

OUT OF ORDER

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Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2013

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Davis, Kimberly D. *Out of Order*. Master of Fine Arts (Radio, Television and Film), May 2013, 37 pp., references, 20 titles.

Out of Order is a documentary film that explores the emotional and physical aspects of living with polycystic ovarian syndrome. This reproductive disorder affects between five and ten percent of all women of reproductive age. This film features an animated, autobiographical look at director, Kimberly Davis' personal experience with this condition.

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PROSPECTUS

Note about this section: This section was written during the course of one year, from May 2008 until April 2009. This is the original proposal that was submitted and approved by the thesis committee.

Introduction

What would happen if life were to fail? For years now an endless debate has questioned where the origin of life lies, but regardless of whether humankind is cast in the image of “God” or perfected from the process of natural selection, the ovulation cycle of a woman is where life originates. But what happens if the cycle is thrown off, or even fails? Without life, does the presence of death linger in the desolate hallows of the fallopian tubes?

Out of Order explores the meaning of this pre-conception death, which occurs not at the end of a life, but is rather an end before life can even start, when the functions of the female reproductive system fail due to an increasingly common condition, polycystic ovarian syndrome, or PCOS. PCOS is one of the most common reproductive disorders women face today, affecting nearly 10% of all women of reproductive age.

In this three-part film, I will both share and reflect on my personal experiences in coping with PCOS, beginning in an ovary as the vital place where the balance of hormones determines a woman’s reproductive cycle. I will attempt to explain the hormonal processes and malfunctions that take place with PCOS by using interpretive dance. The choreography will metaphorically depict the balance between estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone in a normal reproductive cycle for a woman. Throughout this dance, co-produced with an outside choreographer, a number the patterns among

these characters will change and become imbalanced to represent the hormones as they malfunction in PCOS. The key feature of the dancers will be their representation of hormonal imbalance using their bodies' silhouettes. By costuming the performers in head-to-toe green suits, their bodies will be keyed out using chroma key software and abstract images and colors that represent the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity will be framed in their keyed-out silhouettes

The second portion of this film will depict the side effects beyond infertility faced by someone with PCOS, raise questions about modern medicine's response to this condition, and explore some of the debatable cures many doctors suggest for this disorder. By using stop-motion animation with clay representations of the human body, I will show the conflicting treatments, question whether or not some of these procedures do more harm than good, and propose the possibility of a better solution.

Finally, the closing section of this film depicts the first place we all travel on our life's voyage. An experimental look at death in a fallopian tube will express my personal struggles with the reproductive disease as I question how things went wrong inside my own body. I will look back on what it meant to be a girl, becoming a woman, and when I began to realize there was something wrong with my body. An example of archival footage to be use includes video I took when I was 20, I am putting makeup on my face and clearly take the process to the extreme. At the time I made the video, I can remember beginning to question the idea of femininity and the expectations places on women to look and dress a certain way and marry and have children. This video and several others dating back to my pre-adolescent years will serve as a tool of self-examination, as I recall my awareness of reproductive dysfunction.

Overall, this piece will provide an informative, first-hand reflection on this increasingly common disease with hopes for more discussion, research about what exactly causes this condition, and suitable treatment options for the future.

The initial concept for this documentary grows from personal experience and the desire to share my story in hopes of bringing the topic of reproductive disorders into more discussion. As a video artist, experienced choreographer, and someone who faces this disorder, I find it necessary to share my personal story for the greater understanding of anovulation, or failure to ovulate. I consider this project highly feasible because of the stop-motion approach for the story and the controlled environment in which that is created. This project is also feasible due to the relatively low cost of clay, wiring, plywood, and cardboard, which will allow the creation of fairly elaborate sets for the film for a reasonable price. In addition, I have access to a large amount of digitized archival VHS footage of my family, and myself dating back to 1994.

Style and Approach

Providing an experimental, first-hand approach to the subject of this film will support an interesting and relatable experience for viewers. I will introduce myself early in the film, and invite my audience inside my body, moving to different locations for each segment. With each of the three sections containing its individual visual approach, the overall feel of the film represents the many facets of PCOS.

Artistically, in the first section in this documentary, the story will take the form of a performative medium as the silhouettes of three modern/interpretive dancers provide the main focus to illustrate this portion. Titled "Testosterone Tango," this portion shows

three dancers, each one representing a hormone used in a woman's reproductive cycle. I plan to utilize a muscular male silhouette as Testosterone, a tall, average-statured female as Estrogen, and a petite female dancer as Progesterone. These unique shapes will act as a canvas for each of the hormones at play in this dance. The interpretive choreography will begin as a normal ovulation cycle, presenting a balanced, safe, and visually appealing movement. Then they will enter a cycle faced with the imbalance of PCOS. Their movements will become more erratic and unbalanced as the hormones begin to work against each other. This metaphoric dance will be accompanied by an original music composition that emphasizes the same transition, with the music beginning as normal and rhythmic, but soon moving to harsh and out-of-rhythm to match the choreography.

