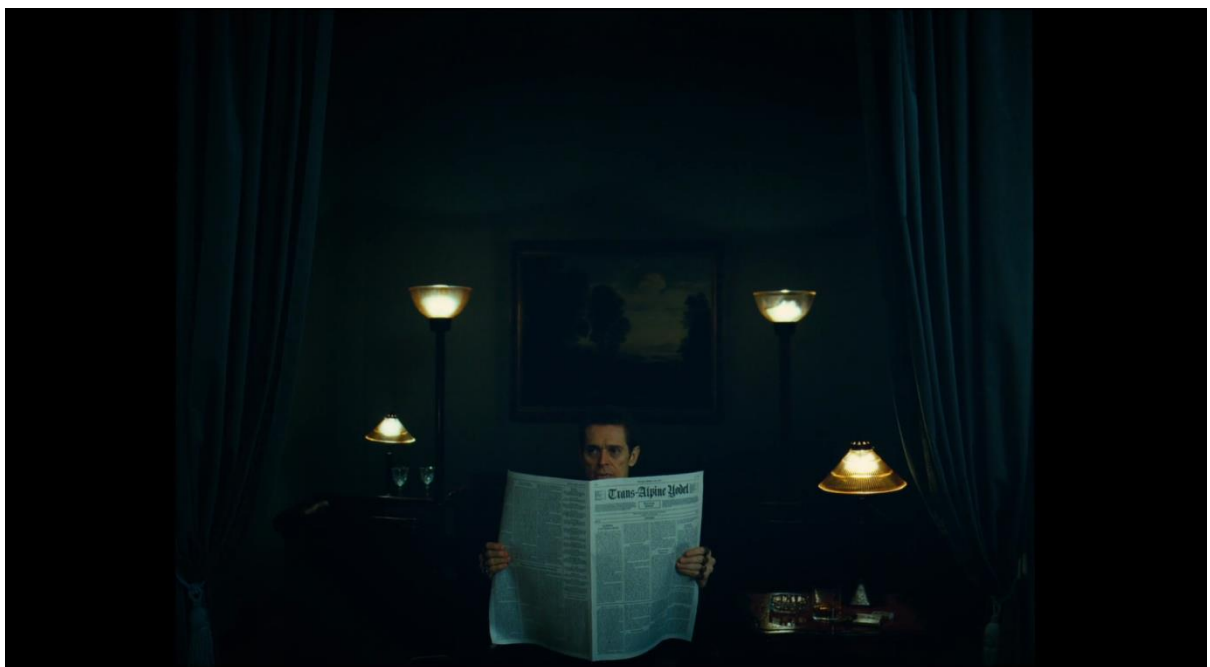
(Image 15)

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Img 15: This is a POV shot of Zero looking at Agatha. The frame only showcases only Agatha's face (even though it is a POV shot) suggesting his full attention towards her. The choice of a long lens and a shallow depth of field are suggestive of the above mentioned idea. The use of bright lights in the out of focus areas, the slight red light on left side of her face gives this image a dream-like feel, this suggests the dreamlike love that Zero has for Agatha.



(Image 16)



(Image 17)

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Img 16 & 17: The colour of the interiors and the general underexposure of the frames indicate a that something tragic or bad is going to happen. This dark tones are also carried to the costumes. This scene is just before the character walking down the stairs in image 16 is going to be murdered by the man in image 17.



(Image 18)



