**‘A Beautiful Mind,’** directed by Ron Howard

**CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**

**At Princeton University**

**John Nash**

**Opening scene:**

**Camera work**

A long shot shows John Nash sitting at the back of the room filled with new mathematics and physic students at Princeton University. He has chosen to sit at the back, even though there is a spare seat in front of him with the other students.

The camera zooms in to a medium shot to show John nervously sitting at the back with his head down. He nervously looks across at a fellow student, Martin Hanson and then a point of view shot is used to show Martin looking back at John confidently.

The camera zooms in to a close-up of the nervous and intense-looking John.

**Dialogue**

Professor Hellinger speaks to the students saying, ‘Mathematicians won the war. Mathematicians broke the Japanese codes and built the A- bomb. Mathematicians like you.’

Immediately we identify the students in the room as being successful in their field.

Professor Hellinger also issues a challenge to the students, ‘Who among you will be the next Morse, the next Einstein?’

This challenge places pressure and an expectation for John and the other students to achieve ‘publishable, applicable results’ while they are at the University.

John’s nervousness is revealed in a final medium shot shown.

**Princeton Garden Party:**

**Camera work**

An extreme close-up shows John holding a glass that is refracting light onto a table.

This indicates that he is fascinated by geometrical and mathematical patterns in the world.

A long-shot moves to an extreme long shot, showing John to be standing in the centre of a lot of people socialising with each other- John appears to be isolated in this group.

An extreme close-up of John holding the glass while it is refracting light is shown and this shot pans on to a plate full of lemons and then on to a fellow student’s tie. The light is illuminated on to the patterns on the tie, showing that John has found a connection between the light and the patterns. This also shows that John has the ability to see mathematical equations in his everyday life.

**Dialogue**

John says to the student Neilson, ‘There could be a mathematical equation for how bad your tie is.’ This shows that John is direct and comes across as rude; situations seem very ‘black and white’ or straightforward to him.

Later in the scene when Martin Hanson, another mathematics student, insults John, John retorts by stating ‘I imagine you’re getting quite used to mis-calculations.’

This shows that John is equally competitive, arrogant and can be rude when provoked.

**In John’s room at Princeton**

**Music**

Traditional classical opera is playing in John’s room which indicates he is from a formal, traditional background and lives a relatively ordered and serious life.

**Camera work**

A long shot shows John move his desk toward the window where it is lighter. A point of view extreme long shot shows John looking at the Princeton students socialising below his window. A close- up reveals John’s reaction to this: he is worried about his lack of social activity.

A point of view shot shows Charles Herman, a delusional flatmate enter the room. This indicates that John has created Charles for company.

**Sound**

We hear Charles cough before we see him. This reflects the Schizophrenic condition where people with the disease hear delusions before they see them.

**On the roof at Princeton University:**

**Dialogue**

John reveals to Charles (his delusional flatmate) that he:

* has had a ‘privileged upbringing.’
* ‘has a chip on both shoulders’
* ‘The truth is, I don’t like people much and they don’t much like me.’
* ‘I can not waste time with these classes, these books.’
* ‘I need to look through to the governing dynamics, find a truly original idea.’
* ‘It’s the only way I’ll ever… (and Charles concludes John’s words) matter.’
* Charles is representative of John’s own subconscious. When Charles completes John’s words, it is really John showing his insecurity and low self-esteem.

**The ‘Go’ competition with Martin Hanson:**

**Camera work**

A long shot shows John moving backwards amongst a group of pigeons, taking notes. A full shot shows Neilson Sol, Martin Hanson and Bender staring at John. A close up shot shows the pigeons that John is analysing.

Martin Hanson challenges John to a game of ‘Go.’ A series of close-ups and reverse close-ups show Martin and John playing the game. Martin appears cocky and confident as he challenges John’s lack of productivity at Princeton. John appears equally calm and confident until Martin makes his final winning move in the game. An extreme close-up shows the game counter placed on the board and a close-up shows John’s disbelieving face.

A medium shot show John stand up and accidentally knock over the game board. A final long shot shows him walking away agitated and the men stand in the background staring.

**Dialogue**

As John moves backward through a group of pigeons Martin Hanson makes the comment ‘look at him,’ highlighting John’s strange activity.

John states, ‘I’m hoping to extract an algorithm to define their movement.’ which indicates again that John can see possible mathematical equations in everyday situations. Bender then makes the quiet comment, ‘Psycho,’ which indicates the other students do not understand him at all.

Sol asks if John is ‘ever going to go to class?’ John retorts, ‘Classes will dull your mind. Destroy the opportunity for authentic creativity.’ John has rejected any boundary at the University that he deems useless.

Martin Hanson challenges John to a game of ‘Go;’ a mathematical challenge.

Martin also challenges John’s lack of productivity at the University: ‘Nash achievements zero,’ ‘What if you never come up with your original idea,’ ‘How will it feel when I’m chosen for wheeler and you’re not,’ ‘What if you lose.’

At this point Martin wins the game of ‘Go’ and John disbelievingly leaves the group of men. Martin states sarcastically, ‘Gentleman, the great John Nash.’

**At the Library, trying to work out his ‘original idea:’**

**Camera work**

A long shot shows John sitting in front of a library window that is covered in white mathematical equations; John has been trying to find an original idea.

A point of view shot shows Charles enter the scene. This indicates that John needs a friend at this time.

A close-up shows the mathematical equations that John has drawn on the windows. There are three sets of equations showing ‘a game of football,’ ‘a cluster of pigeons’ and a ‘woman chasing a man who has stolen her purse.’

A medium two-shot shows John and Charles talking about John’s search for an original idea. Charles encourages John to leave the library and get some food and ‘beer.’

A final long shot shows John leave the library with his hands in the air. He looks excited about taking a break.

**Dialogue**

The voice of Charles states ‘you’ve been in here for two days.’

John states that ‘Hanson has just published another paper.’ John also reveals that he has been drawing mathematical equations about ‘a game of football,’ ‘a cluster of pigeons’ and a woman chasing a man who stole her purse.’ Charles states ‘You watched a mugging. That’s weird.’

John shares that he must find an ‘equilibrium’ where all parties in a competitive situation win, this would be his ‘truly original idea.’

Charles asks, ‘when was the last time you eat?’ This indicates that John should take a break and get some food and beer.

John leaves the Library yelling, ‘I have respect for beer.’ Here Charles liberates John again, breaking his torment over trying to find an original idea.