

CMNS3450 Media Production: Project Exegesis Proposal

Hannah Jordan

1. Introduction to My Project

Breakaway is a 12-minute promotional documentary, coalescing live action with animation to tell a respite camp's story. This project will incorporate Camp Breakaway's history, services and the experience of two families to garner support to its cause. It will be published online on Video On Demand services with a 1-3minute edited version for advertising purposes.

2. Roles to Be Undertaken

I will be acting as co-cinematographer and animator for this project. *Breakaway* will pursue a social art form, combining the collaborative efforts of different affective, situated and embodied knowledges (Rabiger, 2009, p.24). The negotiation between diverse bodies, this 'authentic dissent' (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003, p.327), will create a highly deliberated product.

According to Cowan, the cinematographer is "charged with the technical and practical realization of a director's vision" (2012, p.3). Involved in the previsualization process, the cinematographer "finds visual solutions to narrative challenges" (Hurbis-Cherrier, 2013, p.112), deciding angles, lenses, composing lighting aesthetics and physically producing the shot (Shand & Wellington, 1988, p.166).

Animation in documentary "offers a novel form of imagining" (Cohen, Salazar & Barkat, 2009, p.308). Culhane posits that the animator creates frames displayed in rapid succession, giving the illusion of movement (1988, p.32). The role of the animator is to serve a visual alternative, going where live action often cannot, and can be executed through digital and physical formats like motion capture or stop motion (Wells, 2006, p.10).

3. Previous Experience

My role as director in a first year Documentary course unveiled the fundamentals of the form, revealing a documentary as being a "corner of actuality seen through a temperament" (Rabiger, 2009, p.24). It imparted techniques about how to use the mediated lens to induce the audience. As a confluence, Audience Studies showed that deviating away from stimulating cognitive dissonance and using persuasive advocacy documentary techniques, like personal testimony, can ascertain a dominant reading from the viewer.

Producing a character driven piece in Screen Writing created an understanding of sociological telling details of people and their behavioral nuances that reveal character (Rabiger, 2009, p.134). This important storytelling device I will be able to practically train the camera on. This course also taught me the linearity of cause and effect of narrative

structures and the importance of an overall trajectory of enigma resolution for audience satisfaction.

Being the cinematographer in Music video subjected me to grammar of visual design, importantly the mise-en-scene, camera motivation and shot types. This experience has allowed me to develop an acumen in framing and the working principles of equipment. My interests in mixed media art installations and European Cinema has exposed me to innovative cinematography and storytelling methods like stop motion.

A Photography course created insight into light theory, its Inverse Square Law creating comprehension of f-stop measurement and how to bounce light to reveal geometric form. Added with my background in visual arts and practice of the chiaroscuro effect in emphasizing and de-emphasizing elements, I have an understanding of an images weight and the power of negative space in directing audience's eye. My perspicacity of visual subtext and visual metaphor, learnt in Screen Drama, has additionally informed how we will be able to use the symbolic placement of objects to create the 'feeling' of an enlivened microcosm.

This accumulation of cultural capital, manifesting as my habitus and further becoming a part of my internalized intuition will aid in the completion of this project.

4. Exegesis Topic

I intend to direct my analytical gaze during this projects evolution at the constraining and enabling structures of client based documentary filmmaking. This research will examine the interplay of the individual, field, domain and resulting production of novelty. Delving into the cinematographers and animators struggle in authentic representation, it will look at the expectations of documentary genre, the reactive or proactive field, the negotiation of the individual and if this arena could see any metamorphosis in the domain. It will investigate just how these circumscribe the creativities liberties and agency of the individual.

In this process I am hoping to disprove the presumption that the production process in documentary is creatively stagnant. This pursuit will manifest as the question '*Aesthetic and authentic cinematic representation- is documentary filmmaking creatively dormant bound by constraining structures?*'

I will be using the theoretical underpinning of the System's Model of Communication (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). This confluence model will delineate the circular causality of the field, domain and individual, uncovering each effect. Using this as my focal theory, I will be incorporating other analogous scholarship such as Anthony Giddens 'Structuration' theory dealing with structure and agency (Davies & Sigthorsson, 2013), and the Group Creativity Model recapitulating the feedback loop of group functioning (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003).

The methodology I will be using is the Practitioners Based Inquiry. It draws on Aristotle's notion of the 'active intellect' by using self-reflective mediation on practise to enable

progression (Davidson, 1992). I will be reflecting-in-action by recording the conditions of each situated conflict in an electronic journal, detailing the negotiations and expectations (Schon, 1983, p.3). I will also be drawing on production paperwork like contracts, the amended visual design of storyboards and comparing the initial narrative structure. This auto-ethnographic research, a concurrent attempt to be both subjective and objective, will guide me “towards the acquisition of intellectual autonomy, improved judgement making and enhanced technical competence” (McIntyre, 2006, p.4). By reflection-on-action I will engage in a process of continual learning.

References

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