

CRITIQUE I:

LUCID RHAPSODY

Media Realisation502-MC6-AS

sect.02518

Presented to

Mr. Michael Belcher

PROPOSED BY

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(GUSTAVE)

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This short experimental film features a protagonist who is suffocating from the grand narrative that one has to be “that somebody” instead of just an ordinary nobody. Created in the form of a murder mystery, *Lucid Rhapsody* will unmask society’s intangible peer pressure by using a sensory onslaught created by multiple layers of voiceover and it will liberate the audience from this obnoxious oppression through a ritual dance.

The protagonist’s struggle is depicted through footage of a patient confiding to his psychotherapist about these daily instances of being smothered by the expectations of others. The therapist’s approach, inspired by Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic approach, is to let the patient reveal his true desire by taking a nap and describing it afterward. The short dream that follows is essentially a liberating dance against social prejudice, against peer pressure, against the daily oppression of the grand narrative.

Visually, the film will employ a hallucinogenic combination of spiritual dancing and the video edit style of Adele’s “Send My Love To Your New Lover,” using the doppelganger effect with multiple layers at once, plus dark, transcendental lighting and a highly saturated color scheme, with a dash of hypnotic mushroom. The overall effect will be that of a weird ritual, one that embodies the desire for liberation.

The challenge of this project’s cinematography lies in getting the right equipment and lighting, carefully planning logistics, and finding the right choreography that expresses the protagonist’s inner id (ex. how Joaquin Phoenix’s bent, twisting dance in *Joker* captures his mental degradation). Getting access to a big white space with expert control over the lighting will be another challenge.

“
IF GOING TO SLEEP IS THE ONLY THING
THAT KEEPS YOU SANE, IS IT TIME FOR
A CHANGE OF LIFESTYLE?
”

A SHORT EXPERIMENTAL FILM



INSPIRATION BOARDS



LUCID RHAPSODY

LIGHTING

During the reality sequence, the experimental film will be using the conventional “motivated lighting” with very soft light with a view to blending the character into his surroundings in order to depict a normal lifestyle. However, during the dream sequence, a different set of lighting techniques will be utilized. Specifically, the film will use the low key lighting technique - a mixture of small, colored light sources to create a dramatic effect to illustrate the internal struggle caused by the protagonist’s daily interaction with other characters. In essence, lighting in this project will serve as a medium to amplify the protagonist’s emotion to protest against the grand narrative.



COLOR

Throughout the film, the protagonist will generally wear clothes that have unappealing color tones that make him inconspicuous. For example, white T-shirt, or earthy color palettes that blend him into the surroundings. In the dream sequence, the film will utilize color gels to generate a heightened reality - a safe space where the protagonist can let his hair down and be a “normal” person (in other words, a human being with actual emotions who does not like being told what to do by others). I will also be using cinematic color throughout the film with a blue tone to depict the protagonist’s isolation from society.