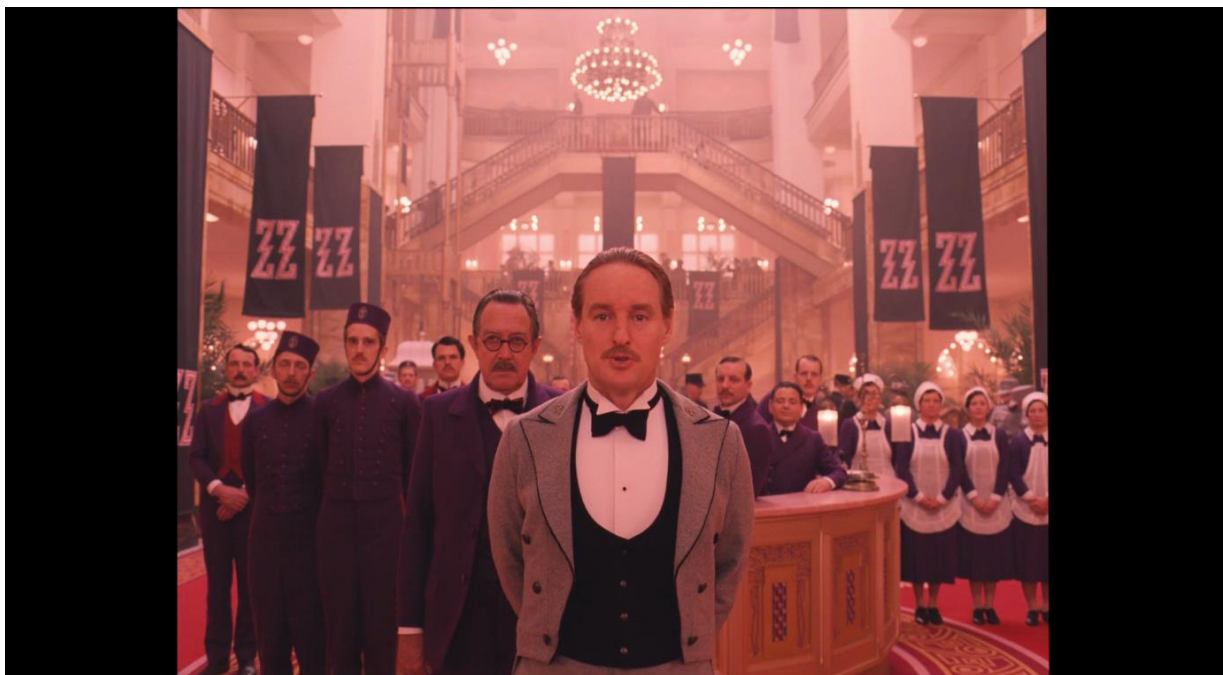
(Image 19)

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Img 18 & 19: These images are shown in black and white to suggest the tragic incident which would follow, the death of M. Gustave by these fascist soldiers. The black and white colour in this sequence resembles the look of black and white documentary photographs, reminding the viewer of that era. The very rough make-up on the middle soldier in image 19 suggests that he is here to do something fishy.



(Image 20)



(Image 21)

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Img 20 & 21: Image 20 frames the son of Madame D and his sisters from a low angle looking up, while in image 21, which is a part of the same sequence, the directors keep the camera at eye level. This suggests the son in img 20 showing supremacy towards others, as he is the owner of the Grand Budapest. His pitch black costume in the frame contrasting with the innocent pink colour in the background creates a striking contrast in the frame and signifies that he is evil.



(Image 22)

Img 22: The pink colour of cake boxes by which Zero and Agatha are surrounded by signifies the innocent love between them. Their posture, hugging each other confirms this emotion on a more obvious level.

4.2 Frame-wise analysis of "The Darjeeling Limited"



(Image 23)

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Img 23: The three brothers smoking in the train compartment, opening the window - in spite of no smoking instruction - tells the viewers about their character traits. Also, this frame is composed as if these three are forced into it together, which is exactly the case in the story, they are not very good terms with each other as brothers and this trip is meant to make them better as brothers.



(Image 24)



(Image 25)

Img 24 & 25: This shot starts as a wide shot establishing the location, while Francis is narrating the story of his accident. The shot slowly zooms in until we end up on a close-up of Francis's face and his wounds (img 25), which the story was all about. All this time the director

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only cuts once to the reaction of the other two brothers in spite of Francis narrating such a tragic story, which signifies that the relationship and caring bond between them is very weak.



(Image 26)



(Image 27)

Img 26 & 27: These two frames further comment about the relationship the three brothers share. When Francis tries to hug both of them after telling them his tragic story, the two brothers reaction when he hugs them is more awkward and surprised, and not giving the hug with love and concern for him. In img 26 Peter is plainly surprised and looks in the other direction, while Jack is shown having an awkward expression as well, looking at Peter while Francis is hugging him. Also the distance of the camera from the actors is significantly high,

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the shot being taken with a telephoto lens - this comments that the brothers are very distant to each other. The decision of the director to do a continuous zoom in from from the wide shot instead of taking separate shots was deliberate especially for this moment in the scene to show their distant relationship with the camera observing from far back.



(Image 28)

Img 28: This shot tells about Peter's character. The use of tight framing on his face, him shown having a headache and him wearing black sunglasses speak about his personality - he is the one who often keeps his emotions to himself and thus he is very harsh on himself and passive aggressive a lot of times. He's so much into his own problems that ignores when others try to help or look out for him, thus Jack is shown out of focus in the background. Him wearing sunglasses is his way to overlook the reality of the real world and his real life problems - one of which is his wife about to have their first baby in a few weeks, which he cannot process.



