

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Come In explores issues of time and space in an unusual and different way. It uses the work and ideas of theorists such as Manuel Castells and Marshall McLuhan as a departure point. Castells introduced the concept “the space of flows” in his book entitled *The Informational City*. This term represents the idea that distant locations can share functions and meaning through their participation in electronic circuits and fast corridors. A prominent example of this would be the internet. Space and time convergence as new ‘virtual worlds’ are created. The first vignette in this documentary deals with cyberspace as a new territory and how it can be governed. As much as these new virtual information and space flows encourage new experience, they isolate and demean the truth of experience that comes from being in the ‘real’ place. The importance of this embodied learning is emphasised through the following two chapters on June and Basil. It also articulates how spaces of safety nourish this connection with place.

In terms of the media landscape, *Come In* would find itself comfortable as an insert on a magazine show. A programme that explores issues in an alternative or esoteric way. The target audience is older people, possibly with a tertiary education, interested in making meaning on a deeper and more intellectual level. This said, anyone can enjoy the piece as a snapshot into the lives of four interesting people. An audience that found a film like *Paris, Je t'aime* fascinating would really like *Come In*. This film employs the vignette genre and really does it well. *Come In* could almost be read as being quite similar, although on a much smaller scale. Four stories connected by the place of Grahamstown just as the stories or vignettes in *Paris, Je t'aime* all happen in Paris.

The newsworthiness of this piece is revealed mainly through the ideas represented about the convergence of time and space. In all the vignettes questions are raised around space and how it is created and how information is accessed. These are important concerns in a world that is increasingly relying on new networks of information- the world wide web and the internet. The piece begins with Camel du Plessis as being a representative for this new access. It continues with examples of how information has been acquired in the past. June as a librarian talks about access to knowledge through books and Basil through the experience of embodied learning. It is important as we move

forward in these 'postmodern times' to look back through the past at the ways that information was gained. Both to critique but also to keep the significant things that pre-modernity and modernity have taught us. Post-modernity being represented by the computer culture, modernity by the book culture and pre-modernity by an oral/storytelling culture.

In terms of content and narrative structure, there definitely is a post-modern aspect to this piece. The nature of working within the idea of vignettes is that you capture essential and significant moments and then move onto the next vignette. Establishing a character and a bit of their history is not emphasised as much as the content of the vignette. This technique can be observed in *Come In* as the characters' ability to be a safe space creator is foregrounded over other details about them. Vignettes are difficult to work with when considering audience reception. Most people are versed in story as having a beginning, middle and end which flows in a certain manner. When you change these conventions as a filmmaker, it does challenge peoples' understanding and therefore acceptance of the piece. I realise this may be the reason that some people don't fully comprehend the many meanings on a first viewing.

The sources were chosen before the theme and I think they work well. I wanted to do a piece about interesting people in Grahamstown as opposed to an event or issue such as crime or poverty that sparked a story. In retrospect, it may look as though Regina was put on at the end of the documentary for greater 'racial representation' but she does play a very important role in further integrating the ideas of space creation. My executive producer helped me to conceptualise the main theme of space. It was a useful way to link the people I wanted to film in a thought provoking and interesting fashion.

I used four sources in a five minute documentary. This length warrants two or three. The piece is busy and intense from start to finish as all four people are focused in on and not merely used for ancillary comment. It may have been wise to cut one of them to allow more time for the others.