The second section, "The Forty-Pound Balloon," addresses the side effects of PCOS and questions current approaches of treatment. This concept will be represented visually through stop-motion and clay animation. After the dance portion in the ovary, the film will move throughout various parts of the body, as the common side effects of PCOS are shown, such as weight gain, insulin resistance, facial hair, acne, balding, high blood pressure, and depression. In addition to illustrating how this condition can throw the entire body off balance, I will address the most commonly prescribed treatment to PCOS, oral contraceptives, and how they regulate reproductive hormones but do not provide a long-term solution because the condition returns when a patient goes off the medication. I will also touch on another popular treatment, Metformin, which was created to treat diabetes and helps with insulin resistance. I will illustrate the possible problems in using drugs, the primary functions of which are for treating other

conditions, and question why more research is not done in creating treatments specific to this disease.

Finally the last segment, “Death in a Fallopian Tube,” will take place within an animated world to represent the inner workings of the human body. The fallopian tube itself will be constructed of the same clay as the previously depicted body parts. Through the tube will travel a ghostly ovarian egg, representing the pre-conception death that lingers in the bodies of women who face PCOS. As the egg passes, archival footage of myself, from when I was a young child up until the realization that I had this disease as a young adult, will play within the silhouette of the eggs. An added voiceover commentary will help shape the story as I begin to question this disease and myself.

Overall, the approach in this documentary primarily consists of poetic style, using visual metaphors with forms of animation and performance. In addition, archival footage of both observational and participatory natures will be used to further make lyrical meaning of this disease.

Intended Audience

The intended audience for this film is primarily young women who are beginning to grow accustomed to their reproductive cycles. By reaching women who are entering their prime reproductive years, early teens to mid-twenties, this film will call for these women to become more aware of their changing bodies and look for signs of dysfunctional change. This age group is critical to reach because at this age ovulation cycles begin to regulate, as they age further away from puberty, and problems can become more noticeable. When I was an adolescent, there was little education

available on reproductive disorders to me, and I had a difficult time finding answers about my body, not know things like PCOS even existed. So a sense of awareness for this age group of women is a key goal for this production.

PREPRODUCTION RESEARCH

Treatment

What would happen if the moon were to fall? Would it come crashing down in a fit of rage, bursting into thousands of tiny lunar shards, killing us all? What would happen if the sun were to die? Would daylight become a memory as we all mourned and began to cry? What would happen if life were to fail? Would men and women wage war with each other, and sexuality become a thing of the past?

What *would* happen if life were to fail? Though the exact origins of life are often debated, it is well known that the reproductive process starts in a woman's ovary with ovulation, then fertilization, pregnancy, and finally the birth of a child. This occurs in a timely cycle, with new opportunities for life every month, but what happens if something goes wrong? What if life never happens?

Meet a young woman; she is tall and has red hair. She looks like an average woman, and not many would suspect anything peculiar about her presence. Though she appears healthy on the outside, on the inside lies a vast emptiness. Diagnosed with something called polycystic ovarian disease, this woman produces no life and, in fact, has not ovulated in her reproductive cycle for over a year. How did this happen, and what exactly is polycystic ovarian disease?

She wants to show us and invites us into her body. We pass through the skin near her hip; inside is filled with veins and nerves, all lively in a fast-paced ensemble. Ahead we can see her reproductive organs—a uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries. Getting closer, we head toward the right ovary. As we enter the ovarian sac, the inside strikes a strong contrast from the active body functions just outside. In here it is dark

and musky. Empty shells of what used to be ovarian eggs are strewn in cluttered piles against the dingy white walls.

Suddenly a ghostly white light flashes, beckoning us to take a glimpse at this place before it became the wreckage it is now. We see a faintly pictured flashback of three figures gracefully standing in unified arabesques. In the middle stands a man, Testosterone, and on either side of him stand his two female partners, Estrogen and Progesterone. The figures begin to move perfectly in synchronization, as if the three bodies operate as one. They plié down and rise up to their toes, arms outstretched in the air. The tips of their fingers meet above their heads, forming triangles with their arms. They all lean to the right, bending at the waist, as each left leg extends outwards to the other side. Soon their legs touch back to the ground; they resume center, plié down again, and start the same motion leaning to the left. The movement continues, shifting positions but maintaining an internal balance with each new location throughout the ovary.