COLD

ISOLATION

CEREBRAL

MELANCHOLY

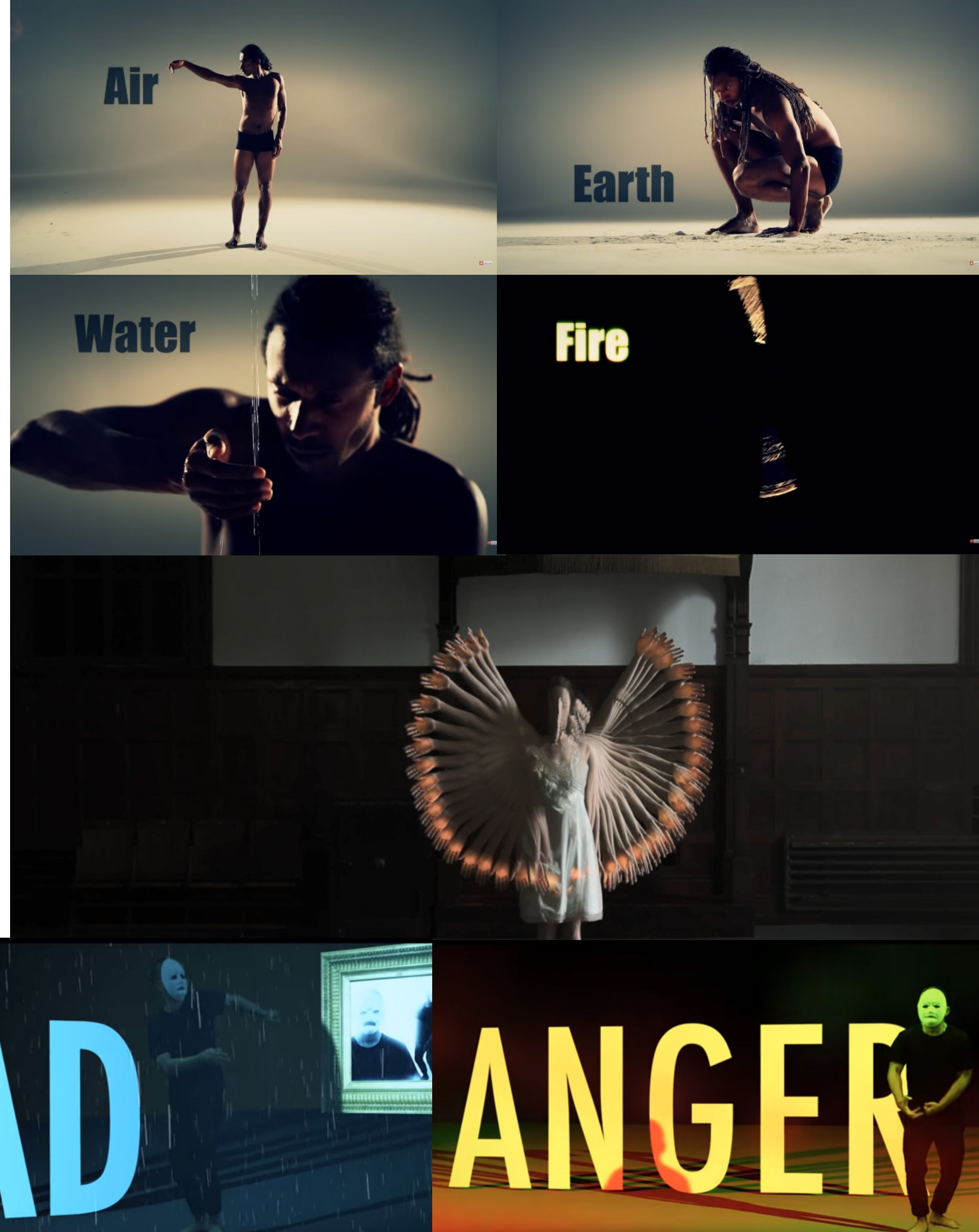
PASSIVITY

CALM



DANCE & EMOTION

Dancing, commonly known as a way to release powerful feelings, will be the means of communication that the protagonist uses to convey his inner desire. The dance will use four elements as the base: earth, water, air, fire. The dance will start with conformity using stiff movements in the Earth stage with minimal facial expressions, then gradually, it liberates the protagonist as the dance shifts to the three other stages (the protagonist expresses more and more emotion as the dance goes on). At the Water stage, the protagonist reluctantly lets out the part inside that is filled with shyness, sadness and fear. Then, at the Air stage, the protagonist starts using rapid and light movements to express joy and liberation from his societal burden. At the climax of the dance at the Fire stage, the protagonist lets loose his anger to “burn down” whatever restraints there might still be from his daily oppression. Then, the fire of frustration gradually changes its form to the fire of passion, the fire of love, as the protagonist embraces the demonic part of himself - the fact that he is only an ordinary human.



INSPIRATIONAL PRODUCTIONS

Dance film: La La La Human Steps - *Amelia*

La La La Human Steps, founded by Édouard Lock in 1980, is a Québécois contemporary dance company. The dance company has “a reputation for a distinctively athletic, complex, boundary-pushing, fast-paced and spectacular style.” In 2002, Lock choreographed the dance “Amelia” which was turned into a film under the same title one year later. This 90-minute film makes optimal use of minimalism: using only an unremarkable bland space as a canvas, the film depicts an artistic contemporary dance that is beautifully shot from a variety of angles. The dance is aesthetically captivating; however, these movements and their rhythms are not what I am mainly aiming for in my project for the following reasons:

First of all, the movements carried out by the dancers are professional movements that are not recreatable without training. Nevertheless, the point of the film is that the protagonist is an ordinary character. Turning him into a professional dancer all of a sudden will betray the core message that the film wants to convey.

