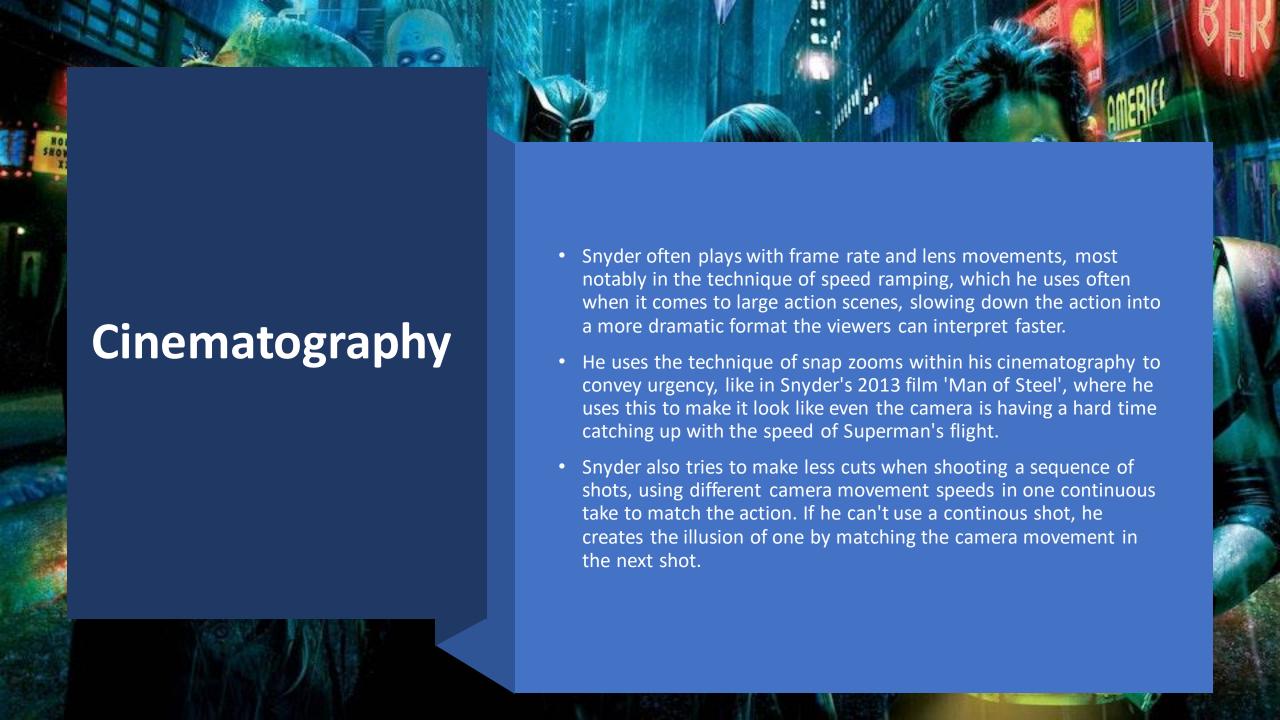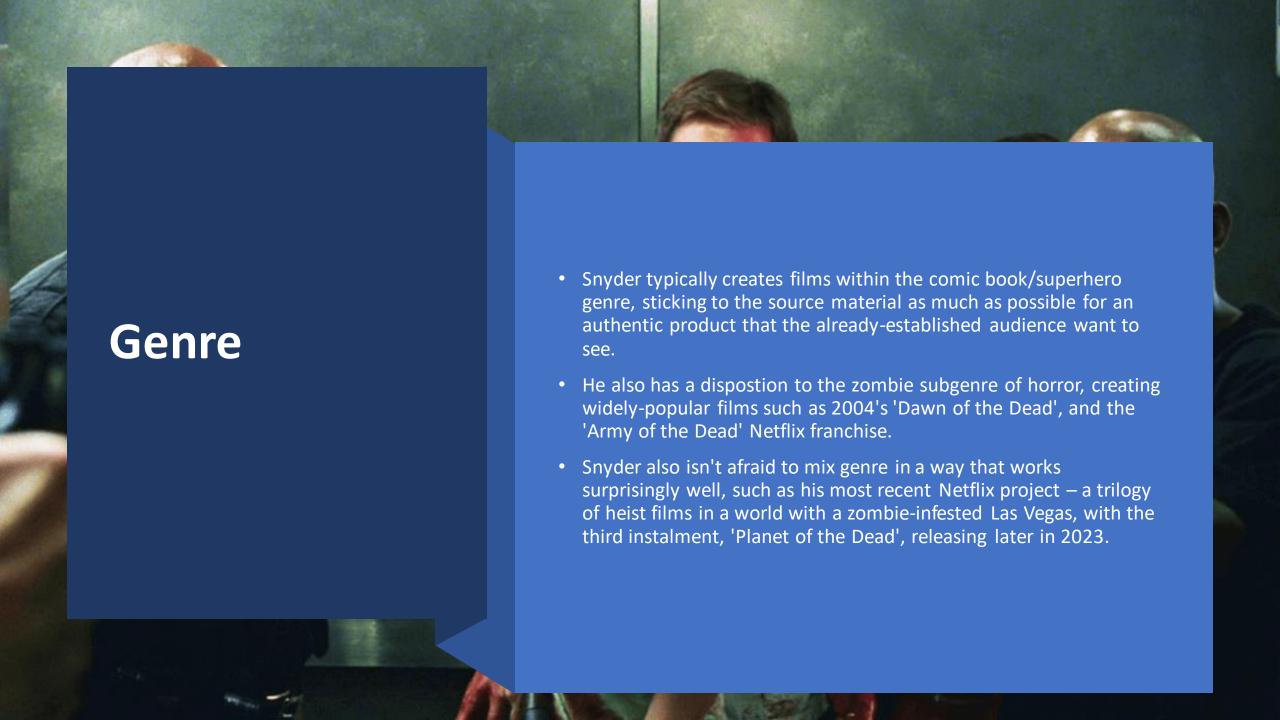