

Magazine 1

Reflections on an

Introductory Module Part 1

NJ CREATIVE WRITING

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Cover Image:

Photo of the Threadrik Von Yarn from '*Thoughts of a Hat*' contemplating in front of a book.

Taken by NJ.

Magazine 1

Reflections on a Introductory Module

Part 1

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INTRODUCTION:

Hello, NJ here, welcome to the first issue of this magazine.

Allow me to introduce myself, I am a writer and I created the NJ Creative Writing YouTube channel as a way for me to try out video editing and to showcase what I make.

I'm very new to video creation and I was anxious about uploading videos. I felt there was a certain quality to YouTube currently that meant I wouldn't fit in. But technically you can't learn unless you try.

Regardless I hope you find what I make interesting and can deal with my formal style of writing.

This is part 1 of a 2-part reflection on a series of videos I recently posted to YouTube. I made these in early 2024 as part of a introductory screenwriting module. All the videos were edited using CapCut.

The videos I made include the following:

Video 1 ‘*Thoughts of a Hat*’

The first video posted to YouTube. Based on a prompt inspired by the film ‘*Man with a Movie Camera*’ (1929).

Video 2 ‘*A Veiled Conversation*’

This video was not posted to YouTube. This was a group project requiring us to use the 180-degree rule.

Video 3 ‘*Three Clocks in a Hall*’

The second video was posted to YouTube. Made using items in a hall.

Video 4 ‘*Waking Up*’

Third video posted to YouTube. Made using stop motion animation.

Video 5/6 ‘*Mask in the Theatre*’

Audio version of video posted due to privacy concerns regarding the original.

This reflection had been delayed because I was completing a draft script for the same screenwriting module.

Submitting said draft meant I got feedback which allows me to think about my writing in different ways and notice mistakes.

Additionally, it's ideal for spotting formatting or grammatical errors.

Part 1 will concern the following videos:

Video 1 '*Thoughts of a Hat*'

Video 2 '*A Veiled Conversation*'

Video 3 '*Three Clocks in a Hall*'

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoy issue 1.

NJ (*NJ Creative Writing*)

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Current Icon for NJ Creative Writing



Musings
Thoughts of a Hat
By NJ

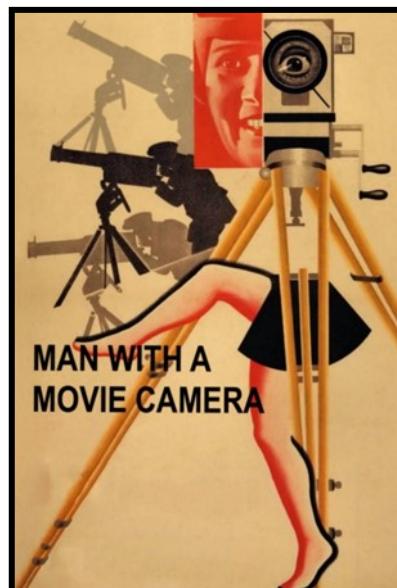
Video 1: 'Thoughts of a Hat'

This was the first video I completed for the module. Our prompt for this project was to make a video inspired by the 1929 film, '*Man with a Movie Camera*'.

The film is a silent feature directed by Dziga Vertov. The cameraman in the film is played by Mikhail Kaufman. There isn't an overt plot per say, but the film observes the lives of the citizens residing in three cities in, what was at the time, the Russian Empire. Two of the cities are in the now independent Ukraine.

The man and his movie camera appear occasionally, moving from place to place. Often through methods which would violate health and safety codes today.

Poster: 'Man With a Movie Camera' (1929)



Personally, I feel ‘*Thoughts of a Hat*’ is less in line with the prompt compared to other videos module members made. I liked one video a member made about a red ghost haunting a hall.