Secondly, even though the dance movements seem liberating as the dancers execute graceful and liberating movement effortlessly, its fast rhythm is oppressing in its own way. Thus, even though these leaping and spinning motions can be used in the Air stage, the rhythm will have to be modified. On the other hand, this intense rhythm can be utilized in the Fire stage, as the protagonist burns down the wall that keeps him from accepting himself.



In spite of that, there are several dance movements that I can take away from this contemporary dance. To begin with, the dance’s treatment of the space using the human body can be incorporated into the Earth stage, with the protagonist lying flat on the ground and slowly rising up to illustrate a life rising from the ground. The rapid tapping feet along with the leaping and spinning motions mentioned above can be used in the Air stage.

In terms of cinematography, the film makes great use of the bland space, which is definitely something that I will try to do for my project. Just by using this space along with different lighting and camera angles, the film manages to accomplish various feats, including defying gravity, disorienting the viewers, creating a suffocating atmosphere, etc. Basically, by using different cinematography techniques, the film breathes life into the blank location, transforming it into a living being that synchronizes with the dance movements.

Film: Damien Chazelle’s *La La Land* (2016)

La La Land (2016) is a romantic musical film about a passionate pianist and an aspiring actress falling in love with each other while trying to pursue their respective dreams in the city of Los Angeles.

In order to create *La La Land*, Damien Chazelle drew inspiration from several classics such as *42nd Street* (1933), *An American in Paris* (1951), *Singin’ in the Rain* (1952), *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (1964), *The Sound of Music* (1965), and *The Young Girls of Rocherfort* (1967).



An aspect of *La La Land* that truly inspires me is its cinematography, specifically the heightened reality created by the use of lighting and color that adds a magical touch without rendering the scene theatrical. Linus Sandgren’s expert use of cinematography simply lifts the audience out of their seats and gives them an escape from their everyday life.

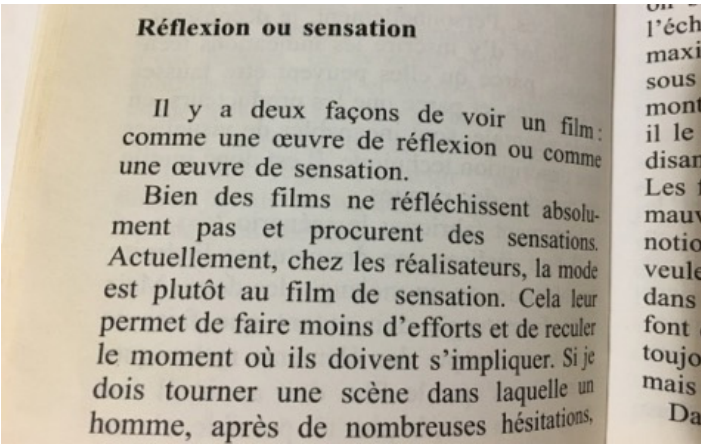
For example, in the dinner scene with Sebastian and Mia at Sebastian’s house, even though the dinner is taking place at a real location, it has an eccentric touch added to the location to make it magical thanks to the green lighting coming in through the curtains by the windows. It is a scene that drew inspiration from Alfred Hitchcock’s film - *Vertigo* (1958). This green touch isolates the dinner for two from our reality, making it an exclusive dinner date for two lovebirds in a different world.

Drawing inspiration from the film, I decided to also use departure from motivated lighting as a means to create a magical realism. To be specific, during the dream sequence, I will reuse footage from previous scenes in the short experimental film and paint it with another color to add a new layer of meaning to the same scenario. Then, I will also be using the low key lighting technique chosen by Damien Chazelle in both *Whiplash* and *La La Land* to heighten my scenarios.