Then by surprise Progesterone slips, suddenly knocking Testosterone out of balance. Though she quickly tries to rejoin the other two, she looks noticeably off rhythm. She bumps into Testosterone again, this time knocking him to the floor. The two women continue on, a mere beat behind one another. From the floor Testosterone rises, shaking his head, as if lifted from a trance. He raises his arms in the air, enraged with his newly found freedom. He approaches the dancing women, and yanks Estrogen into his arms, forcing her to tango with him around the room. Meanwhile, Progesterone continues the melodic dance they started with, though struggling with the imbalance of her lost partners. As the tangoing duo sweeps near Progesterone, Testosterone swiftly

throws Estrogen across the floor and grabs Progesterone as his partner in his increasingly fast tango around the ovary.

Angered by rejection, Estrogen rises to reclaim her partner. Soon the two women are tugging at Testosterone, no longer dancing, but greedily ripping away, until eventually all three spin out of control and fall to the ground, sinking into the floor until there is nothing left of them and the room resumes the state in which we found it.

Character Location

The main character in this film is me. I will create a clay representation of myself, which will address the audience directly with my voiceover. In addition, the locations for this film will be created primarily on a miniature tabletop set. The specific sets I plan to create from clay and cardboard are an outdoor scene, inside an ovary, and inside a fallopian tube.

For the dance sequence, the setting will take place on a life-sized studio in which the dancers can move freely. This section will also introduce three additional characters—Estrogen, Testosterone, and Progesterone—who will each be represented by a dancer.

Funding

Due to the high production cost of filmmaking, *Out of Order* will be applied for consideration for several filmmaking and film finish grants throughout the summer and fall of 2011. Some of these opportunities include:

- Roy W. Dean Film grant
This grant funds new and work-in progress documentaries under the guideline that the film benefit society in some way.

- Texas Filmmaker Production Fund

This is awarded by the Austin Film Society to emerging filmmakers in the state of Texas.

- Open Meadows Foundation

A funding program that encourages creative projects involving girls and women.

Potential Areas of Distribution

This film would benefit both from showing at film festivals and alternative distribution specifically targeted for the intended audience. Film festivals would provide a nice ground to raise more awareness of PCOS to a general audience and allow for the film to be seen in different locations across the country. The following are a few of the film festivals I am interested in seeking entry:

- Through Women's Eyes

7205 Frisco Lane
Sarasota, FL 34241

- Thin Line Film Fest

5012 Pebble Beach Trail
Denton TX 76208

- Experiments in Cinema

PO Box 7669
Albuquerque, NM 87194

- Ann Arbor Film Festival

PO Box 8232
Ann Arbor MI 48107

As an additional form of distribution, I feel this film would be a helpful conversation-starter for young women and with regard to how they should be aware of their changing bodies. Places such as schools or summer camps would be ideal for this. I would like to present this film to organizations like the PCOS Foundation, Project

PCOS and PCOSupport in hopes to form a partnership with one of these nonprofits for potential distribution for healthcare providers to use as a tool to inform young patients about this and give them insight to my story.

Goals of Production

The overall production goal is to shed light this condition for a broader audience, as it is such a little-known disease. By raising awareness of this condition in a relatable way for the intended audience, a greater line of communication can be formed about this sensitive topic.

Steering away from traditional documentary film form and creating this story through animation and dance allow for a greater freedom to explore places inside the body that would otherwise not be accessible. Not only will I be able to invite my audience inside my body, but also I can share my emotional interpretation of these body parts, by presenting them in abstract form.

For the first chapter, "Testosterone Tango," using silhouettes of bodies to represent hormones provides a tangible and relatable form to represent testosterone, estrogen, and progesterone, which otherwise are hard to visualize. The reason for choosing these three particular hormones is that they are the main reproductive hormones produced in the ovaries, and the balance among the three is vital to ovulation.

The use of modern and interpretive dance to illustrate the balance needed for ovulation will demonstrate the delicate nature of this balance and how easily the slightest shift in hormone production can disrupt functions of the entire body.

During the middle portion, “The Forty-Pound Balloon,” the audience moves from the primary hormones in the ovary to the overall reproductive system. To journey into this otherwise unreachable place, I will represent myself as a tour guide to the inside of my own body. The purpose of this approach is to express simply that which would be impossible to see in traditional observational video form. The goal of this section is to present the most common effects of PCOS, commonly recommended treatments to the condition, and how the treatments pose conflicting problems to these effects. The section will ultimately conclude that better options need to be made available for this increasingly common problem.

In the final chapter, “Death in a Fallopian Tube,” the continued use of clay sets to represent the walls of the fallopian tube reflects the vibrancies of life that the reproductive path holds. By creating a colorful, abstract interpretation of a fallopian tube, I can better communicate the importance of this place in facing anovulation (failure to ovulate) and reflect the desires I have for life to exist in these fallopian tubes.

