

Danielle Thomson

DSC 294 – Kelliher

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“With Power Comes Great Responsibility”

I had never truly thought about the term “media editing” until I took DSC 294 this past semester. Before I decided to pursue Digital Culture as my Undergrad major I was enrolled at Northern Arizona University for their Graphic Design program. At the time, media editing simply meant what I was doing in my major at NAU, editing images, type, drawings, etc. in various programs such as Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, and Illustrator. Yes, this is true. These programs are used for media editing. However this is only a tiny fraction of the spectrum. Editing (media) is a term responsible for “the process of selecting and preparing written, visual, audible, and film media used to convey information through the processes of correction, condensation, organization, and other modifications performed with an intention of producing a correct, consistent, accurate, and complete work” (Mamishev 128). Given this excellent, thorough definition of what exactly we studied and practiced in DSC 294 this semester, we developed an understanding of the idea, process, and artifact of media editing.

It did not take long to understand the “idea” of media editing. Most if not all of the students, including myself, in DSC 294 were involved in a major that dealt with some sort of editing or design. As we grew further into the semester I began to understand how much power comes with media editing. One word, one picture, one color, basically any element can change the entire feel and meaning to any type of media whether it involves with fine art, digital art, film, audio, etc. This enables the editor to an enormous amount of power. With this power, comes the greatest responsibility to correctly and successfully convey the purpose and meaning of whatever media is being refined, condensed, compiled and so forth. For example, one of our assignments was to take one of Kanye West’s tweets from his twitter page and create an image that portrayed his tweet. Here is the link to my image, [Kanye West Assignment](#). I took one of his quotes that were meant to be of a positive nature and turned it into a joke by simply placing a comical image underneath the text. With one image I was capable of changing the entire meaning of West’s tweet. That is a sweet but simple example of the power of editing. Lastly,

Professor Kelliher introduced to the class an incredible contemporary artist by the name is Bill Viola. His pieces stood out to me more so than any other artist because his work exemplified the power of editing. We watched a shortened video of his piece from 2000 called "[The Quintet of the Astonished](#)". All he did was videotape five people's reaction and slowed it down to the point where each viewer can observe absolutely every moment of movement. His artwork captures what would be a quick and fast interaction between people and people, or people and an element (such as water), and slows it down without any sound as large installations in museums. This effect is enormous and creates incredibly powerful pieces.

For each and every one of our individual and group assignments we practiced the process of media editing. The development of our understanding of the process of media editing came from completing various assignment in the class rather than through lectures. The most successful project in discovering and understanding the method of editing would be the [Group Portrait](#) assignment. Each student was assigned a group to work together in creating a video. We had to find a common or unique property to our group based on the individuals in the group. Because there was not enough diversity in our group to create a theme on a particular unique quality, we decided to focus on group project on "going green". We felt we could easily display our common interest in saving energy. Because our idea came fast and easy, we were able to take a successful amount of footage: which allowed for each of the member's to create whatever type of video they wanted. We shot from different angles which allowed for our videos to better grasp what we were doing in the video. Because I had a clear understanding of the message I wanted to portray in my personal video from the beginning of the filming process, I was able to pick out angles, ideas, and elements that would best suit my video. This project gave me a true understanding of the media editing process and as a result, my final edited project was chosen as one of the Exemplars on the DSC 294: Media Editing Wikispace.

The last element to media editing that we covered in DSC 294 was the idea of works as artifacts. The last module in our class was "Life". During this module we watched a film featuring Robin Williams called *The Final Cut* which is based on the idea of "cutters". In this movie, people are given the option of placing a disk in their bodies to record absolutely everything they do their entire lives so that when they pass away, their families and loved ones are capable of remembering them through an edited video of their memories. A "cutter" is an

individual who is in charge of taking the footage of a person's disk and editing it to suit the passed on individual. It is their job to fully understand what their loved ones want to remember and what they remember that specific person to be like. A "cutter's" job is to create an artifact of that specific human being. In our class we were given nine months of footage taken by Daragh Byrne's journey in Dublin, Arizona, and Boston. He wore a Sensecam, a light-sensitive camera worn around the neck that captures footage every 30 seconds, for nine months straight. With this footage we were told to "cut" his life and create memorable scrapbook albums with various chapters. Without knowing Daragh on a personal level, this task was difficult and challenging because I had to create a purpose and create a memorable artifact for his life during those 9 months. *The Final Cut* and this project helped me understand, even more so, the incredible amount of responsibility that comes with the power to edit and create a piece of work.

Taking this class this past semester was truly ground breaking for me. During one of the lectures we spoke about famous director Ricky Leacock and we watched a video on film and they spoke of the importance of female editors because female editors are able to capture a different side to film making than most male editors are capable of capturing. Females are wonderful at catching the emotional aspects. After experiencing video editing in this class I have now considered a different path to take for my future. The footage and media is essential to creation, however, the editing of that footage and media is what makes or breaks the meaning, purpose, and quality.

References

Mamishv, Alexander, Williams, Sean, *Technical Writing for Teams: The STREAM Tools Handbook*, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, John Wiley & Sons. Inc., Hoboken, 2009, p.128