

# Through Little Eyes

## Critical Analysis

Because of the nature of this piece, it was inevitable that my presence, as film-maker, would come through somewhat in the ideology of the piece. It would show up in my choice of children, and particularly in the questions that I decided to ask them. For this reason, I decided to make my presence even more obvious to the viewer by bringing my voice into the piece at an early stage, explaining my goals and guiding the viewer to understand the purpose of the piece.

To further illustrate my presence as film-maker, I kept to a rather strict question-answer style with the kids; this highlighted the presence of an invisible interviewer and reminded the viewer that there is a set purpose being sought out through the piece. I was also careful not to film "interview children" as "playing children" for B-roll. I didn't want to mix the two, because my B-roll was of a different style, whereby the camera seems more invisible (although not entirely so, as there are a few instances of "play children" looking directly at the camera) because it was directly addressed with far less frequency and it seems almost as though the camera just happened to catch these children at play.

To help bring out the theme of "looking through a child's eyes", I used camera angles that were lower, and used over-the-shoulder shots in some places to indicate perspective.

I consciously decided to avoid using B-roll over my interviews until the second question. I made this decision because I wanted to initiate the audience and make sure they understood the interview format, so that they didn't wonder why there were random voices over the B-roll.

## Self-Reflexive Analysis

The individual piece was a very difficult project for me. I had been working on another idea – Biblical families and parenting – for quite some time, when it suddenly fell through due to scheduling changes (one family needed to leave town suddenly on a last-minute business trip, and my other main family decided, also at last minute, to send their daughters to the coast for the school holiday, so I wasn't able to film anything).

I moved on to another idea, about interviewing Muslim women who wear purdah (veils). I was quite interested in doing this project and learning more about a controversial subject, but I was met with much resistance by the Muslim community and was unable to find girls who were willing to appear on camera, despite my offers to shoot them in silhouette.

I researched a few other ideas, including a profile of a little-known monastery outside of Grahamstown, but all of them fell through. After having a conversation with Paddy, however, I came upon the convention of filming children and compiling a film out of their responses. I was attracted to this idea because I was far more interested in doing a light-hearted piece than a serious, investigative one, and I felt that I could also make this piece somewhat political while maintaining the light-heartedness. I decided, therefore, to interview a number of children and ask them a set list of questions designed to invoke somewhat politicised answers.

I interviewed 30 girls in Grade 1 and 2 at Victoria Primary School, and another 20 boys in Grade 2 at Graeme College. I developed a method for making the children comfortable in a short space of time – on average, each interview lasted around 3 minutes – by asking them questions about home, pets, and their favourite subjects/sports as I did the soundcheck. I feel I was successful for the most part, because only a few of the children were terribly shy – most of them warmed up to me quickly and, after the first few warm-up questions I worked into my routine, they opened up and started to give very interesting and amusing answers.

The editing process was frustrating at first, as I tried to come up with the most appealing format in which to organise the interview clips. For the most part, however, it went quickly, and although I was stressed with my project running so last-minute, I felt lucky to have been organised and finished days before the other people who had been working longer on their pieces. All in all I really enjoyed working on the project, it was a lot of fun and a very welcome change from the more serious pieces we had been working on throughout the year.