The purpose of using archival video to represent ovulation in this portion of the film is to raise questions of normalcy versus abnormalcy, and to question whether it is possible to pinpoint any warning signs of reproductive disorders in the midst of adolescent and post-adolescent changes. By reflecting on my documented personal experiences, I will attempt to recount any changes in myself that may have indicated the onset of my reproductive problems, in hopes that my audience may find relatable instances to become in tune with their own bodies.

The choice of an artistic, first-hand approach to this health-issue film, instead of an expert-driven view of the topic, will reflect the vulnerability and uncertainty

experienced by someone with PCOS. This approach seems better suited to communicate with a younger audience to convey the message of knowing about and taking control of their own bodies.

RECONCEPTUALIZATION BEFORE PRODUCTION

During the early stages of pre-production, I reconsidered the idea of using dancers as visual representations of hormones in this film. I met with a few dancers and choreographers before deciding that including dancers would cloud this film with too many elements. I found it best to continue with claymation during this section for the flow of the film. I found it would be easier to transition from clay to archival footage without the addition of dancers, who would only appear in the one segment. Having clay instead promotes a balance between the first and the second half of the film.

In this particular section, "Testosterone Tango," I decided to take a simpler approach with the animation by having three clay balls represent the reproductive hormones of estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone. The testosterone is represented by a black ball, estrogen pink, and progesterone yellow. The three characters roll around in harmony at first with the testosterone taking equal turns to dance with the female hormones. Then eventually the two female clay balls demonstrate jealousy for one another and eventually destroy each other. After both of the female clay balls are flattened, testosterone grows in size, and multiplies with several little testosterone spawns that fuse into the female hormone disks. The female disks rise from the dead under the control of testosterone and begin dancing again with the testosterone, but the original harmony they had is far gone. Eventually, testosterone pushes both of the female characters down, signifying its ultimate takeover.

This scene visually represents how testosterone manipulates the female reproductive cycle in attempting to continue normally after the three hormones become unbalanced. This process of the testosterone rising is the main culprit of how PCOS

begins to spiral out of control, though the exact cause of why the testosterone begins to rise is not yet known. I decided to take this opportunity to reflect on femininity and my childhood as I attempt to parallel the rise of testosterone in my body to my childhood struggles with femininity.

In addition to this change, I decided to add outside archival footage alongside the home videos of me as a child. I felt that produced movies for sex education created in the early 1950s added a unique platform to better visualize PCOS and how women with this condition compare to those with a normal reproductive cycle. However, instead of playing this outside footage as it originally played, I chose to manipulate the footage to generate a new explanation of the female reproductive cycle with polycystic ovarian syndrome from the same footage.

Lastly, due to the changes involving the dancers and the low cost of the clay medium, I decided to forgo the process of applying to the grants outlined in my prospectus. Depending on the reception of the film and distribution, I may seek outside funding to screen at festivals in the future.

INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRODUCTION

Experimental filmmaking and documentary have gone hand in hand throughout history. *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) is a film that made use of self-reflection by means of a movie camera and how audiences experience cinema. This film popularized manipulating real images to create expressive meaning in documentary films. Even some of cinema's first short films by pioneer filmmaker Thomas Edison, such as *Serpentine Dance by Annabelle* (1896), experimented with color variations to express new meaning to the documented image.

With *Out of Order* I drew inspiration from these pioneer films to push the boundaries of documentaries and freely used inaccessible places, such as an ovary, as a setting in this personal film. I adopted the experimental take on this project to promote excitement for a young audience. Though this film is highly informational, I wanted to primarily focus on the fact it is personal and artistic.

Many of today's experimental films involve the same process as the documentary classics mentioned above, by creating new meaning from non-fiction film footage or ideas. This film falls under the category of experimental, in that it tells a constructed story based in reflection of reality. Although this film contains controlled scenes of animated storytelling, it documents not only the real process of the medical disorder, but also the emotional reflections of the filmmaker who is faced with the condition.

This reflection occurs through reminiscence of the past via first-person narration over archival footage from the filmmaker's childhood. By manipulating the speed during the playback of this video, the expression on how the filmmaker perceives these moments in memory is displayed in a poetic form.

The Autobiographical Documentary and Self-reflexivity

Through expression of self and providing a first-hand account of PCOS the film reflects an autobiographical account of the story. Through the use of home videos from my childhood and first-person narration, I construct an identity as a first-hand experience expert about the topic of PCOS and how one might feel during the process of coping with this condition.

