**SELF REFLECTIONS- Rahul Gulati**

1. **Spectrum Media- Cyrus Oshidar**

In Spectrum Media’s podcast, Cyrus Oshidar provided some incredibly valuable insights into the advertising industry. I learnt that advertising in the past was more traditional, as compared to nowadays, where it centrally revolves around social media. Communication of messages to the audience primarily took place in the past through television campaigns and billboards. It is essential to choose what sector of the advertisement field you would like to get into. The advertisement field broadly consists of marketing, creative, and strategy-based sectors. I learnt that copywriters are the very soul of an advertisement since they are the people responsible for crafting the advertisement’s message. These people are as crucial to an advertisement as a script-writer is to a movie. A large amount of research is required to craft a convincing and appealing communication message related to a particular product, brand, or company in order to sell it. Being a copywriter is no menial task, however, and to even become one, a person must create an entire book of advertisement ‘script’ ideas and pitch it to advertisers. An art director or a visualiser takes control of the next step of the process. The art director chooses relevant images to appease the audience or even hires a photographer to create a visual impact on the audience. I find the visual aspect of advertising quite fascinating and have a great interest in working as a photographer working side-by-side with the art director of an advertising campaign to create an image that would draw people in to purchase a particular product.

Finally, with more work and experience, both a copywriter and an art director can become a creative director. A creative director’s position is one of seniority, and he/she plays a significant role in guiding the creative process of advertising. A creative director must be able to think from a marketer’s perspective, as well as from a creativity perspective, with greater emphasis on his/her creative skills, since all advertising messages are communication-based and make attempts to convey something to the audience. Placement of advertisements takes place in a certain way, and advertisements on social media platforms and websites target consumers based on their interests and age group. Before going in-depth into a campaign, it is of utmost importance to choose a specific target audience. Campaign messages, as well as the depiction of art forms and visual content, is very dependent on the target audience. For example, advertisement content created for the young generation would have ‘loud’ visual content, and edgy music, as a contrast to an advertisement made for the older generation, which might typically feature classical music and far less intense graphics. It is notoriously tricky for advertising agencies to capture the imagination of young people. The choosing process that takes place here is known as the tone of the advertisement, and selecting the right tone determines whether the advertisement will be a success or not. Advertising means using smart, fresh tools in a way that achieves your objectives and aims to sell a particular image or a brand. Advertising consists of two forms- subtle and image building. A successful advertisement campaign stands out from the rest and achieves what it set out to do. It has understood its audience (who they are and what they do) and has found an effective way to reach them.

If people already have vast knowledge about a product, the campaign would then enlist celebrities and humour to drive the message across. Advertisements can also be used solely to attract people to a particular establishment, like a shop or a restaurant. To be successful in the advertising field, you need to be an excellent communicator (verbal or written), which includes teamwork skills and fabulous problem-solving skills. Advertisements nowadays focus on ‘How do I get people to do this?’ and vast amounts of strategic planning is required. Sometimes less is more, and providing visual information in an advertisement attracts people towards a particular product or even a country on a bigger scale. Large brands prioritize youths' interests and what they find relevant to create content. It is crucial to take advantage of the time I have now to improve my communication and writing skills, perhaps in the form of internships. Observing how celebrities market themselves will give me a better idea of how to both market myself, as well as any product that I would like to sell. People and sports teams are brands too. When promoting sports teams like a polo team in England or a football team in South America, it is vital to consider if we are promoting the team itself or their merchandise, since these two campaigns will differ in strategy. Getting together to sell a particular item with a few friends, even something as small as lemonade, will help me develop the skills I require for a career in advertising. Volunteering at non-profit organizations and charities also helps develop skills required for a career in this field.

In conclusion, it is essential to be connected to the world through social media and forums online and know our world and the events taking place in it. Problem-solving and excellent communication and engagement skills are required for success in this field. I need to be able to put on different aspects together. Finally, I must have ambition and organize things well.

1. **Lee Byung Jun**

The interview podcast with Lee Byung Jun was fascinating, with vast amounts of information about the live-streaming industry. Some live streaming companies sell their software to big brands like Samsung, and thanks to live streaming, these companies now have the opportunity to revise their business models and attract more consumers. Live streaming content is a determinant of the number of people who would tune in. Live streaming cooking tutorials and gaming tutorials are popular.