RESEARCH

Comment faire un film - Claude Chabrol, François Guérif

The French book - *How to make a film* - as its title suggests, is essentially a guideline for filmmakers to make a film. Written by the leading New Wave filmmakers, Claude Chabrol, the book explains the different steps involved in the making of a film, from writing the screenplays, choosing the mise-en-scène, working with the actors, the producers, the crew to editing and even accepting criticism. For me, one of the most important aspects that was

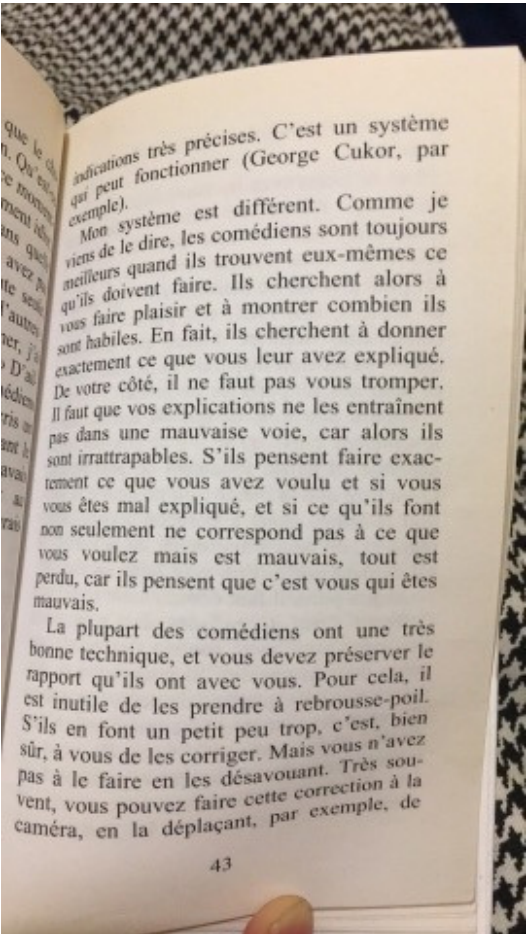
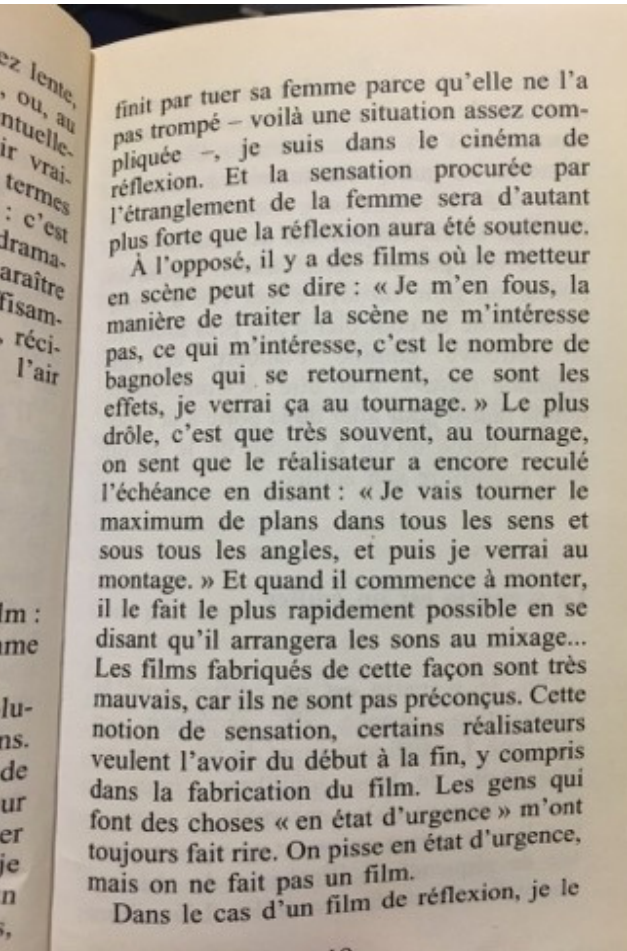