(Image 29)



(Image 30)

Img 29 & 30: In img 29 we see Peter and Francis spying on Jack (img 30) like hawks. Their posture suggests their interest in what Jack is upto but they don't want to confront him regarding what is up with him. This is true for each of the three characters with each other. They are interested in each other's lives but them not speaking to each other since one year has affected the way they communicate with each other, they end up lying and bitching to one another.



(Image 31)

Img 31: The three brothers are placed next to each other in a very systematic fashion - this is when Francis tells the other two about his next day itinerary. The placement of the actors

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in this scene is how Francis thinks things should be - systematic and well arranged. The director emphasizes Francis' worldview with this frame.



(Image 32)

Img 32: This frame shows the inner rage of the three brothers for being kicked out of the train and being stuck with one another in a foreign country by throwing rocks at the train. The dark exposure of the frame due to the night exterior setting is suggestive of the inner feelings of these three brothers - the black colour dominates the frame with only small streetlights at a distance in the background acting as a hope for them at this point in the narrative.



(Image 33)

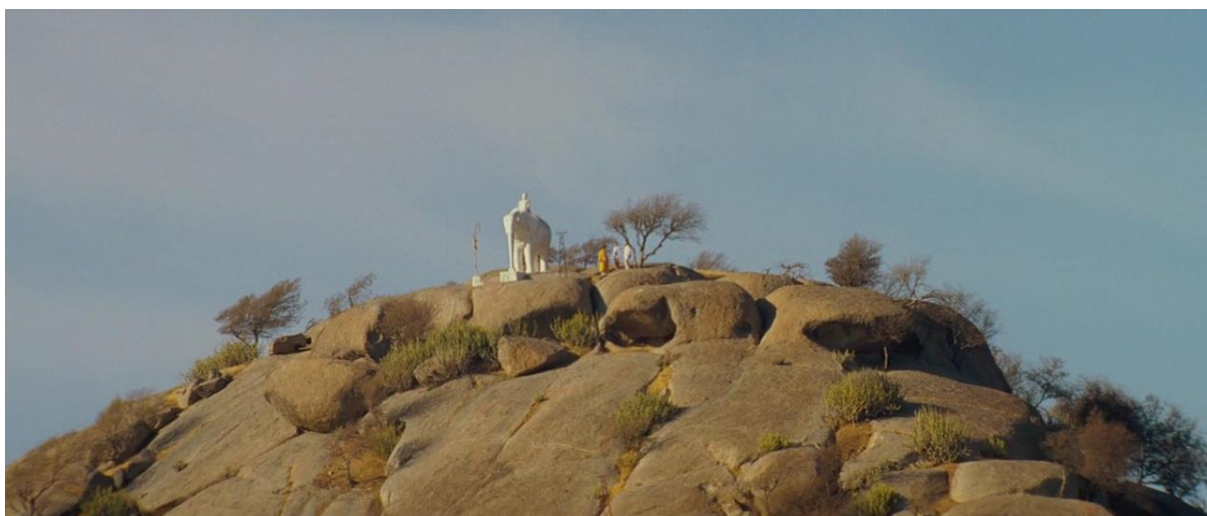
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Img 33: Peter, Francis and Jack framed in wide, barren landscape of Rajasthan and the wild bushes in it are suggestive of their rough journey in a foreign land. Even though Francis planned this to be a "spiritual journey", it turned out to be more of an adventure and not so easygoing.



(Image 34)

Img 34: The skull sign on the box is a suggestion of Peter's skeptical nature for doing new things in life. He has become a victim of his own thoughts which has led to his passive aggressive nature. We see him holding tightly onto the rickshaw rod, suggesting him holding onto his regular life and his nature of lack of taking risks.



(Image 35)



(Image 36)

Img 35 & 36: The three brothers on top of this mountain signifies that they have completed their so called "spiritual journey" and have succeeded in their reconciliation on a personal level. This journey for them was meant to fill the communication gap between them. The patterns in the hill indicate all the moments of fighting and not coping up with each other which they went to get here.



(Image 37)

Img 37: The director puts a painting of legendary Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray as a tribute near the end of the film. The reason would be because a lot of music used in this film

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was taken from Satyajit Ray's films. This frame can be seen as the director Wes Anderson himself - instead of Jack - looking upto Satyajit Ray.



