

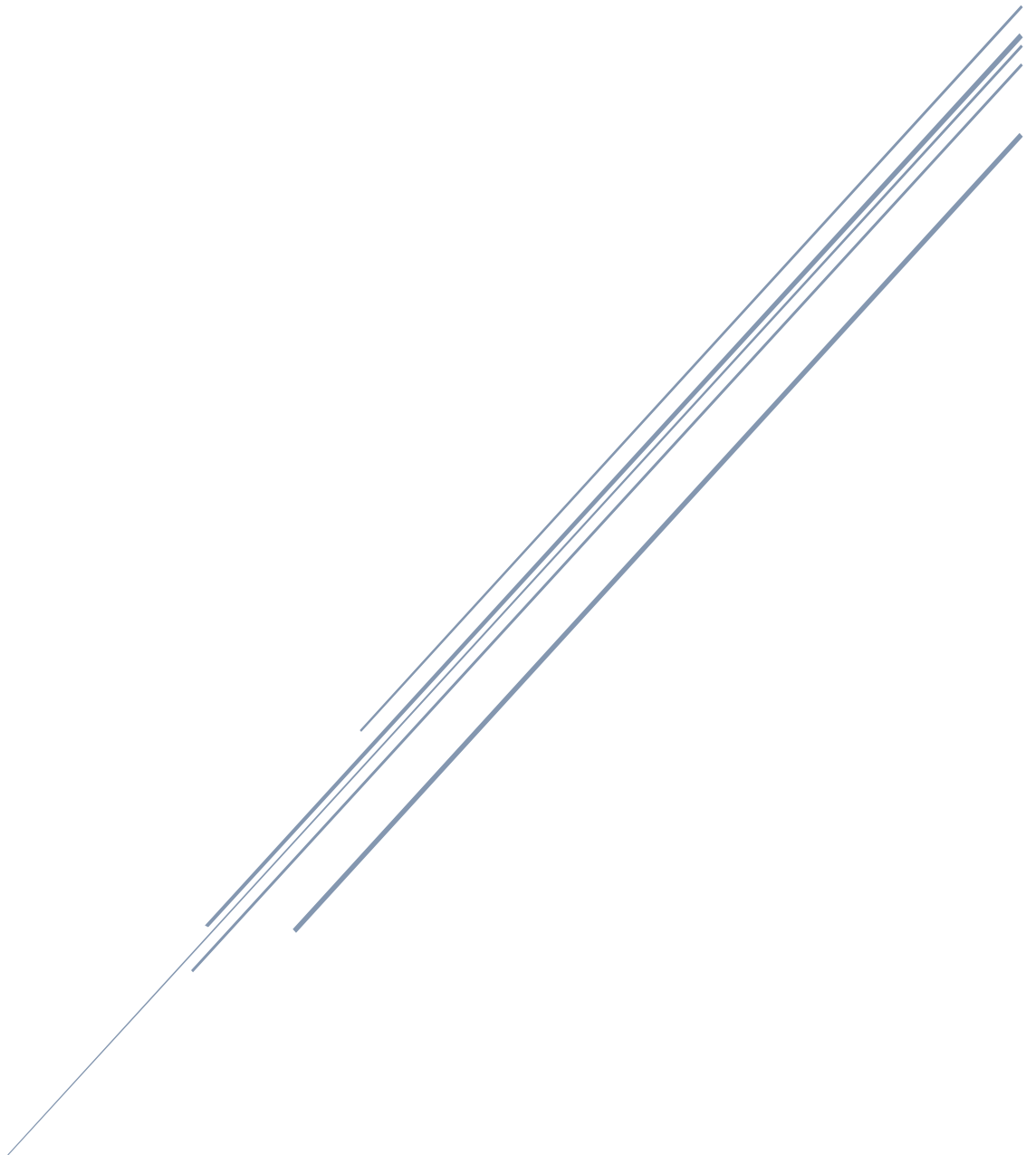
WAY OF PERCIEVING ESSAY

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When it comes to partaking in any creative project, it is important to reflect on the process to gain insight into the way in which a project turns out. Because the process will always impact the outcome. Therefore, when it comes to my own creative project, I will critically evaluate it and reflect on my own strengths and weaknesses as I believe this will inevitably help me become a lifelong learner and build upon skills to help me in any future endeavours. For the practice based work I undertook, I created a short silent film about a boy dealing with domestic issues, whilst dreaming and escaping into his own world. Therefore I will analyse what went well and what I would have done instead, specifically as a writer and director. This exploration is important because it will help me understand my intentions, and what I want to tell the audience through my work.

Firstly, for the pre-production phase of my practice based project, I had planned to shoot this film in two days due to the availability of the actors. So I created a storyboard for almost every shot within the film, and when it came to shooting the film, I was fully prepared and able to get all the shots done in the short time that we had to film. Reflecting on the decision to do a storyboard, I believe this was a success for the first day of shooting, and very important to the overall outcome of the film because I wasn't thinking of all the different shots and angles on the spot, which made for a smooth day of shooting with limited stress and a good atmosphere. However, on the second day of filming, I was less prepared because that day was spent on filming contemporary dance choreography, which I could not fully pre-plan. Despite this, the day was a success and I managed to get all the shots needed to complete and edit the film for post-production.