Jennifer Kunst's article on *Psychology Today* uses a psychoanalytic approach to analyze the emotional struggle behind being "ordinary". Notably, it describes the inward journey of self-discovery as a courageous one. She also compares psychoanalysis, this journey inward with the help of a psychotherapist with a heroic adventure in order to come to terms with one's inner demons - which are "the orphaned parts" of one's self. The article greatly assists me with understanding the psychology of the protagonist that I am creating for the experimental film. It makes me understand that his trauma will come from two factors: external and internal. On the outside, the protagonist suffers from unkind remarks and comments made by people around him about him being "ordinary". On

mentioned in the book is having a clear vision about the film before creating it. In particular, the book suggests choosing between "a piece of reflection" or "a piece of sensation". In other words, a filmmaker should decide whether he/she wants viewers to "reflect" and think about the piece and the message that the film wants to convey (which means that the screenplay plays the most crucial role), or whether he/she want the viewers to have a certain feelings when they are watching the film. As I read this part, it hits me that the ultimate objective of *Lucid Rhapsody* is to create a feeling of liberation. I want the viewers to be mesmerized in the dance sequence and forget about the oppression from our everyday life, even just for a moment. With regards to the technical aspect, the book suggests getting an external monitor for shots that are more demanding, which gives me the idea of borrowing one from CUTV for the dream sequence which requires a meticulous use of lighting and camera framing.

The Ordinary Hero's Journey: Part I - Jennifer Kunst

the inside, the protagonist has trouble accepting himself, that he is just another normal human being. Between the two factors, the protagonist will only be able to change one thing: the way in which he views himself. So the dance at this point will be a struggle for him to defeat his inner demon. But the battle can only end when the protagonist himself embraces this part of him that no one else can, at least up to that moment. Visually, after reading the article, I can imagine that at the end of the Fire stage, the protagonist will channel his flame of hatred into the heartwarming fire of love as he sits down and exposes every corner of himself, every single flaw but in an endearing way.



Source: Wiki Commons

"The real battle for me was my own self-abuse... I was never good enough. I couldn't let go of my failures, I couldn't let go of my shame... I couldn't let go of any mistake I had ever made; I had an inventory that was so long...

"That was the battle, in the four months in that meditation cave, alone with no distraction, no friends, nothing except me and It (she says, pointing to her head). And the It was the anger, the sadness, the sorrow, the shame, the pain. And we were in there. My head, like most heads, is a neighborhood you don't want to walk in at night...

"And I just remember, this was my victory and my battle. All my 'demons,' all my 'monsters' that I'd been carrying around forever... The light came through and I realized, 'Oh! They're not demons, they're not monsters, they're not dragons. I've been making them more grandiose than they are. They're just the orphaned parts of me. They're just the fearful-est, most young, terrified parts of me. They're scared to death. And they are throwing temper tantrums because of their fear. And now I have to tell them it's going to be okay. And they will all go to sleep. I am the mother of all of these parts of me."

"And I remember in my mind just ascending above them all and saying, 'I love you, Fear, and now you go to sleep. I love you, Anger, you're part of me. Go to sleep; it's fine, I'm in charge now. I love you, Shame, even you. Come into my heart, go to sleep. You're safe, I love you; I'm not leaving you. I can't, you're part of me, you're part of the family; you never can be away from me. I love you, Failure. Come into my heart, rest. You're so tired, you're so scared. You're just children; you don't know how the world works. I love all of you; I have space for all of you. And together, we're just going to go forward now. But mommy's driving now. And mommy is the part of me that can embrace everything I am in peace."

Cinematography and character depiction

William Francis Nicholson

Nicholson’s academic essay analyzes three ways in which cinematography can be used to effectively depict a character in the motion picture medium: lighting, camera view point and the camera’s mode of perception. In essence, the essay “demystifies and systematises” these three aspects of filmmaking in order to explain the relationship between character depiction and cinematography. For instance, it analyzes how chiaroscuro lighting is carried out and its effect when it comes to depicting a character’s inner self and emotion. The article assists me to choose the lighting condition for each scene in order to depict the character’s inner state better. For example: I can place the protagonist against

a brighter, busier background to depict his feelings of insignificance, or chiaroscruo lighting to illustrate an internal conflict of the protagonist. From the article, I also decided to film the protagonist closer and closer as the story progresses, as “the closer the sightline of a player in a close-up is to the camera, the greater the degree of viewer identification” (Nicholson, 204).