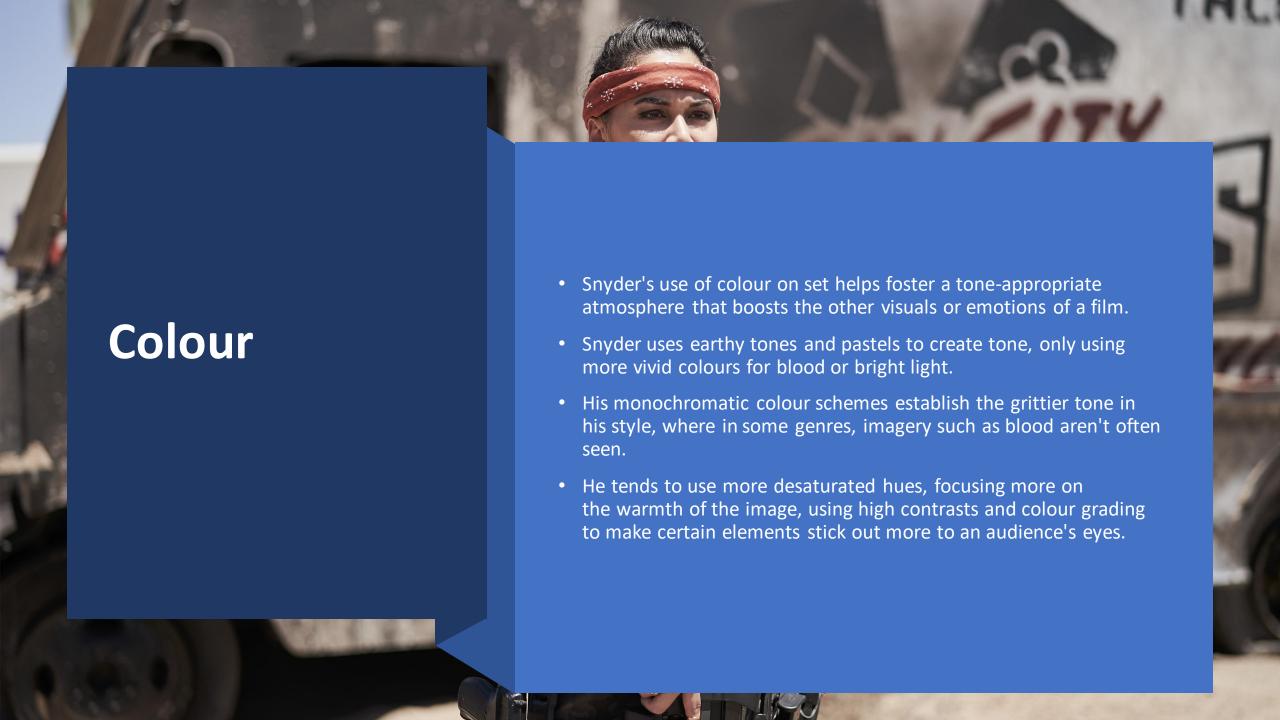# Auteur Theory:

