

The Cancer of Joy – Film Production Management A2 Assessment

Fionntán McCaughey

Logline:

Cancer, heart disease, obesity, malnutrition: **all** have been eradicated. But the question that needs to be asked is, at what cost?

Synopsis:

In a world in which illness and disease have been directly linked to stress, our lives have been designed to be as stress-free as possible. We focus in on a day in the life of one man named Joy who experiences a strange occurrence that begins him on the road to awakening and self-discovery.

Outline:

Joy, a very young-looking man in his 30s, lives in an apartment complex in which he has minimal contact with the other occupants of his building or the outside world. Joy is not a happy man; he is merely content and has been content his entire life as this is how the society of this world has conditioned him to be. The walls of his flat are splashed with colour. Rainbows, sunflowers and rabbits are painted on all sides as if it was that of a child's room. A monitor turns on with a smiling/laughing sun rising to the middle of the screen indicating it is morning time and a lullaby accompanies, waking up our protagonist from his deep slumber. He wears a blank expression on his face, his movements robotic, as he gets up to turn on the news and eat his breakfast porridge. In his fridge there can be seen multiple portions of porridge consecutively labelled breakfast, lunch, dinner, breakfast, lunch, dinner, breakfast...

On the news we hear that stress levels have reached an all-time low with the *Sylvia State's* programme having been the most successful implementation of stress-free policies yet. As Joy slowly spoons down his porridge the news goes on to list some of the regulations that have been put in place, including no individual conversations that lasts over 10 minutes, no relationships or sex, no narrative or stories allowed in media entertainment including films and television, and no lyrics are to be used in music. The news reporter goes on to express cheerily how there have been no recorded deaths in the past several weeks, giving us trivial information such as the fact that a thousand transit busses have made it to their destinations safely. As he speaks, we are introduced to shots of the outside world where everything is working in order, the streets are pristine, the buildings sky high, the trams running smoothly. There are no cars or pedestrians in sight.

We return to our protagonist, still eating his porridge, when the voice of the reporter starts to become drowned out and we see a look of concern invade Joy's face. He is looking down into the bowl of porridge, at the bottom of which there appears to be a little black capsule. He fishes it out and upon closer inspection finds a twistable cap at the top. He unscrews the capsule, and a little strip falls out of it. It is a strip of black and white celluloid

film. He unravels the strip and holds it up to light, his concern turning to horror as his eyes glance over images that he's never seen before in his life: of war and chaos, love and heroism. His breathing becomes intensified, and his heartbeat picks up rapidly. Etched into the bottom of the strip are the words 'Greatest of Cinema'. Before he has time to think a loud but soft voice blares over the speakers of his flat and a warning sign interrupts the news on the television.

The voice states "JOY. Your heartrate has increased to 118 beats per minute. This is a 47% increase from your stable heartrate. We detect 4375 cells that could become cancerous if you do not stabilize yourself in meditative brace immediately."

In a panic joy drops the film strip on the floor under the emitting overhead light and rushes to his bed where he gets into a position of meditation. Another lullaby has started to play, and joy slows his breathing to the tempo of the music. He holds there for what feels like a minute and the music begins to fade away. He expresses a sigh of relief and then gets out of bed walking through to the living room where he left the strip of film. It is lying there on the floor, exposed to the light. He bends down slowly and picks it up, holding it up to the light again to see those wonderfully horrible images... but the images are gone; the film has been spoiled under the light. All that's left is the celluloid material with that title 'Greatest of Cinema' etched at the bottom. Crunching up the material in his hands, he drops to his knees and begins to sob uncontrollably. The voice over the speaker initiates the broadcast and the lullaby begins to creep in. He spreads himself across the floor

"JOY" the voice booms, seemingly louder this time as Joy's movements become more frantic. It is hard to tell: is he crying, or has he started to laugh?

78: This is an imaginative and philosophical yet viable proposal for a short film production. Be careful of telling the reader things they wont learn for themselves from the onscreen action. Great sense of tone and world building.