

Critical Reflection of my specialism in Major Project

In this essay I will explore the specialism of editing with one of the final year films I was involved in, this one being "Stationary Bike". I will be critically evaluating my role as editor, how my team work and problem solving affected this role and how my influencers affected my thought process and how this affected the outcome of the film.

"The purpose of reflection is therefore to bring our reasoning processes and behaviour patterns to the surface and make them explicit. However, uncovering these can be difficult because so much of this knowledge is tacit and spontaneous." (Burridge, Hinett, Paliwala, & Varnava, 2002)

To start with, I want to begin looking back to before the film entered the post production stage. Until then, my only influences were films that were in the same type of genre of Stationary Bike. Instead of looking towards actual personnel's I thought it'd be more useful to see what same kind of clichés crop up in each film and at what times the plot starts to unravel itself. Looking back this, I'm glad I looked at the films rather than the editors, I didn't want to just copy someone else's style, but to create my own and I think look multiple films and investigating how they are edited gave me more of a variety of ideas rather than focusing on a few specific people.

Before analysing the film, I must first analyse myself, and the way I approach my role. *"The movie for me is always written in the edit. After what you shoot that one of my least favourite things to hear is 'I shot this great movie I just need to edit it', because fuck you man that's not how it works like, you can take shit and edit it into a great thing like, it's everything, the edit is everything, editing is the hardest thing"* (Westerbeek, 2015)

Casey Neistat for me is just one of the biggest influencers I have when it comes to filmmaking. I'm not sure if this is through similar outlooks on life, or same approach to film making, but his style just seems to connect with me, I understand it, and I think that's what matter the most. *"The edit is the difference between a pile of paper and a pencil, and the Iliad. Pile of instruments and the Beatles. There's nothing mechanical about editing. The edit is where the story is told, the edit where the movie is crafted, the edit is what matters more than anything else"* (CaseyNeistat, 2015) His ideology of the way modern films are created and the way he looks at them is something I can connect with.

Stationary Bike was *"for me, written in the edit"*, it was a film that was completely adapted during the post production stage. For the first few rough cuts, it was completely based off script, it wasn't until I was allowed to have full creative control of the footage is when the film started to find its current form. At this point the current directional vision was pushed aside, and the creative flow of the edit came into place, and this is where Walter Murch played a key role.

"Discontinuity is King" (Murch, 2012). Discontinuity, the word that I based Stationary Bike off, the word that structured the new narrative of this story. The reason short films don't appeal to me as an audience member is simply because of the crammed story, where there's a three-act structure in 15 minutes. With Stationary Bike, I wanted to make it as close to 10 minutes as possible, and not to start at the traditional beginning of the story to

give the audience context, but to start in the middle. *"You need to set the tone early on. If you give the audience a path, chances are they're going to follow it"* (Marks, Editing, 2012). The jump cut at the start of Stationary Bike was from my point of view the most important shot in the whole film, hence why I chose to have an alternative start. This then *"set the tone early on"*, it allowed the audience to start to understand where this film could be going and allowed the film to *"give the audience a path"*. Doing this allowed me to then bring in genre stereotypes and allowed me edit in a temporal discontinuity style. Using this style then cut down a good 4-5 minutes from the movie which would of traditionally be the beginning of the film, without losing any of genre stereotypes that the director wanted. The start of the film is the most important part of this film, it fully *"sets the tone early on"*, it literally shows you the element that the character is internally facing, it shows you the two key shots that will make the structure of the story. The importance of these shots become unparalleled to the rest of the film, and once you could see the bedroom scene play all the way through, this is where the story is about to take a change, and that was important, hence why I never allowed the audience to see what he did after he woke up until it was necessary.

This discontinuity style allowed me to also edit in a style that I am constantly watching and adapting with, bringing the new medium of online content with a genre that typically would not explore this type of editing. Being comfortable in the edit stage is a must for me, otherwise I'm worrying more about editing within the genre than I am the story. *"When we develop a pattern of behavior that works in certain situations, we will tend to repeat it until it becomes automatic."* (Burrige, Hinett, Paliwala, & Varnava, 2002) This could mean that I am constantly putting myself into a corner, and not allowing myself to fully experiment, maybe this is due to being too comfortable or realizing that I can only edit in a certain way, however I do believe for this film, this was the best way to complete it.