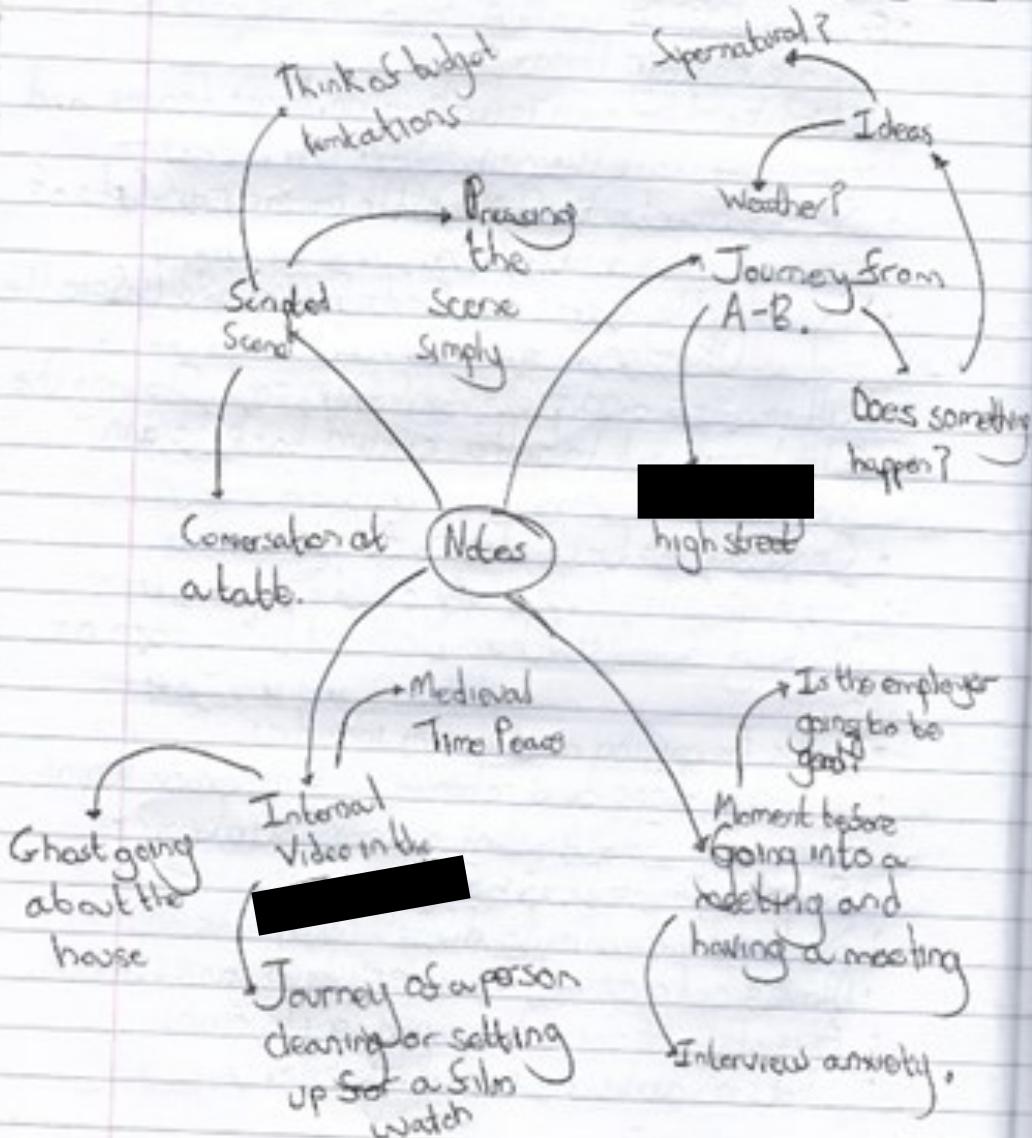
I plotted my ideas on a mind map (*on the page opposite*) to create a plan. These included the story of a ghost in a house, travelling from A-B or the moments before going into a meeting. Additionally, the mind map contained other notes such as keeping budget in mind.

‘*Thoughts of a Hat*’ follows Threadrick Von Yarn as he laments his ‘*lost*’ love Yarndra. There is also a demonic pillow and a fire at a museum.

8/11

3 minute Videos Ideas:

8/13/2024



Scan of Mind Map for 'Thoughts of a Hat'

Obviously, there were changes made during the scripting phase. As can be seen in the hand-written script it mentions a character, called Crochet, who didn't make it into the final draft. The script's format changed from a letter written by Theadrik to a monologue.

Short Video Script
(Shot of paper. Hat appears from behind).

Hat: My Dear Yandra, it's I ^{Theadrik} Fredr ^{Von Yarn}
Your former lover.

(Cut to Yandra and Crochet together).

Hat: After you left me for Crochet I have felt as
empty as a teacup.