I learnt that, in the live streaming field, introducing a new type of streaming is very difficult, and it is no easy task to draw audiences into watching a new type of tutorial or different types of content. I learnt that there were no live streaming music tutorials in the past on big Korean live streaming platforms like BigoLive and BeLive, and people who wanted to learn how to produce EDM music or write songs from an online tutorial were unable to do so. It gave me a fascinating insight into the shifting business model that several companies are adopting due to the coronavirus situation. People cannot visit malls, but shops in these malls are required to pay rent, despite not having a single customer. This is where live streaming comes in. Large malls can collaborate with live streaming platforms to create a virtual shopping mall platform, where people representing these brands can sell their products by speaking live on these platforms. I feel that I can have a good career in the live streaming business, and I am intrigued by how I can both connect to audiences worldwide with engaging content and earn a decent living at the same time. The live streaming business has a large number of other applications as well. For example, a small English school needs a thousand students in a class, and would not prefer using a video conferencing platform like Zoom, due to security concerns and possible limitations like only two hundred students in a class at maximum capacity. The school can choose to go live and teach all one thousand students at once, using a vast number of tools at their disposal, like PowerPoint slides and videos. Live streaming is a fantastic space for people to showcase their talents, like photography or art. I am interested in photography, and I see live streaming as a place where I can showcase my skills and perhaps get the interest of a well-known photography company. I learnt that the live streaming business is relatively new, and tremendous exposure is required to understand it. People with minimal experience and understanding of live streaming find it challenging to persuade companies to adopt it. Many big companies have never tried live streaming, so their marketing teams are not usually used to creating this type of content, and are instead more familiar with creating social media content.

An in-depth review of a live streaming podcast is required after it has concluded. Key focus areas of analysis include asking whether the podcast or live streaming show successfully engaged with the audience or not and if the content was liked, and met with positivity. Despite the importance of reviewing a show, a large amount of planning is required in the earlier stages as well. Live streamers must consider what type of products they sell, and the kind of content that would appeal to audiences in the next podcast and must carefully consider the way they interact with their audiences to encourage them to tune in regularly.

The script must be prepared in advance. Audio and video equipment must be fully functioning, and lightning adjustments must be organised. The media industry needs to create a new breed of celebrities who will go on TV shows and make their content more engaging and fun for younger people to watch.

A single, large, government-owned media company in Singapore (Mediacorp) removes the threats of competition, and so the content put out by this company is not very strong or does not appeal to a large number of people, and the need for more live streamers is present. Young people should educate themselves about the media so that they can lead live streaming shows of their own effectively. In live-streaming, when a person speaks only to the camera, and there are no people present, feeling conscious and shy is normal. It is vital to understand that mistakes are acceptable because people love raw and spontaneous aspects of the show. Live streaming content can change in between the show as well, but this is acceptable because anything can happen anytime when you are live. Live streaming is open to any age, and any content can be put out, but the content must target the correct audience. Content must be targeted towards the same age group which the live streamer is a part of, because older people may not relate to it, and younger people can learn something from it. I learnt that excellent communication skills are essential, as well.

In conclusion, live streaming models can be adopted by many businesses, including hospitals and insurance companies, with several applications. Live streaming also inculcates a community spirit by interaction with other people attending live streaming sessions. In times of extreme difficulty, like the current virus situation, where social interaction is limited, it is truly a blessing to have the opportunity to share and exchange ideas with others through this medium.

1. **J2 Productions- TP Lim**

J2 Productions’ Podcast provided a treasure trove of information about the film industry. A film has several stages, and each of these stages must be completed correctly to ensure that the film is a success. The first stage is the development stage, involving brainstorming concepts that will be applied to the film, as well as coming up with ideas for the film. Once the identification of the concept takes place, the creation of a synopsis occurs. This stage is essentially the planning process of a film.

Scriptwriting for the film takes place in the next step, including the development of the script. I learnt that the scriptwriting process is quite lengthy and takes an extraordinary amount of deep thinking in order to create a compelling story that would appeal to the audience. A single person can do scriptwriting, but it can also be written as a collaborative effort between five, six, or even ten people. Sometimes, a committee of people gets together to write a script. The next stage is the pre-production stage, where plans are made for the production of the film, and shooting aspects of the film are also taken into consideration, like how it will be shot. I am interested in filmmaking and see it as an exciting medium to convey stories and emotions through visual-based storytelling. The next stage is production, involving the actual filming and directing of the movie. Finally, at the last stage, post-production takes place, involving editing and adding special effects. After the completion of all this work, the movie is released into theatres for mainstream viewing.