Kolbs learning cycle has been in parallel affect throughout all stages of Stationary Bike for myself. Before the film started filming, I was constantly editing test footage in different ways, using different types of coloring to see which complimented the film. On the other side of this I was consistently watching films, tv shows, trailers, anything that I thought could give me some form of inspiration when it came down to the final edit for the film. Additionally, I was watching daily videos of online content creators that inspire me and the way I edit. Using active experimentation like this allowed me to feel more prepared when it came down to the edit itself bringing in more knowledge on the area itself.

We then move onto concrete experience, an area that I was able to grow upon thanks to the active experimentation. By doing these test footage edits and watching relevant comps, I was then able to take on board clichés for the film genre, and when stationary bike had been filmed, I not only had a lot of things prepared like music and colour LUTS, but I also had ideas to bring to help let them film flow and to propel the story.

Reflective observation was the stage I hit when it got to the third rough cut render of the film. At this point I was very much sticking to the script, however when I sat back and just watched the film I felt that some things needed changing for the story to be king. This reflection was needed for the film to advance more, this allowed me to tailor with the structure of the story and thanks to concrete experience and active experimentation I had some ideas that I had saw in some of the comps and in some internet films that I had previously watched.

The new idea I had for the structure of the story was thanks to abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation, both coming back into play here and allowed me to experiment with the footage just as I did back in the test footage stage. *"The outcomes of reflection may include a new way of doing something, the clarification of an issue, the development of a skill or the resolution of a problem. A new cognitive map may emerge, or a new set of ideas may be identified."* (Boud, 2013) Thanks to this, the Déjà vu idea sprung upon me, and like I did in the active experimentation stage, I was allowed the room to experiment. This cycle was an act this film needed in the post production stage for the story to be fully complete.

Problem solving was a big factor in this film, I had numerous of problems to try and get around. The biggest one of all was to take a risk, *"the most dangerous thing you can do in life is play it safe"* (Neistat, 2015). Alex the director had taken a huge risk with this film, it's a film he can't post online or anywhere that isn't a film festival, and even then, he is extremely limited, he's thrown all his eggs into one basket and it was only right that I did the exact same in the edit. I feel like the one thing that stands me out as an editor is the exposure to the internet, and how I look towards internet films as inspiration instead of traditional film making. I wanted to bring that advantage into Stationary Bike, I had to make sure that this film stood out. Trying to convey the change of structure of the story to the director was difficult, I didn't want to stand on his toes, or make it out like I was downgrading the film he had shot but wanted to show him an alternative way of portraying the film. *"I tend to give the director three versions of something, the first day; new directors tend to be surprised by that."* (Squyres, Editing, 2012) I understand to the director that this film had some form of deeper meaning to him, however to me, I just wanted to create something in the edit which I personally think was its best version. I think that dysconnectivity I had towards the film allowed me to see these alternative versions. *"Nonlinear editing is a huge, tremendous change in our industry and a boom, and it enables us to try many different things and save different versions."* (Tichenor, Editing, 2012) I wasn't stuck on tunnel vision, and I'm extremely glad that happened, otherwise I don't think I would've been the right person for this film.

Stationary Bike tested me as an editor, it was the first time I went deep into a genre and a type of film that I was not familiar with. Typically, throughout university I could adapt films to my own style throughout the post production stage and I know that the director would be happy with it, but this one was different. This was the first film where I was heavily involved in all three stages of production, and where test footage and alternative versions of the films affected the next stage. As an inspiring editor this film allowed me to creatively learn genres and techniques completely outside of my comfort zone, it was also the first time editing a short film at a 10-minute length. Here I had to quickly learn how to keep the audience's attention attached to the film, keeping plot, rhythm and pace for the film was key for the story to elevate at its peak.

Stationary Bike as the final film I edit for my BA degree makes me realise how far I have come and grown as an editor and as a film maker overall, I have learnt so much throughout university and I hope this film really embraces this. The one thing I will take away from this film, is simple. The story is always king.

References

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