Zettl’s final function of chiaroscuro lighting is indeed a helpful one – conveying the emotional meaning of a scene. Van Sijll points out two examples of where chiaroscuro is effectively employed to convey character interiority. The first occurs in the dinner scene in Sam Mendes’ *American Beauty* (1999), where the warm, pleasant effect that candlelight has on the faces of the family members is subverted by the family’s dialogue, which reveals that it is in fact a dysfunctional household. The candlelight renders some area of the dining room darker than others, suggesting that there are things this family keeps concealed. The second example is taken from *Apocalypse Now*, where Captain Kurtz appears for the first time. He sits up on his bed in the shadows and only the side of his bald head comes into the light. There is very fast falloff, sharply dividing the illuminated side of his head from his face, which is shrouded in darkness. This use of *chiaroscuro* lighting indicates the inner darkness of Kurtz to the viewer, whilst also mimicking Captain Willard’s uncertainty at what to expect from Kurtz – he is unable to ‘read’ his expressions. In a story about war and insanity, this fragmentation of character

“Linus has this sensibility of magic realism where everything feels slightly heightened but nothing feels too theatrical,” Chazelle offers. “You might not know exactly where the colored light or that sense of unreality is coming from. Linus and David were always working on that. I would joke that we wanted to take real settings and locations and make them look fake.”

Sandgren says that for this particular scene, “We imagined a neon sign outside Sebastian’s window. It would be the worst to have a light like that when you’re trying to sleep, but he wouldn’t care. He would embrace it and make it romantic.”

La La Land: City of Stars - Mark Dillon

The article, written by Mark Dillon and published by the international publication *American Cinematographer*, breaks down the cinematography of *La La Land*. Not only does it analyze the technical aspect of the film (including which equipment was used in each shot, the secret behind the lighting, etc.), but it also tells the story about the makers of this Best Cinematography Oscar Winner by describing in detail the inspiration and intention of director Damien Chazelle and cinematographer Linus Sandgren. After seeing what went on behind the scenes in order to meticulously bring *La La Land* to life, I started to have more realistic expectations for my experimental film project. First of all, with limited equipment

and a limited budget as well as crew members, it is virtually impossible to recreate the exact same look from *La La Land*. I might not have a wide range of hue in each shot as *La La Land* when it comes to using vibrant colors for both character costumes and the filming set, but I will try to replicate the magical realism touch by using neon lights and color gel.



Apply Digital Technique To Make Your Dance Film Stand Out

The Lights Film School article is an interview with two filmmakers - Michael Langan and Terah Maher - who created the short dance film *Choros* (which is simply a stunning work of art). The interview touches on three subjects: how the film was made using the “chronophotography” technique, the process of digital compositing, and the lighting setup. The interview also addressed a few technical aspects, including camera movement using a Steadicam, the effect of a high contrast look, the impact of the camera’s resolution on the clarity of video effects, etc. The article opens up my options when it comes to using cinematography techniques to enhance the overall aesthetic of dance movements. A very inspiring technique that these two filmmakers used to create *Choros* that I can apply to *Lucid Rhapsody*

is the glowing orange balls and fire effect created by Michael running next to Terah in a black bodysuit to trace her motions as she dances. The interview also offers insights into using the temporal offset editing technique to create the doppelganger effect - something that I will definitely incorporate into *Lucid Rhapsody* for a mesmerizing experience.



PUBLICITY PLAN

Internal Press
Event pages
Very Short Film Festival (final projects)
Video Trailer — for online and
mezzanine (April 15th)

In terms of publicity, I will be handling the creation of the video trailer for the event in order to captivate potential event-goers on social media. I will also create an Eventbrite page to promote the event and the content for the college's internal press.

At the end of March (or as soon as the deadline for the final production approaches), I will start collecting footage from the six other projects to create the video trailer for the event. This video will then be played at the Mezzanine and any other platform that we can have access to (including the social account of our department, of our college, and any other platform that might feature a media event

such as CUTV, etc.). Then, at the beginning of April, I will create the content for the internal press and the video trailer for our event booth at the Mezzanine on April 15th.