Scan of Hand Written Script for 'Thoughts of a Hat' P1

(Shot of teacup. Then cut to Hat sleeping on a cushion).

Hat: Now I have no one to share my pillow of lost souls and their screams).

(Shot of screaming cushion).

Hat: I understand why you may have abandoned me but now I have ~~no~~ one to accompany to the museum at least until it burned down for some reason.

(Shot of Sire and screams). I want but I can only
see words starting
back at me.

Hat: As I'm left to ponder alone, Please Yarnbra ~~From~~ ^{back at me.} keep well and tell Crochet I am (Pause) please for him.

Threadnick
From ~~Threadnick~~ Von Yarn

(Screen Fades to black as Threadnick Von Yarn stares out the window).

The visuals were changed to black and white to match '*The Man with a Camera*.' The video is made up of long shots taken at a hall and in the corner of a room. I used two woolly hats I owned to portray Threadrik and Yarndra. I placed and awkwardly controlled it as I held my phone to achieve the shot of Threadrik reading. The diagram below shows the setup used between 00:41-00:51.



Drawing of Setup for the shot used at 00:41-00:51

I recorded the narration on a Dictaphone, stuffed into a hat (*sound proofing*).

I do like the flowery language I wrote for Threadrick. It matches the dramatic way some people write breakup poetry or music. I like the humor too, but I know the sudden cuts mean the narrative isn't as cohesive and may not be to everyone's taste.

Another aspect that bothers me is the narration. An issue I have when reading scripts or books out loud is that I go too fast. I'm more likely to stumble over words or not put enough emphasis to read clearly. This is evident at the timecodes, 00:20, 00:29, 00:39 and 00:54. If I were to redo the narration, I would try to take it slower and do a few recordings to get a reading I'm happy with.

If I were to remake the video, I would tell the story of a street. Perhaps creating a mood through different shots or effects changing the meaning of a scene.

Overall, though, I am happy with the video which was my first time creating something showcased to other people.



A Veiled Conversation

Edit

Video 2: 'A Veiled Conversation'

‘*A Veiled Conversation*’ will not be posted on YouTube for privacy reasons. I, and two other people appeared on camera, so I wanted to protect our identities. This video was based on a prompt too. We needed to create a scene between two characters using the 180-degree rule.

We were shown example scenes from several films:

‘*Taxi Driver*’ (1976)

‘*Tokyo Story*’ (1953)

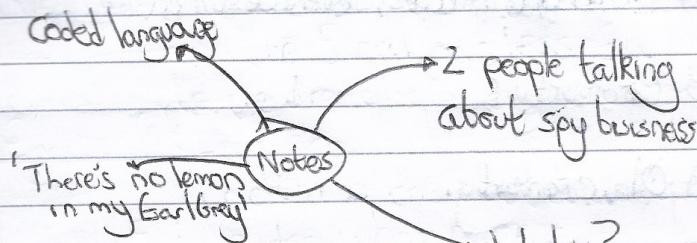
‘*Breathless*’ (1960)

I worked with three people who I’ll name N, F and D. N and F came up with the idea of having a coded conversation using a shipping forecast. By their nature shipping forecasts sound like nonsense to most people who don’t use them regularly and know their language.

N chose a forecast, and I wrote a script over the lunch break. Due to the limited time, we couldn't rehearse the script. I marked N and F's roles in red pen and because my role as the Waiter was small, I could hold the script off-camera. Thankfully, they could read my handwriting.

D, who was involved with film studies, held the camera/phone and directed us. Due to his education, D knew how best to achieve the 180-degree rule. After everything was done, we shared the footage between ourselves to make our own edits.

Technically this was the first thing we ever filmed for the course, but '*Thoughts of a Hat*' was the first video I completed.



- Script:

(Two people sit down at a table. ^{'A'} lady comes into a room (café) she looks around the room settling on a ^{'B'} boy at a table. She sits walks over to the table).

A: South Viking?

B: South Viking.

(A' nods and sits down).

N BA: North Viking, North Utare

A: North Utare

F B: South Utare!

N A: Shh!

(A looks around before continuing).

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N A: Northeast Forties, Southwest Forties.

F B: Cromarty?

N A: Oh, Cromarty.

F B: Oh, yes.

N A: (Waiter appears)
Forth Tyne? Dogger?

B: Dogger

F B: Fisher.

