

W A S T E L A N D

Logline: Three ill-equipped adolescents question the fundamentals of friendship as they endure a primitive struggle for survival in a post-apocalyptic ecosphere.

Film Production Role: **Editor**

Table of Contents

1. Reflection as Editor (1000 words) p. 2
2. Reflection of Collaboration (964 words) p. 7

Works Cited p. 11

Word Count:

1963 Words

Important – please note:

- This work has been fabricated to enable teachers to experiment with applying the assessment criteria. It may not fulfil all of the formal requirements of the assessment task as outlined in the guide.
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- This work will be replaced with authentic student work after first assessment in 2019.

My role as Editor

This project was not my first experience as editor and by this point I had already started developing my own routine and editing “style”, so I began by going through the same process I had used in the past. Firstly, I sorted the “good shots” from the “bad shots”; this is simply done by highlighting them in red (figure 1).

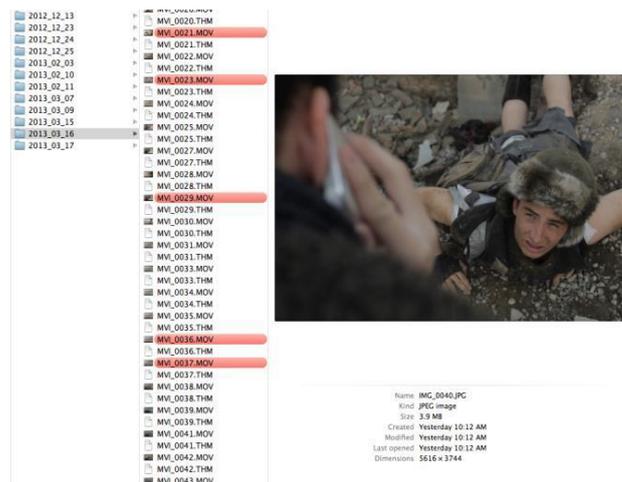


Figure 1. Highlighting the good shots in red (screenshot of my work).

Then I labeled all the shots in Adobe Premiere, and used certain keywords, such as “Hole” or “Epic”, as they reminded me of where the shots fit chronologically in the story (figure 2).

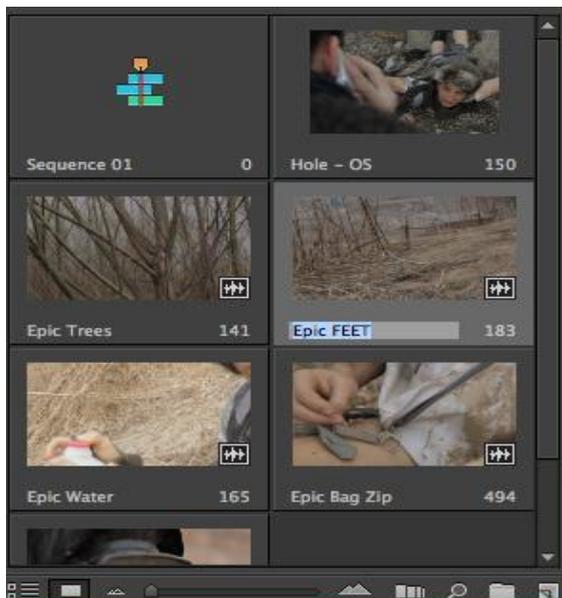


Figure 2. Screenshot of my work labeling the shots.

I then proceeded to make a very rough edit of the film, with no sound editing, no color correction, with a final product rendered in relatively low quality. By doing this rough edit I was able to accomplish several things; I got a feel of whether or not the film was going in the right direction and if not, there was still time to reshoot certain scenes.

On top of this, I could also give the sound designer some tangible material to start working with as soon as possible. In this case, we also had a composer working with us, who created the music specifically for our film.

After creating the rough edit, I then started some preliminary color correction tests, examples of which can be found in figure 3.



Figure 3. Examples of preliminary color correction.