First of all, the main target audience of our event is students from College LaSalle. An Eventbrite fanpage makes the event look more contemporary, suitable for this young demographic. Registering for an Eventbrite event will also create an automatic notification on one's mobile device, ensuring that this audience—well-known for forgetting the time, date, and location of events, in general—will get a reminder to show up to the event. Also, if we get the

eticket design right, it will get them to share the eticket on their social media so that we will get a better organic reach. It will also be easier for people to get more information than what is on the poster should it feature a short link to our Eventbrite page, which will contain a brief description written by me about the event, as well as specifics about whose films will be presented and when. Elements like the brief description mentioned above will be adapted for internal college press so that the information is properly disseminated in a “press release” fashion to the various media channels within the college.

FORMAL EXPERIMENTATION

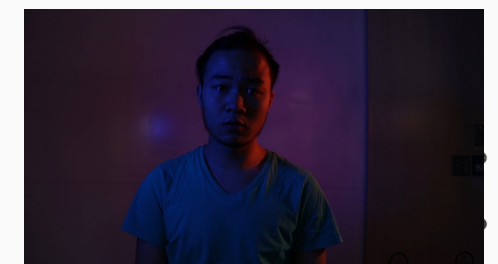
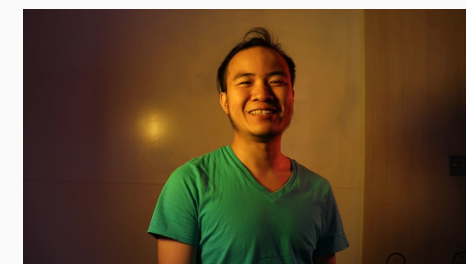
The brief for my formal experimentation was to try to produce a video with the visual that I would like to have for my final project. So, I decided to give myself a challenge of trying to amplify certain emotions with the lighting system available at college LaSalle, and, if possible, I would try to create a short story with the least amount of material as possible. At the end of the experiment, I created three different versions with three different intentions:

Version 1: I tested out whether only through the lighting, the minimal facial expression and ambient elemental sound, the right emotion can be conveyed.

Version 2: I tested out whether different blending mode will bring about an interesting visual (doppelganger effect from the Adele MV).

Version 3: I tested out whether random text without much context would be able to bring out a story related to the emotions. In the “anger” section, I tried to depict the daily oppression through just a few lines that we normally hear in our life.

In version 3, inspiration for the text was drawn from a series of six-word short stories (for example: For sale, baby shoes, never worn; strangers, friends, best friends, lovers, strangers) in order to create the corresponding emotion.



PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

To Do			1/28 completed
✓	Date	Task	
PRE-PRODUCTION			
<input type="checkbox"/>	24/2	Finish screenplay	
<input type="checkbox"/>	24/2	Change screenplay in accordance to feedback	
<input type="checkbox"/>	24/2	Shotlist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	25/2	Location scouting	
<input type="checkbox"/>	27/2	Find shooting crew: Art director (Moises), cameraman (?), lighting (?), grip (?), sound designer (?),	
<input type="checkbox"/>	28/2	Find actors/actresses + extras	
<input type="checkbox"/>	29/2	Scout for props + costume	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/3	Create an equipment checklist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/3	Reserve equipment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/3	Contact everyone to prepare a shooting schedule + consult the weather for outdoor shoot	
<input type="checkbox"/>			
PRODUCTION (Shooting day)			
<input type="checkbox"/>		Test equipment + make sure that everything is fully charged	
<input type="checkbox"/>		Arrange transportation: equipment + cast	
<input type="checkbox"/>		Shooting	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 day after	Review footage	
<input type="checkbox"/>		Additional shooting	
POST-PRODUCTION			
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/3	Rough cut	
<input type="checkbox"/>	21/3	Sound design	
<input type="checkbox"/>	22/3	Color correction	
<input type="checkbox"/>	23/3	Final cut	
<input type="checkbox"/>	24/3	Peer review	
PUBLICITY			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	31/3	A- Very Short Film Festival Montage	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/4	Write the Event Description for internal communication and the EventBrite page	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/4	Create the EventBrite page	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/4	Collect the footage from the six other projects	
<input type="checkbox"/>	10/4	Create the trailer for the event	
<input type="checkbox"/>			
EVENT RUNNING (To be added)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	11/4	Final film splicing / editing	
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/4	Have the contact information of everyone	

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