

STILL HERE

Critical analysis

The idea for the documentary was to show how old people have been regarded as just old and some have been compelled to stay in old-age homes. I thought it would be interesting to find out what they regarded as the most important factors of life, and how they had lived their lives. I also thought it would be quite fascinating to know what they think of the youth of today; just to make them realise that they are not alone; Hence the name of the piece.

The name of the piece was given to me by a friend. Many may think that I am being insensitive by calling this piece "Still Here"; but the name refers to how we have somehow forgotten that old people still have the mental capacity to live life; just because they are elderly (over 80 years), they should not be discarded, they should still be represented in life and should not be abandoned by the youth; As the piece made me realise that they yearn to spend more time with younger people, as one of the subjects stated. Thus the name is not a literal reference to them still being here.

I must state that I felt that 5min was too short, because I had to leave out a lot of interesting pieces and just put the ones that I thought were relevant to drive the piece. The camera shots decided to use were mostly close-ups to show the contours of the skin, facial expressions and I felt that this makes the piece look more beautiful and appealing.

The final shots I decided to use in the piece were meant to be metaphorical. I think that I did not manage to execute the idea I had in my head coherently. I used the train to symbolise the journey that my subjects have taken to get where they are now; Which is why the piece starts with shots of an old, stationery train; referring to how the elderly are viewed as being too old to do anything for themselves. Although they do get to a certain age where they are unable to perform, it all depends on the person more than it depends on age. The shot of the incoming train is metaphorical for the journey that they are still travelling as they get older than they already are.

I also used a number of still shots. Firstly, I just wanted to slow the piece down in order to give it a calm feel and secondly, I used photos of Miss Wood and Mr Zondani of when they were younger for the viewer to see what they mean when they say that they used to be younger. I had initially thought of finding people resembling them and having

some re-enactments, but due to the time constraints, it proved to be impossible. Therefore the cutaways were also meant to be a representation of the whole; I did not want to use obvious shots; Such as the shots of feet, when Miss Wood is talking about the youth. The feet represent the hustle and bustle of the youth and how they are up and about and this is accompanied by the noise in the background of them chatting.

The shots of the two women at the end of the piece were just to show how happy the elderly are. I had interviewed them, but I could not use their interviews because of bad sound due to the interviews being done in a spur of the moment situation because I found them sitting outside the train station when I was going to film the train.

I think the sound was relatively adequate considering the problems I had with the sound equipment. The interview with the Whites was done with the camera mic because the Shure Mixer battery was flat and none of my group members cared to tell me. I was also not able to use the Lapel mics because Mr White was becoming very irritable with being on camera, as he was anyways initially reluctant to be in the interview until his wife persuaded him. The battery of the Shure Mixer also died half way through my interview with Mr Zondani. But I somehow managed to get a reasonably good sound.

The subjects in the documentary were asked similar questions. It was very interesting to hear how they understood the questions and also how they answered them differently. In the end I had to choose the best answered questions. In the piece I decided to let the Whites talk more about marriage and living together for so many years; Miss Wood focuses on life in general and her memories; and Mr Zondani focuses on the youth in a more political manner. I tried to let the personalities come through, through what they were saying.

I must admit that this is not the best piece of work I could have done and I do regret it because it is my final year's piece, but I think that with the little I had, I did try to use it to the best of my ability. The idea was good but it was not executed that nicely. I do however think that in its own right, the piece does work.