In order to achieve this effect, I increased the contrast, turned down the reds, and brought up the blues and greens. It gives a bit of a grungy feel to the movie, which I thought was necessary to make it feel post-apocalyptic. However, as I began to color correct the rest of the shots I realized it was too overbearing. In the end, I went through the film about five times, retrying different color schemes, before settling on the final one. Even though it is meant to be an apocalyptic film, bluer skies would have been much more useful than the polluted grey skies that took up most of the film, since with a blue sky I could have chosen to color correct it to a grey color had I wanted to. Eventually, I finished my color correction with a yellowish tint, as well as increased contrast, color correction was important to achieve our goal to give a visual cue to the viewers that this is a post-apocalyptic world, thereby avoiding having to film backstory shots. *The Book of Eli* was a strong influence on this part, since it has rather unique color correction, which made me think that following a similar color scheme would help establish the story for the audience. Unfortunately, due to the lack of a Hollywood budget, I was not able to achieve such a dramatic effect. I also wanted to avoid the look of crushed blacks and blue shadows, as that is such an overused color palette.

As for my editing technique, I went for a somewhat inconsistent style. The film takes place after the apocalypse, where the unexpected is a daily occurrence, so I thought it would be fitting to mimic this by using some very unexpected techniques, such as jarring cuts. A lot of the editing in the end was simply showing reactions, therefore it was not incredibly complex and there were not many special effects.

Making the opening title was relatively simple; to get the browned edges, I made the text into a 3D layer, and then added two lights (one spotlight for the white, one ambient for the brown edges) (figure 4).



Figure 4. Screenshot of our opening title.

Although the “walking over the text” effect may seem easy, it was actually one of the most time consuming editing processes in the film. I had to create a mask around the person walking in the front and move it over frame by frame (figure 5). Luckily, I was able to get away with not being exceedingly precise by increasing the mask feathering.



Figure 5. Screenshot of my work creating the opening title.

In the scene where the character of Alex (Goggles) eats dog food, I had to make the audience understand that Nico (Black Poncho) and Valtter (Yellow Tank-Top) were playing a prank on him (figure 6). For this, I had to constantly cut between the two to show their reaction building up. As they started laughing, I showed Alex's reaction, which delivered the intended effect.



Figure 6. Valtter and Nico play a prank on Alex (from our film).

During the scene in which Alex gets hit by an egg, Nico begins laughing uncontrollably; as he is doing that, I cut to a long shot. Although a seemingly insignificant choice, I think it adds a nice

touch to the film, reminding viewers that even in an end-of-the-world scenario the characters are still human.

For the scene where Nico and Valtter cry desperately, I broke the conventions of standard filmmaking and emulated more of a “YouTube” style of editing. I thought that the constant cutting would add to the chaos of the scene and show the different stages of their apparent despair (figure 7).



Figure 7. Screenshots from the crying scene in our film

It also allowed me to cut between moments of relative calmness and then cut right back into the chaos. After they start calming down, I cut to a smooth pan that crosses over their faces and eventually crossfades into the sun. The use of a fade suggests time passing, while the cut to the sun makes everything seem grueling. When it cuts to the mirage-like shot, the color correction becomes incredibly yellow, adding to the whole feel that they are possibly hallucinating.

The freeze frame at the end with the three characters jumping in the air was meant to be a cliché, whose purpose was mainly to mock those classic 1980s teenage films, such as *Playing for Keeps* (1986) or *The Breakfast Club* (1985), while also ending the film on a happy note.

I am really proud of the opening sequence and I believe it was successful in setting a dramatic tone that resulted in nothing, which was one of our main intentions. The fast editing contributed to giving a sense of urgency, mystery and tension. There were some continuity errors throughout the film, which we discovered only in the editing stage. For example, at 0:43, the can in Alex’s hand has the label on. At 0:59 the label is not there. There were some other errors that I spotted

along the way. In certain shots the characters are walking, but in the next they are already in place, which disrupted the flow of the film. A visible example of this can be found in Fig 8. All of that aside, I am proud of the editing job I did on this film and feel like I made a valuable contribution and learned more about the role.