I drew inspiration on this portion of my film from Jonathan Caouette's film *Tarnation* (2003) in which Caouette creates a personal documentary reflecting on his childhood with a schizophrenic mother. As with my film, there are different facets of character Caouette addresses in this film as both a narrator and a performer through his home video footage. All of the experimental edits and manipulation to the home video footage in Caouette's film give the past a surrealist feel, but most importantly the dialogue in the home video speaks to and balances the narration. This is something I aimed for with my narration and home videos.

The footage used in this section was comprised from home VHS and MiniDV footage taken from 1994-2003. The VHS footage was primarily shot by my father, offering a unique paternal filter to the events covered. The footage itself documents the various childhood activities I participated in at a young age, including baseball, fishing, and playing with the family dogs. This footage is important because it reflects on both my non-feminine demeanor, and a peek at my life before adolescence.

The MiniDV footage was shot by me, and provides a self-reflexive look into the years leading up to my diagnosis. An interesting tie-in to the theme of femininity lies in footage I used for a video project I created while I was in college. The experimental

video project is interesting in that I am expressing feelings about beauty and femininity, and the video features shots of me putting on excessive makeup, then consuming lipstick to make a statement. Though I may not have been aware of it at the time the video was made, it creates a clear parallel to facing PCOS, as emotions and hormones are unstable.

In all of the home video used in my film, the above is the only section actually shot by me, which brings up another interesting filter to the femininity represented in this film. The majority of the footage of me as child was shot by my father. Arguably, this view of womanhood through his lens both follows and presents change of empowerment to some of the ideas about the male gaze presented by Laura Mulvey. As stated in her article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female form which is styled accordingly" (Mulvey, 9). On the surface, the home video footage falls victim to the male gaze due to the performative nature of my actions on screen and my father documenting them. However, I argue through repurposing of the video inserted into this documentary that it was not the original intention for the footage to challenge the idea of the male gaze. Instead, I embrace the idea of my father as parental and comforting in this film that deals ultimately with infertility. In all of the film my father acts as an aspect of successful parenthood, in turn taking on a maternal-like character through his male gaze on me as a child as the only facet of parenthood in this film.

It is also important to note the inclusion of archival video of found footage of a classic sex education film used to illustrate the difference between a normal

reproductive cycle and that of a PCOS cycle. This footage also is male dominated with narration from a man. Like the footage of me as a child, through the acts of manipulation and editing the footage into this film, which was not its original intention, I use this male gaze to project female empowerment by using it to elevate my voice and my assertions about womanhood.

With the sex education film, I felt this video clearly illustrated a normal reproductive cycle. I chose to manipulate this footage through video effects to show a comparison between a normal cycle and PCOS, thus providing a clear visual comparison for my audience early on in the film to create a framework of pictorial reference to build upon during the following sequence that explored hormonal imbalance in PCOS.

Narration and Voice

Narration plays a key role in establishing myself as both a director and subject in this film. The voiceover serves two main purposes throughout the film, both in giving firsthand emotional details from my experience with PCOS and also in guiding audiences through the details of medical information and processes involved with the condition.

Narration in documentaries over the past few years has become somewhat of a declining trend, especially in films other than historical documentaries. As film scholar Jeffrey Youdelman wrote, "In editing, they first look at the words in the interviews, hoping to find key phrases that will articulate the viewpoint they want or one closest to it. The desire for any narration usually comes when they find that the assembled footage

doesn't quite say enough, that 'facts and figures' are need or 'transitions' are lacking" (Youdelman, 403).

For this film the narration plays to the continuous voice of my character as a director. Although we see a clay representation of me in the film, the voiceover is not necessarily an extension of that character; rather, the character acts more as an extension of the voice, bringing the audience into my world in this first-person documentary.

In recent years, the revival of narration has been a trend due to the rise of first-person documentaries that take on the genre in pseudo essay form. As communications scholar Patricia Aufderheide writes, "It is not only marked by the first person voice testimonial, but also by the bringing of the viewer into the world of the storyteller's experience. Often socially engages, it is rarely polemical. Indeed, it typically does not make a direct argument, but an implicit request for the viewer to recognize the reality of the speaker, and to incorporate that reality into his or her view of the world" (Aufderheide, 1). My film embodies this idea by not only raising awareness about PCOS, but also attempting to poetically draw relatable instances for viewers to take with them, with elements such as the sex education film and the beginning sequence in space.