J.P. Ogilvy (1996-7) states that "A student who observes and evaluates herself - her thinking, feelings, learning or acting - is also being reflective, and valuably so". I agree with this statement because in evaluating myself, I have realised that I could have better prepared for the second day of filming in my pre-production to avoid any problems that might occur such as time management and execution of the cinematography to create the best effect. As the director and cinematographer for the vast majority of this film, I would have found it a lot easier to have another cinematographer in the making of this film because that would have made directing the scenes more easy, and less stressful. Therefore, I would have better prepared for the second day of shooting.

One of the films which has influenced my decision making as a director, is *Pans Labyrinth* (2006) by Guillermo Del Toro. This is because the theme of fantasy versus reality is prevalent in both our films, and so aesthetically, I took inspiration. In an

interview from warner bros (2019), Guillermo Del Toro states that “ I wanted the audience to experience a movie in which they were not sure if the fairy tale elements were real or not”. Taking this quote into account in my own work, influenced that way in which I used visual storytelling to address the audience in a more subtle way. For example, at the beginning of my film, the setting takes place in a bright vibrant nature like setting with the protagonist making his way through the location. This along with the slow moving cinematography and warm colour palate, creates a dreamlike atmosphere, separate from reality. As well as this, the slow melodic non-diegetic music enhances this setting and this combination of visual storytelling is what conveys to the audience the mood of the protagonist. However, in contrast, the protagonist is often at a home environment, where the mood of the protagonist is also conveyed through a cold, blue colour palate to oppose the warm dream like setting at the start of the film. This is one of the ways in which I tried to get the audience to think about whether or not what they see in the film is real. Therefore, reflecting on this piece of work, I do believe I was successful in creating a film with a fantasy versus reality theme, and this helped to create an aesthetically pleasing and visual reliant film.

However, reflecting on my work as a director, I realise I should have given more direction to the actors because this film is heavily reliant on visual storytelling. This would have also made for a better work space for the actors I worked with, giving them more confidence in their performances. Furthermore, I should have taken the importance of physicality into account especially in a film with no dialogue. This would have made for a better performance, and given more depth to the characters being portrayed.

When it comes to the mis en scene my film, I wanted to capture the protagonist in a contrast of difficult and pleasant situations to give a sense that the character is enveloped in a repetitive cycle of going from extreme content to extreme discontent. This helped to convey the feelings of the protagonist, as the narrative clearly progresses with him in these situations, which create the sense that he is trapped in his own world. This further informs the use of the fantasy versus reality theme. Reflecting on this now, I would defiantly explore the more extreme side of discontent, not just within the situation of a domestic home, but with also exploring different characters outside of his home to create more drama, and to also have a character who helps him get through his obstacles and problems. This would have added more depth to the story, which I would love to include.

Symbolism in my film mainly revolves around the Dahlia plant, shown a number a scenes throughout the film. This symbol is used to represent the protagonists purity and innocence within the film which was effective in getting an audience to feel empathy towards the character. The Italian director Federico Fellini (BrainyMedia Inc 2022) once said “If you see with innocent eyes, everything is divine”. Reflecting on this

as a director, I would change the way the shots were taken to capture the plant, in order to make the symbolism more impactful and to see the film through an innocent lens. This would be done by using camera movements in rhythm with the music playing, as this could evoke a sense of playfulness. A quote from Ridley Scott (quotestats.com) suggests that "The only way to see a film remains the way the filmmaker intended: Inside a large movie theatre with great sound and pristine picture". This quote supports my reflective intent, as I would combine the sound and picture to reinforce the symbolism. As well as this I would add a scene where perhaps the protagonist interacts with the plant more, rather than it feeling like a distant object. This would help to make the symbolism more important within the film.

Furthermore, as a director I also wanted to show the isolation and alienation of the protagonist towards the climax of the story. Following the three act structure, this is a critical moment in the story, as I wanted to create rising tension up until the climax of the film. I did this by using a hanging fly shot high on the wall lingering above the actor as he is seated on the ground looking distraught in a bathroom. This static shot in a night vision setting was impactful because it is very different to the rest of the cinematography in my film. It also shows that the character is not in a good state of mind and not thinking clearly therefore, this scene in which the protagonist contemplates hurting himself out of frustration, is an obstacle for the character to overcome in the hero's journey. Reflecting on this, I am happy with the outcome and overall my intentions as the director were met.

In conclusion, as a director, the intentions for my film were met, and I am pleased with the outcome. Aesthetically, my influence from Guillermo Del Toro and the fantasy genre is prevalent in this film, through the use of strong contrasting colours to create the effect of juxtaposition. As well as this, I was able to express the mood of the protagonist through the music and visual storytelling to get the audience to see the film through a childlike lens. However, reflecting on the pre-production, I would have better planned the days of shooting the film to create better time management and a more comfortable environment for all those involved. As well as this, I would have liked to work more closely with other cinematographers to allow me to better focus on directing and informing the actors to give the best performance. Overall, I have found that reflecting on my practical work has given me insight into what I need to do to improve and will help me to make the same mistakes as I have done already. Therefore, this evaluation has helped me to become a lifelong learner and I will continue to evaluate my future work to build up my skills.

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