While the development of the story happens, thought must be put into ways to secure funding for the making of the movie. I got a better understanding of how filmmakers must keep a specific budget in mind and the importance of sticking to a budget. In order to get investors involved, your project needs to be extremely compelling. Sometimes ideas can be pitched, despite not having a complete script, but in other cases, investors insist on seeing the entire script before investing in the movie. Besides knowing how to make a film, I need to know how to market my film. I gained a fascinating insight into the Malaysian film industry and locally produced movies like Hantu Kak Limah in 2017, which broke 20 million dollars in the box office within the first eleven days, and broke $38 million by the end. Three other Malaysian-produced movies broke the $30 million mark in the same year. In 2019, two exceptional Malaysian made animation movies did very well.

I learned something very thought-provoking: The owner of the film only gets back roughly one-third of the money made in the box office because the other two-thirds pay tax, and the cinemas displaying these movies. For example, if a movie costs $3 million to produce, and the box office total is $9 million, you only get back $3 million. A ubiquitous challenge faced by filmmakers is unpredictable weather conditions. Outdoor scenes planned for a particular day would need to be replaced with indoor scenes if weather conditions are not suitable. Efforts to prevent the delay of a shoot must be taken because actors and crew members need to be paid additional money for their time, and actors may already have signed onto another role somewhere else in the next week, making it incredibly difficult for them to adjust their schedule for you. Location issues are also a big challenge, as famous landmarks frequently get booked for events.

I learnt that filmmaking is about expecting several problems, and once these problems are solved, the movie is made. Filmmaking is also about learning to work with different types of people, and teams are huge: around 150-200 people, so fantastic communication skills are required. These people range from artists to actors, among others. Filming is a very tiring and stressful process, and people’s moods can dictate how they react to something, and their actions can also be affected by how frustrated they are. It is vital to manage my own emotions, as well as my team’s emotions. I would like to undertake a job related to cinematography, so internships focused on this can help me get experience for a career in it. Preparing a schedule is very important, and when the actual execution takes place, you get a better idea of how to coordinate these two. A good movie has a great script, quality acting, beautiful cinematography, and excellent editing, and a combination of these factors is known as the production value of a movie. Actors must have chemistry to create an impact on the audience. The better the production value, the better the movie performs. Sometimes a very well made movie only earns a decent amount of money in the box office.

The success of a movie is based on knowing the target audience very well, and movies made for a specific target audience resonate well with them and are a great success because they are rewatched several times. I learnt that as a moviemaker, I need to make sure that the production value is also high, because the Box Office is unpredictable, and I will only be judged on the value of my film. If an external event, like a natural disaster, occurs at the same time the movie is released, and the movie is somewhat related to the disaster, audiences may not want to watch it, but if the production value is excellent, that is the most important thing. I have learnt that inspiration and ideas can come from anywhere, and I must be insightful and creative to apply my experiences and everything I observe into a movie.

1. **HCC Podcasts- Terence Chang**

HCC’s podcast about filmmaking provided an insight into the Hong Kong Film industry. Photography is focused on still photographs, which is quite different from film making. I learnt that film making does not require the use of flash lighting, unlike photography, which does. Some types of shots require a combination of panning, tilting, and tracking. It was interesting to learn that camera movement has an effect on lighting, and that is only the tip of the iceberg. While editing or post-processing provides a host of opportunities for the improvement of an image in photography, film making involves processes with twenty-five frames a second, making post-production very limited, unless there is a large budget.

Although a person’s ability is essential, I learnt that filmmaking is a team effort. People with exceptional personal abilities still need to compromise and coordinate with other members of a team to get fantastic results. Teamwork is always required, and will always play a significance in film making. If the budget is small, or there is not enough time, tremendous sacrifices need to be made. Sometimes the time frame is so essential that the quality of the movie is compromised. There are many careers in the film industry, like a director, an art and design department, a lighting department, and the camera crew. If I want to focus on film making, I need to have great enthusiasm for films in general. It was interesting to learn that the director and his/her small team are the most involved in the film making process. Directors in the Hong Kong film industry get paid significantly less than other departments, and I was slightly puzzled and shocked upon hearing this, considering much of the film’s success is attributed to them. The lighting department and camera crew get a daily salary. The assistant directors and the continuity supervisor have contracts with the production company, but it takes a long time to produce a film, involving 14-18 hours a day of work. Assistant directors play a role in helping directors arrange props, and the types of clothes the actors are supposed to wear in a particular scene.

