

REFLECTIVE ESSAY

I will reflect on this project under three separate headings: technical, conceptual and interpersonal.

TECHNICAL

My major technical challenge was sound. My first shoot was with Camel in her study that looks onto a busy road. The noise of cars is clearly audible on my first recording and required a second shoot. All of the footage for Basil's chapter is shot outside which created a problem because of wind. I was determined to get strong footage in terms of sound and picture as well as it being required of me by my executive producer. I re-shot both Camel and Basil's interviews. The sound on the interviews with June proved to be the most problematic. The high pitch of her voice combined with distortion resulted in a lot needing to be done in the edit. When it comes to assessing my piece I would say that the weakest element is sound. I also learnt to be quite inventive when it came to sound as I had to film Basil on the beach, right by the waters' edge. With the assistance of my executive producer I acquired a microphone that could be attached to the front of the camera and was a little stronger than the normal camera mic. Once a sock was tied round it, it worked well to cut out the wind and the noise of the sea. The sound on my interviews with Regina was a little hot but required minimal tweaking during editing. My management and executing of sound recordings improved as the term went by due to my portfolio as sound person on our group project.

Throughout the year I have had an apprehension towards the technology of this television trade. But having to be responsible for all my own conceptualising, shooting and editing was extremely liberating. Constant hands on experience with all the technologies have benefited me enormously. Putting together an individual documentary meant I was on my own and could do things the way I like to do them. I didn't have to worry about someone looking over my shoulder and constantly correcting my shot, sound levels or tripod position. I made mistakes and I had to re-do things but that is where the greatest learning occurred.

The time which I had allocated for editing was affected by my shooting schedule and also the volume I shot. I know that I shot too much which meant I spent a great deal of time capturing. I was left with the final week of term to edit and that just wasn't enough. I could have put something together but it would have been of an acceptable standard for either me or my course requirements. The effort that went into contacting characters and going on numerous shoots deserved a proper editing procedure. My executive producer was extremely generous in the extension that he granted me to create and perfect a project I am very proud of. This enabled me to work hard on putting together a narrative that was complex and came out of a lot of interview footage. Sound needed extensive tweaking and the adding of audio effects was imperative.

CONCEPTUAL

This was a challenging piece to complete because of the nature of the themes and ideas. Working with abstract concepts to make them tangible in terms of video production is not easy but it definitely is rewarding. I know now for sure that this aspect of television is where my greatest strength lies. I've also learnt that this ability combined with a good grasp of the technology of editing software is what makes a superb editor. Although I do not ever see myself as a full time editor, this project has really opened my eyes to the art of editing. I am so much more aware of how films and television programmes are edited. How good editing choices really enhance the development of a character or storyline.

It was really exciting to feel like a documentary filmmaker instead of a television journalist during this project. Of course the two are not separate entities but I really enjoyed the artistic freedom this piece afforded. I liked the idea of vignettes as being something different and working with a narrative that ended up with a slight postmodern feel: fractured and uncertain. This was appealing to me. As this is my first individual piece it has my unique style. It is very exciting to already be developing a signature style or way of doings whilst being a young almost-graduate. My strength in conceptualising and working with narrative has lead to an interest in scriptwriting which is something I want to pursue next year.

INTERPERSONAL

I really enjoy filming because of the interaction with people. You learn a lot about yourself and others through the interview process. I always find it such a privilege to be let into someone's life when I interview them for a documentary. It is a privilege I think journalists sometimes abuse when situations are not handled with the necessary respect. The art of directing is very much concerned with interpersonal relations. *Come In* was my first chance at directing people on shoots and taking control of this kind of environment. I really enjoyed being at the helm and it helped develop an assertiveness and confidence within me. I was lucky to have four characters who were all very open and interested in what I was doing as much as I was interested in them. This helped to fuel my enthusiasm. Both my crew members were accommodating when it came to my heavy shooting schedule and let me take the camera whenever I needed it.

As I was exploring notions of space creation I began to be aware of my relationship with space. How a certain space could determine my feelings or how my emotions could determine how I felt in a particular space. For example, I felt much more comfortable in my editing suite working on my project when I was alone than when there were people around me. I think this kind of learning creates important awareness about the self and place and others.