Fig 8. This is the shot where he is still in motion and it cuts to a still shot



Collaboration with others

Intentions

The Core Production Team (CPT) for this film was composed of my friends Faysal as director, Harri as cinematographer, Emma as sound designer, and me as editor. Together we decided to make a film set in a post-apocalyptic era, since this is a genre we all like and wanted to experiment with. Our goal was to have a very plot-driven text to charm the audience, which is nevertheless ultimately very simple in nature, and with a style that focuses on making the dialogue the most humorous element.

For the look of our film, we were inspired by post-apocalyptic Hollywood movies such as *The Book of Eli* (2010), *The Road* (2009), and *I Am Legend* (2007). Although our project is more of a comedy/absurdist tale, we were intrigued by the visuals of these films, for example the color correction, the costumes and the settings. Also, we thought it would be interesting to imitate their style, but not the dramatic conventions usually associated with it.

Pre-production

In terms of storytelling, it often seems that student films rely on a big twist, which is something we wanted to poke fun at rather than imitate. The film we wanted to create was more like a “picture in time”, as if you just happened to see a small glimpse of their lives. This means that we had to be more selective with what we filmed, as we did not want to give background to each and every character. The main intention concerning the plot was to have a very intense build-up that results in nothing, which is in line with the jokey tone of the film.

Since we did not have a designated writer we were all throwing in ideas and changing things very often, which in reflection, resulted in us losing precious time. And despite our intentions, I feel like the finished film does not really have a great story. The main allure of the film is its random and over-the-top acting, but I think we should have spent more time working on the script.

That being said, we were very successful in our goal to play with the audience. An example of when we achieved this is shown in Figure 9.



Fig 9. Nico looks briefly into the camera, breaking the fourth wall.

I think it was successful in engaging the viewers and adding a comedy element to a scene that would have otherwise been dramatic.

Our other intention was to parody student films, and we succeeded when the boom operator is shown after the line “Everyone makes mistakes”, again breaking the fourth wall.



Fig 10. Boom is seen breaking 4th wall

Production

I was less present during production than I was in the other stages, especially post- production. However, since our team is quite small I was on location for most of the filming, during which I continued my work with the cinematographer and the director to make sure that I would get all the shots that I needed to assemble the final product according to our vision. I found that our schedule was difficult to organize, considering that we had to go to a rather isolated and not easily accessible location. I believe we should have put more effort into organizing the shoots, which would have saved us time.

Post-Production

This is where I spent most of my time. Although the other members gave me some feedback throughout... most of the decisions and figuring out how to do things was left to me.

As I mentioned before, I was particularly proud of the intro scene which was inspired by the advert Move by STA Travel Australia. Here our characters are seen walking across different locations in a post-apocalyptic world. The purpose of this sequence is to give context as to where these characters are and the editing technique inspired by the ad makes it more visually appealing. In order to pull this off, I had to coordinate with the cinematographer and set up a list of shots at specific locations, that I would then use in post-production. We also had to agree on how to take the shots, especially to make sure that each person always had the same dimensions on screen. This was very hard to plan, and it did result in some issues during post-production. For example, one of the shots I was given did not have an even horizon, and the characters' size ratio compared to the environment was off. In order to fix this I had to rescale and realign it to match the other shots. To be efficient, I put one layer on top of the other and lowered its opacity. That way I was able to match up the shots with much more ease.

Overall

Despite some initial difficulties dividing up the tasks, we found our flow and learned to appreciate each other's roles. For me in particular, I felt very supported by the director, who I think contributed greatly to the unity of the team. I think it was also due to our collective desire to come out with a good end product. This meant that we focused hard on our roles, and learned new things that I expect will be highly beneficial to our future projects.

Overall, the energy behind the making of this film was incredible. We fed off each other's creativity and inspired one another with different ideas. This had positive effects on our motivation and made the whole project fun, which I believe is reflected in the final product.

Despite a few issues, we were satisfied with the finished film and felt that our intentions had been fulfilled. The film was funny and engaging and when we showed it to our classmates their reaction was very positive, which we took as a good sign.

Works Cited

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