Zack Snyder

Directing Style

- Key Conventions of Snyder's style includes the technique of speed ramping, typically to slow down the action during a fight scene and smoothly place the scene into a short burst of slow-motion. This opposes other directors, as it's more commonplace to use heavy placement of close-ups and fast cuts during action scenes.

- His directing style keeps each scene full of energy, and his films are brimming with visual and symbolic metaphors – evident in his 2013 film 'Man of Steel', where he uses Zod as the foil to Superman in each scene he's present through prop design.

- Snyder also goes for a grittier tone when filming action scenes, stating, "I want you to go, 'Oh my God, I guess you're right. If you just beat up a guy in an alley he's not going to just be lying on the ground. It's going to be messy.'"

Cinematography

- Snyder often plays with frame rate and lens movements, most notably in the technique of speed ramping, which he uses often when it comes to large action scenes, slowing down the action into a more dramatic format the viewers can interpret faster.

- He uses the technique of snap zooms within his cinematography to convey urgency, like in Snyder's 2013 film 'Man of Steel', where he uses this to make it look like even the camera is having a hard time catching up with the speed of Superman's flight.

- Snyder also tries to make less cuts when shooting a sequence of shots, using different camera movement speeds in one continuous take to match the action. If he can't use a continous shot, he creates the illusion of one by matching the camera movement in the next shot.

Genre

- Snyder typically creates films within the comic book/superhero genre, sticking to the source material as much as possible for an authentic product that the already-established audience want to see.

- He also has a dispostion to the zombie subgenre of horror, creating widely-popular films such as 2004's 'Dawn of the Dead', and the 'Army of the Dead' Netflix franchise.

- Snyder also isn't afraid to mix genre in a way that works surprisingly well, such as his most recent Netflix project – a trilogy of heist films in a world with a zombie-infested Las Vegas, with the third instalment, 'Planet of the Dead', releasing later in 2023.

Colour

- Snyder's use of colour on set helps foster a tone-appropriate atmosphere that boosts the other visuals or emotions of a film.

- Snyder uses earthy tones and pastels to create tone, only using more vivid colours for blood or bright light.

- His monochromatic colour schemes establish the grittier tone in his style, where in some genres, imagery such as blood aren't often seen.

- He tends to use more desaturated hues, focusing more on the warmth of the image, using high contrasts and colour grading to make certain elements stick out more to an audience's eyes.

Messages and Values

- Snyder's messages and values in his films typically revolve around the concept of family and that in some way or another the main cast is in their conflict to protect or benefit someone they love.

- This is evident in 'Man of Steel' where the character of Superman is stuck between his adoptive family on Earth and his biological family from his home planet, the conclusion ending with him protecting the Earth and preventing it's destruction.

- In 'Army of the Dead' it's also shown that, while some of the mercenaries are doing the heist for their own selfish reasons, the characters want to complete the job to benefit their families and loved ones – which later takes a turn for the worse.

Mise-en-Scene

- Mise-en-scene within Snyder's film is often set up so that the location or props within a scene have some symbolic value or represent some sort of metaphor in the narrative.

- Also, the set that the characters are on often interacts with them in the final product, such as snowfall in '300', or broken glass in 'Dawn of the Dead'. This grounds the scene, and develops the world as something feasible for an audience to picture themselves in.

- Each setpiece also looks "lived in" - something that has wear and tear over years of use, and not like something a production has manufactured to place into the film – it works as a composition.

Sources:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zack_Snyder
- https://filmlifestyle.com/zack-snyder-directing-style/
- https://filmlifestyle.com/color-palette-zack-snyder/#:~:text=He%20doesn%27t%20often%20go,adds%20depth%20to%20the%20scenes.
- https://youtu.be/9Y6-4_bNjp8
- https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/zack-snyder-movies-directing-style/#3-snap-zooms
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9LPsMFU-Ic