(Waiter appears looking confused).

Waiter: Fish was that?

F B: No, we're okay thank you. Some tea please.

(Waiter leaves)

N A: (German Bight, Humber).

F B: Thames, Dover, Wright.

N A: Portland?

F B: Plymouth.

N A: Ah, Plymouth.

F B: Trafalgar, Biscay, Fitz Roy

N A: Isle Fastnet, Irish Sea.

F B: Shannon Lundy.

N A: Rockall, Bailey, Fair Isle,

F B: Malvinas.

N A: Hebrides, Southeast Iceland

F B: Malvinas

(Walter comes with the tea putting it on the table).

Walter: What about have you been to Iceland before.

F B: No this is our first time. We're here on important business

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N A: Gate Warnings.

F B: Yes, gate warnings indeed. You understand.

Walter: Not really.

(Walter leaves the two alone).

F A: Nice fellow. Don't know

(Lights go down)

END OF SCENE

I created an edit of my own. It was interesting cutting the footage and piecing it together and I'm happy with the final product. Granted imagine with more time we would have performed the script with more nuance. I probably wouldn't have looked at the camera at one point either.

However, I'm happy with how I used photos taken for '*Three Clocks in a Hall*' to show the transition of time and help the video flow better. Even the thumbnail comes from a shot used for the video '*Three Clocks in a Hall*'.

It'd be nice to do this script again either by expanding the plot or turn it into a short story. Thank you to N, F and D for the ideas and helping to create this video. It couldn't have happened without you.



*Three Clocks in
a Hall
By NJ*

Video 3: 'Three Clocks in a Hall'

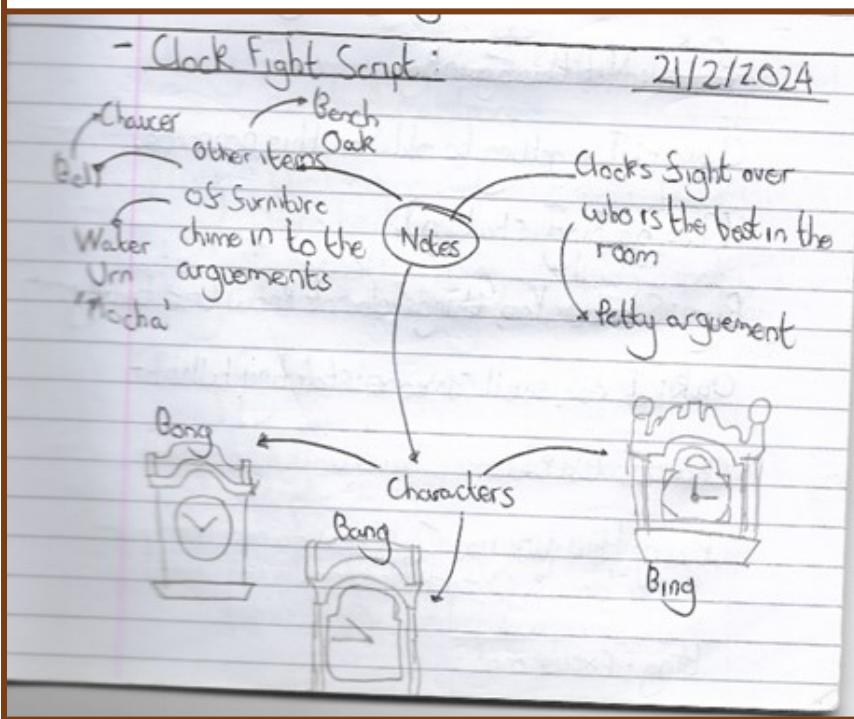
‘*Three Clocks in a Hall*’ is the most overtly comedic of the videos I made. It was certainly one module members liked the best from what I remember. This video differs from the others because it uses still pictures rather than video.

The plot is simple, three clocks; Bing, Bang and Bong start an argument with each other over who’s the best. Meanwhile the bell Chaucer and the bench Oak try to diffuse the situation. As a final joke, a kettle called Mocha interjects arguing with the clocks too. At the end of the video, Oak laments,

‘*I just wanted to sleep this afternoon.*’

Planning for ‘*Three Clocks in a Hall*’ started in late February and unlike previous videos it doesn’t follow a prompt.