At the beginning of the film, the narration sets the tone by reciting a poem supported by the images illustrating its words. From the conceptualization of this film, I knew my voice was an important component to this story and purposely placed it as the driving force. From the very start, through use of the poem, the images in the animated sequences act as a secondary support to the voiceover and story being told. As

documentary expert, Sheila Curran Bernard explains, “Narration needs to follow the arc of the story, not lead it. In the film’s opening minutes you want to set up questions that drive your story forward. You then want to anticipate the audience’s needs and almost intuitively seed information in, just as-or just after-the question or confusion begins to flicker in the viewer’s mind,” (Bernard, 224). With this idea in mind, I strategically chose to open my film with big questions about life and existence. Instead of just pulling these big ideas from nowhere, I called upon a poem I wrote as a child where I essentially ask what happens when the world begins to crumble around us.

This poem in short embodies my journey with PCOS: what happens when the idea of womanhood crumbles around me? Instead of diving right into PCOS, I let the poem linger for the audience to draw connections between the idea behind the poem to this condition. Unlike typical narration that supports the visuals for a film, my voice is not present to recite mere facts and figures, but to drive this film as a poetic entity of character.

One challenge faced in using voiceover for this film was figuring out how to incorporate it as a guide during the sections that feature archival footage of me addressing the camera. Through precise sound mixing, I attempted to make a clear distinction between my voice of narration and that of the past.

Going back to my previous statement, it was important for me to establish a distinction between the narration voice and the voice of the past because of the key role narration plays to the overall character and voice to this film. The voice in the archival footage takes a supporting role as I try to make sense of my past as a narrator reflecting on the memories in the home videos.

The Use of Animation and Exploring the Inaccessible

Due to the complexity of PCOS, I felt it necessary to have the film show the various parts of the human anatomy affected by this condition. Animation provides a way to explore places not accessible by traditional means of filmmaking.

Animation's childlike nature can aid in providing a simple and thoughtful nature to realities that are hard to comprehend or may get burdensome in terms of information or visuals when done via a more the traditional route. The main focus of my film takes place in and around what is commonly seen as "private parts," and the use of animation provides a more acceptable and inviting way to discuss issues presented.

One film that inspired me in my choice in using animation for this film was Tim Webb's *A is for Autism* (1992). This film, like mine, attempts to provide audiences with a better understanding of a complex medical condition. In this film, drawings from the autistic characters providing tutorials are used to illustrate their experiences in seeing the world. In this case, the animation allows for a first-hand experience of autism that can be understood by those who do not experience this condition. My goal is to provide a similar animation to illustrate the complexity of hormonal imbalance.

The choice to animate primarily in clay is due to the material's multi-dimensional features. Compared to computer-generated animation, there is a sense of "realness" to clay that suits well with a documentary production.

To continue the surrealist flow of the animation, I chose to manipulate both types of archival video used in this film. By applying effects that changed the speed of the video, I provided a constant visual reminder to my audience that what they see on

screen is not necessarily the natural outplay of an event recorded to video, but rather a story that is controlled by me, the narrator and director.

Though the use of animation, archival footage, and voiceover, I am essentially involved in this story as a character existing in multiple entities. As film scholar Paul Ward describes, “Animated documentaries could not really exist without the express involvement of the people they ‘are about.’ Clearly this could be said of any documentary, but it is never truer than with these films, and it is in their ‘interactive’ and ‘penetrative’ representing of a worldview that they push back the boundaries of documentary signification” (Ward, 98). Though the animated character in my film is by and large fictional in the sense it is an unliving material, it becomes “real” as it represents me as a character in this film. The clay character acts as a vessel to transport audiences through both time and space that could not otherwise be experienced in the visual sense.

My voiceover provides another entity of character in the film. Though seemingly the voice of the clay representation of me in the beginning of the film, the narration continues beyond the realm of the clay character and serves as a present and reflective guide throughout the entire film. Another entity of my character, and what anchors this film in the documentary genre, is the character that appears in the archival home videos in the film. In these videos I am not aware of how my actions in the footage make meaning to the story, because they occurred before the conceptualization of this film. This footage in a sense is the only true reality in this film aside from the fact that I, in fact, face this medical condition.

This leads to the final entity of my character, which is me as a director and editor of this film. It is important to recognize the fact that I personally molded and created animated movement for each clay piece used in this film, adding my personal interpretation of both, and also of how the human body functions. Similarly, by editing together several sections of home video archival footage to create new meaning as it pertains to my life with PCOS, I again insert control and personal voice in the editing process.

PRODUCTION

Overview

The production of *Out of Order* consisted primarily of stop-motion animation. I began animating in June 2011 and had originally anticipated to complete the animation in December 2011. However, due to the complexity of the animation and the learning curve involved on my part as someone who has never done such animation, the animation was completed in May 2012.