(Image 38)



(Image 39)



(Image 40)



(Image 41)

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(Image 42)

Img 38, 39, 40, 41 & 42: We see the three brothers together on the train in img 38, they lost all their luggage as seen in img 39 to get on the train together. This depicts a change in a way of looking at things for the three, as they were more materialistic in the beginning of the film. Taking an example of Peter, in img 42, we can see him putting his luggage on the running train first, opposite to what he did near the end of the film. He values the journey and his brothers more by the end. Comparing img 40 & 41 with 38 & 39, two set frames with similar composition, img 40 & 41 - near the beginning of the film - shows Peter alone looking at the man who lost his train. The setting is of a city which showcases concrete construction and metal railway lines, symbolizing their state of mind - the man running for the lost train in a way is Peter himself running after his life which he is losing. Img 38 & 39 shows the three brothers together - near the end of the film - looking at the luggage they lost. Their luggage symbolises their lack of communication and hate for each other which they lost for each other in the end. Here the setting is of a beautiful town which showcases trees and a mountain the background - it symbolises their free and pleasant state of mind even though practically them loosing their luggage in a foreign land is quite tragic!

4.3 Evolution of Wes Anderson's filmmaking style from "The Darjeeling Limited" (2007) to "The Grand Budapest Hotel" (2014)

4.3.1 Camera:

Between the The Darjeeling Limited and The Budapest Hotel, Wes Anderson has worked on one animated feature film Fantastic Mr. Fox which has dictated a major change in style in which the director works. Animation poses new challenges before the filmmaker has its own freedoms and restrictions. The use of handheld camera in The Grand Budapest hotel is null, while in his previous films like The Darjeeling Limited, Bottle Rocket and the The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou, he would use the handheld camera very often when his characters are in a heightened emotional state, like in an action sequence. Even in action sequences of The Grand Budapest Hotel, the director uses meticulously framed shots and dolly camera moves to shoot action. Near the ending when there is a ceasefire in the Hotel, these are how the frames look like: (Img 43, 44 & 45)



(Image 43)

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(Image 44)



(Image 45)

When working in stop motion animation, there is no way to employ a handheld camera movement in the shots since the director shoots each frame turn by turn and moves the characters accordingly. The way of working in animation has carried over into his style of making live-action films.

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4.3.2 Editing:

The director, post his animation work would minimize the number of cuts employed in his scenes where all he would need is a pan. Previously, he would usually cut back and forth on the actors faces during a conversation. He would make use of planned dolly moves and pans to maintain a sense of continuity between shots.

Images 46, 47 & 48 are a part of a single shot where the camera pans back and forth between Zero and M Gustave, eliminating the need of two cuts. Images 49 & 50 are from *The Darjeeling Limited* as it shows a similar scene with a cut, unlike *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.



(Image 46)



(Image 47)



(Image 48)



(Image 49)



(Image 50)

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Wes Anderson's growing tendency to cling to his style

Wes Anderson's style of filmmaking and his visual language is getting more personal and distinctive after his work in stop-motion animation. He uses a selective type of shots in his scenes and strays away from type of mise-en-scene that strays away from his style. The Grand Budapest Hotel is an example of this where he completely omits the use of handheld camera because it would stray away from his style. This type of camera work could still be seen in 2007's *The Darjeeling Limited* but not at all in *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.



(Image 51)



(Image 52)

We can see in img 51 & 52 the use of framing that breaks his symmetrical framing in The Darjeeling Limited to showcase the raw action feel of the scene.

5.2 Limitations of Wes Anderson's visual language

In a Wes Anderson film, the compositions, set designs and blocking is very identical and done with the script in mind. However, this approach arranging the mise-en-scene symmetrically can limit the the potential of the text in some scenes which really demand the breaking of such aesthetic. Moreover, the approach of using the same visual language in all of Anderson's films can limit the genres that the filmmaker can work in while retaining these strict rules of visual language. For example, by using this perfect and rather quirky visual style it is difficult to produce a script which requires extreme realism and documentary like approach to do justice to the script. When we see a film, we typically want the technical aspects to be invisible and help the viewer invest into the narrative rather than drawing attention to itself. A Wes Anderson film is every time breaks that rule. This takes the viewer's mind out of the narrative to a certain degree as tells it to indulge into the mise-en-scene. But as much as these meticulously arranged scenes are visual spectacles, after a point the viewer would be bored of the same visual style and would demand more interesting narratives which would require breaking this visual language. Anderson would certainly be aware of the

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drawbacks that his way of telling stories would have, and it must be his choice to only tell the kind of stories which would marry his style of visuals.

5.3 Not placing emphasis and developing foreign characters

Wes Anderson's storylines revolve around high-rich class Americans and they tend to not put emphasis on characters from foreign cultures and those characters serve merely as a way or the white protagonists to get their way around. The punjabi train attendant and his girlfriend, the villagers, etc. such characters are not given enough emphasis and this fact is evident even through his mise-en-scene and way he frames them.

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