I am interested in cinematography, and learning about this exciting career and the potential challenges I will face intrigues me. It is crucial to stay on schedule in film making. Film making also requires attention to detail and a clear idea of how to execute something, and mistakes can be made easily. Care must be taken to ensure mistakes are not made, because the consequences are disastrous. For example, if an assistant forgets to set the camera when shooting an explosive scene, it is disastrous because that valuable explosion that lasted for maybe only a second would have cost over 100,000 Hong Kong Dollars. What is even worse is that the entire team must bear responsibility for that act of carelessness. The number of days it takes to shoot a movie is mainly dependent on the budget. Big movies are divided into twenty to twenty-two parts, with nine to twelve hours per part, while smaller, low budget movies are divided into twelve parts. Filming can be completed in twelve days in some cases, but blockbusters are always an exception to the rule. I learnt that blockbusters are divided into sixty to eighty parts, and there is a significant timeframe, and so nothing needs to be rushed.

The head of the camera department is the cinematographer, or the director of photography, also known as the DOP. The DOP selects which lenses to use, and suitable camera angles to suit the scene according to the desires of the director. I aim to be DOP. Under the DOP, we have the First Assistant Cameraman (FAC), who coordinates the entire camera department and assigns tasks. He/she also ensures that the camera is correctly focused on the subject or action being filmed. If a film is out of focus, it is the First Assistant Cameraman’s fault. I learnt that, in the past, the FAC’s job was even harder, since he/she did not have a monitor to check focus, and had to operate the lens’ focusing ring to keep the right subject in focus throughout each scene, referring to only the distance between the subject and the camera. This also meant that these people were very skilled. The Second Assistant Cameraman (SAC), is also called the ‘clapper loader,’ and operates the clapperboard at the beginning of each take, and mark up the actor’s position during rehearsals, to help the FAC make necessary changes and help calculate focus. Another vital role of the SAC is to do the camera report. The camera report includes the aperture, shutter speed, and ISO of every scene, shot, and take. SACs also need to change camera lenses.

The camera department also includes the camera grip. Camera grips are responsible for providing camera support, which includes tripods, dollies, tracks, and cranes. The dolly is used for camera movements termed ‘track in’ and ‘track out.’ The Hong Kong film industry has around 2-4 people in a camera grip but is usually dependent on the number of cameras used. Before shooting, the entire team has an idea of what technical problems cannot be solved, so efforts will be made to avoid those problems in the first place. However, while shooting, several technical problems can be solved if time is taken out to address it. I learnt that communication in the film industry is complicated because every department is related. For example, the camera department may shift the camera to get a better angle, but this would affect the lighting and art departments. Newer employees have a lack of experience, and senior people will be stringent. I need to be prepared to learn as I go along, despite the challenges I will face working and communicating with them. Effective communication is an art, so team spirit and teamwork are vital. Some directors have difficulty making up their minds, but their will must be followed, and some actors might forget their lines, which causes frustration and building up of tensions. Despite what people think, YouTubers only have a marginal impact on the film industry, as they primarily focus on YouTube videos. A shortcoming of YouTubing, as it is called, is people will develop feelings that movie making is easy. Nowadays, people record their entire lives on video, and opinion leaders use mobile cameras to produce creative or humorous videos, but filming is quite different from all this.

In conclusion, despite being riddled with challenges, communicative or technical, the film industry is truly amazing, and films are used as a medium to convey truly exceptional stories. Filmmaking requires excellent attention to detail, but the results can have an impact on thousands. The film industry is proliferating, especially in the Asian market, and original web series are on the rise. Due to these trends, there will be even more opportunities for me in the film industry. As long as I always love what I do, and focus on my work, and the results I want, there is nothing I cannot achieve. I must keep in mind that this industry is extremely competitive, and I must constantly improve myself. Otherwise, I face potential elimination.