Production Schedule

Out of Order began production in early June of 2011, with most of the stop-motion animation shot during the summer. I completed the beginning sequence with the moon, sun, and evolution in August 2011 and the introduction to Clay Kimberly in October 2011. The music composition began in August 2011, and the selection of archival footage to be used in this film began in February 2012. Due to the change in the “Testosterone Tango” section of this film, the time I originally allotted for the dance sequence was replaced with the animation of the revised section. I finished animating the tango sequence in March 2012. By June 2012, I completed the external side effects animation and in August 2012 I shot a paralleling scene to the evolution animation for the ending.

Equipment

Since this documentary was primarily stop-motion animation, the constructed set and a digital camera made up the majority of equipment for this production. In addition, I

used few different kinds of software and lighting for both the animated and live-action sequences.

The sound in this film features a personal voiceover, recorded in a professional sound recording booth. In addition, an original acoustic score is used to accompany my voice and the action throughout the film. For my score, I worked closely with Richard Wild, a student at the University of North Texas whom I had worked with previously on another film. Richard and I met very early on in the pre production process and developed sounds to represent different aspects of femininity to use throughout the film. For the first section with the animation that takes place in outer space, we attempted to create sounds that embodied the idea of space 'as mother' to all of the elements that reside within it. Perhaps the most complicated piece to compose was the dance between the three hormones. We wanted to create a tango-like piece that musically enhanced both the synchronized cycle and the spiraling out of control with PCOS.

As for the cameras used in this film, I used my personal Canon t2i/550D DSLR camera for both the animation and live-action sequence at the end. I chose this camera for its size and photographic qualities. With stop-motion the video is comprised of a sequence of still photographs, so with that in mind I wanted to make sure I had the equipment to produce the best photographs for those sequences. I also shot most of the animation from directly above my set, and found the DSLR perfect for this due to its light weight.

The set for the animated portions of this film was constructed of plywood, measuring 2'X3'X2.5', and set upon a table. The backing of the set was constructed of

foam-board, to allow for objects to be suspended in the air. My father helped me construct this set and come up a feasible design for my space and needs.

The setting and characters in this film were created primarily out of modeling clay, with cardboard and metal wiring to aid in the shaping of the clay. In addition, I used other materials such as paper and cotton to add texture to some of the sequences in the film. The most challenging piece was the head of the clay Kimberly used throughout the film. I constructed this with a Styrofoam egg that I sculpted into the shape of a head. I then covered the egg with a thin layer of clay. This process proved to be beneficial and gave the face a smooth, life-like look.

As an extension to the set there was continuous lighting setup throughout the animation sequences, consisting of clamp lamps, daylight bulbs, and a filter set. I used a total of three lights for this project, clamping on to the set.

To capture the images, I used Dragon Frame Stop Motion software. This program allows access to the Canon t2i/550D settings through a computer, making the operation of the still camera hands-free. This program also allows for a steady frame rate and onion devices to help maintain a smooth animation flow.

Budget

A full budget is included in included in Appendix A.

POSTPRODUCTION

Schedule

Postproduction for *Out of Order* began in August of 2011 with the primary task of cleaning up the still images that were used to string together the animation pieces. The editing of the archival footage sequences began in February 2012. The following is a detailed schedule of post-production

August 10 - October 5, 2011: Edit images and animated sequences

November 8, 2011: First work in progress

January 23, 2012: Second work in progress

March 11, 2012: Third work in progress

July 7, 2012: Fourth work in progress

October 1, 2012: First rough cut

October 15, 2012: Second rough cut

November 30, 2012: Final Cut

Equipment

This documentary was edited on an iMac with Final Cut Pro 6. Two 1tb hard drives were used to store edited footage and backup completed sequences. Photoshop was used to edited individual images from the animated sequences. Final voiceover was recorded in studio at channelAustin, a public access television located in Austin, Texas.

RECONCEPTUALIZATION DURING POSTPRODUCTION

As I began going through my personal archival footage as part of the production process, I began to reevaluate the idea of having the footage act as eggs traveling through a fallopian tube. I constructed the fallopian tube several different times, but had a hard time creating my original vision for the film. After testing out the egg idea in Adobe After Effects, I decided to cut the fallopian tube travel idea from my film and just present the footage normally. In the end, I was satisfied with this choice because in the original method the viewer had a difficult time seeing the archival footage and understanding its meaning.

Another change made to the archival footage section was the use of fast-forward effects on the footage to illustrate growing up through the footage. I found it more important to play the majority of the footage at real speed so my audience could understand the footage better and gain a greater understanding of my life as a child.

Through the postproduction process, I was forced to evaluate my film in terms of the message I was putting across the screen. I think one thing I failed to do during production was to face myself and this condition. I was missing the emotional spark needed to complete this film. With this in mind, I decided to leave behind my original intention to provide a balanced film of personal story and informational documentary on polycystic ovarian syndrome and went wholly with the personal story.