Once again, a mind map (*below*) was created giving a basic outline to the idea. The diagram included sketches of Bing, Bang and Bong.



Scan of Mind Map for Video 3: Drawings have been made so I remembered the differences between the clocks.

Afterwards a draft script was handwritten before being typed up as a word document.

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- Script:

(Lights come up on the three clocks ticking in silence for a moment. Bang , Bing , Bang ),

Bing: I think I'm the best clock here.

(Shots of Bench and Bett ^{Oak' Chaucer'} growling).

^{Oak}

Bench: Not this again Bing.

Chaucer: I'm getting to old for this nonsense.

(Shot of Bing shaking).

Bing: Silence. You, 'things' do not know true beauty.

Oak: I can smell someone starting bullshit-

Chaucer: Oak!

Bang: How dare you Oak, you cannot compare to us. Or rather me.

Bing: Excuse me?

Bong : What does that mean? P28

Chaucer : Oh dear,

Dak : Ding dong, the pains begin.

Bing : You better than me you're so plain, I have illustrations on my face.

Bong : I may be plain but at least I don't need constant maintenance.

Bing : Don't come for my decorative balls.
Bong back me up here.

Bong : Personally they do need a clear Bing.

(Bing fumes).

Bing : Well you can't compare to me you're just a cheaper imitation.

Bong : You always say that about me. Just because I'm similar to you in shape.

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Chaucer: Can we just get past the ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~compared~~ ^{the} appearances. It's what's on the inside that counts.

Bing: Silence. What do you know Chaucer?

Bang: Well if we are going by what's on the inside then there's not enough polish in the world to clean Bing.

(Pause).

Chaucer: Oh no.

Mocha: Well I think on reflection I'm the best looking. I mean look at me.

All clocks: Shut up Mocha!

Oak: I just wanted to sleep this afternoon.

(Fade to Black)

END OF SCRIPT

For the visuals, I took pictures of objects in an entrance hall. These included three clocks, a bell, a bench and a kettle. The hall was once a museum. You could find old cases and remains of displays. The clocks stood on a ledge at the back of the hall which made them look larger than life.

With the renovation of the hall, it is likely that most of what is seen in the video will no longer be recognizable. In a way this video acts as a time capsule of the hall during early 2024. Interesting to think about.

Moving back to '*Three Clocks in a Hall*,' I feel it's more consistent tone wise compared to '*Thoughts of a Hat*,' The characters' personalities feel easily identifiable. The clocks are all vein, but each have slightly different things to make them stand out. Oak is tired, and Chaucer is trying to be a mediator.

Despite the video being made up of still images, it feels engaging to me. By zooming in, using filters along with other methods I managed to enhance the energy of the video. Some images are blurry though, but that's an issue on my part when I took the pictures. The audio quality is better than '*Thoughts of a Hat*' and there isn't the same stumbling through the dialogue, although the pace is still very fast.

In the original version of the video, the dialogue was quieter than the music and SFX making it difficult to hear the dialogue. For the YouTube release, I raised the dialogue volume which helped a lot.

I won't claim to be a good voice actor as I'm not trained, but I tried to give each character a definable voice.

Bing, Bang and Bong are posh with a pompous tone. In theory, Bing is the deepest and Bong the highest, however, I could have done more to differentiate the clock's voices.

Chaucer also has a posh voice, but I tried to make it kinder.

Oak was given a London accent.

Mocha was given a poor Jennifer Coolidge impression.

Overall, I'm happy with the results of '*Three Clocks in a Hall*' and it's a video I'm defiantly proud of.

ENDING NOTE:

I hope you enjoyed the first part of this reflection. I will see you in the next part, until then have a good day.

NJ (*NJ Creative Writing*)

(*REFLECTION CONTINUED IN PART 2*).

PAGES TO FOLLOW:

Website: <https://httpnjcreativewriting.co.uk/>

Instagram: @nj20242507

YouTube: @NJCreativeWriting2024

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS:

Films:

Breathless. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Les Films Imperia, 1960.

Man with a Movie Camera. Directed by Dziga Vertov. VUFKU, Dovzhenko Film Studio, 1929.

Tokyo Story. Directed by Yasujiro Ozu. Shochiku, 1953.

Taxi Driver. Directed by Martin Scorsese, Bill/Phillips Productions, Italo-Judeo Productions, 1976.

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