I felt I was more alluring as a film subject as a first-person story rather than a third-person information provider.

Through the reevaluation of my narration and footage used in the second half of this film I was able to take this film to a new place as a personal documentary and

create a piece that focuses more on my interpretation and experience with this condition, rather than general information. It was only when I stopped avoiding my emotional reaction to living with PCOS that I found the voice I needed to deliver this film.

EVALUATION OF COMPLETED WORK

Preproduction

Looking back at the development of this film from the earliest stages, I see a work that has matured with research and time. The idea came to me when a close friend of mine mentioned she also had PCOS and formed a bond that was never really understood by others. I wanted to create this project to not only educate those who do not understand PCOS, but to in away let other women who face the various side effects with this condition that they are not alone.

I decided on animation early on because it was something I had never done before. I liked the idea of facing a challenge for this project. I chose clay because it was very hands on and controlled, something unusual for documentary. In the projects prior to this one I struggled with balancing the idea of thinking outside the box with documentary production and made that my main goal as a filmmaker for this piece.

Production

The production stage proved to be a lot more difficult than I expected. I underestimated the complexity of claymation and took longer than expected to complete this film. I had several failed attempts at animating scenes, but persevered in getting the footage I desired. My final product was a bit more scaled back than my initial idea but in the end I feel it is more approachable than the experimental film I intended to make.

Once I was able to let go of the idea of “documentary” or any genre for that matter I approached this film as a personal essay. In the end, having complete control of the outcome of the story gave a unique and personal twist to this film because I do

not have control over my PCOS, and it was somewhat therapeutic to have the power over the visuals for this piece.

One thing that proved interesting was the integration of postproduction tasks as part of the production process. After learning to animate with Dragon Frame, a majority of the process involved going back through each frame and enhancing it for the screen. Though unusual, my pet cats proved to be a challenge as the macro photography used in this film was sensitive to their pet hair.

I felt the majority of the time spent creating the animation was actually in the preparation for the shoot. Whether it was creating clay figures, ironing the background, lint rolling or testing light, the actual photography played a minor part. Since I animated in my dining room at home, I was restricted to certain hours of the night to ensure that there were few shifts in lighting for the animation.

Postproduction

The postproduction of this film began early on due to the highly technical dimension of the production of animation. Since a large portion of this film consists of still photographs, the use of Adobe Photoshop to edit out miscellaneous clay stains and hair in the photo sequences took the most time.

Another process that consumed more time than expected was creating the perfect timing for the animation. I ultimately converted my early scenes from eight frames per second to five frames per second. I used this speed throughout, adjusting the speed for various sequences. For example, during

the tango scene, many of the sequences run nearly twice as fast as the other clay scenes. I sped this up to drive the intensity for the climatic point in my film.

Overall, the postproduction was a bit overwhelming at first with the hundred of photos I needed to manage for the animation sequences; however, once I found a uniformed process for getting the photos on the timeline, the process ran smoothly.

APPENDIX
BUDGET

Budget For Kimberly Davis						
Production of Out of Order						
Length: 30 Minutes						
Format: HD Video/ Still Photography						
Production: 18 weeks (May-October 2011)						
Post-Production: 20 Weeks						
Summary Budget						
PRODUCTION	#	Unit	Rate	Needed	In-Kind	Total
Producer/Director/DP	6	months	2,000		12,000	12,000
Director of Photography	14	days	250		3,500	1,400
On Set Equipment						
Wooden Animation Set	1	set	100		100	100
Clay	50	lbs	3		150	150
Animation Armatures	6	bodies	9		54	54
Dragon Stop Motion Software	1	unit	275		275	275
Camera Equipment						
Panasonic HVX200 +(2)16 P2 cards	14	days	200		2,800	2,800
Canon t2i/550D+ 16gb SDXD card	18	weeks	95		1,710	1,710
Lighting (Lowel Rifa, 4-point kit)	18	weeks	250		4,500	4,500
Expendables		allow	500	500		500
Miscellaneous Expenses		allow	300	300		300
Total Production				800	25,089	25,889
POST-PRODUCTION	#	Unit	Rate	Needed	In-Kind	Total
Editor	20	weeks	500		10,000	10,000
Music (Original Composition)	1	score	1,500		\$1,500	1,500
Total Post-Production				0	11,500	11,500
DISTRIBUTION	#	Unit	Rate	Needed	In-Kind	Total
DVD Dubs	50	DVDs	10		500	500
Festival Entry Fees	20	festivals	50	1,000		1000
Publicity Material		allow	1,500	1,500		1,500
Postage/Shipping		allow	200	200		200
Total Distribution				2,700	500	5,700
				Needed	In-Kind	Total
TOTAL				3,500	37,089	43,589

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