

Thesis Project: Production of Short Film “*[When I was someone else]*”

By

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Student ID: 19203007

A report submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English

Department of English and Humanities

BRAC University

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis report submitted is my own original work while completing my degree at BRAC University.
2. The report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where properly cited with full and accurate referencing.
3. The report does not contain material that has been accepted or submitted for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

Iftekhar Hossain

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Approval

This thesis project titled “When I was Someone Else” submitted by Iftekhar Hossain (Student ID: 19203007) of Summer 2025 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Bachelor of Arts in English on the 28th of July.

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Letter of Transmittal

Mohammad Zaki Rezwan

Senior Lecturer

Department of English and Humanities

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Kha-224 Merul Badda, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh.

Subject: Thesis report on the production of short film “*When I was someone else*”

Dear **Mohammad Zaki Rezwan**, Senior Lecturer.

I am honoured to submit my thesis report titled “*Production of Short Film: When I was Someone else*”, which has been prepared under your kind guidance and supervision.

In this report, I have tried my best to include relevant information on the film’s conception, scriptwriting, production, post-production, and theoretical framework, and my reflections on the process.

I trust this report will meet your expectations.

Sincerely yours,

Iftekhhar Hossain

19203007

Department of English and Humanities

BRAC University

Date: 28. 06. 2025

Non-Disclosure Agreement

This understanding is made and entered into by and between Studio Light and Color and the undersigned student at BRAC University, named Iftekhar Hossain, for the commitment to avoid the unauthorized disclosure of any confidential material related to the short film production.

Studio Light and Color

Iftekhar Hossain

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Almighty for giving me the strength to complete this project. I am especially thankful to my supervisor, Mohammad Zaki Rezwan, for their unwavering support, guidance, and constructive feedback throughout this journey.

I would like to thank Mehjabin Prokity and S.M. Abdullah for their time and for giving me the courage to complete the work during the production phase. Their help and dedication brought my vision to life. I am also grateful to Dr. Masud Rana, who helped me during the sudden accident involving the previous cast. And with the rest of all, I would really thank Ariyan Haque Joy, Nahiyan Haque, and Anas Ratin who helped me during the filming and post-production of the film.

Executive Summary

This report provides an in-depth account of my thesis project, which involved the conceptualization, scriptwriting, production, and post-production of my short film *“When I was Someone else”*.

The film explores an adult man, in his career life, going through a lot, he is falling from everything, and is stressed about his future, and in a deep depression. At his early age, he dreamed of being something that is higher than a name, and he wanted his identity to be something great. During childhood he spent a wonderful time with family school and friends, he is an active person more like an all-rounder was good in studies, played sports, active in cultural society and many other platforms, as he was good from the very early age people around him also dream big with him, everyone thought he would do something great. Everything was going smoothly till the college admission. He was doing great, achieving many things in college and winning a lot, but during the admission test in college, the downfall came. It came in every way, and he started panicking. He hides himself from everything, and his dreams start to fall apart. He was going down and down. He starts to isolate himself from everyone. As he feels separated from everything in his life, his love affairs slowly start fading, and he feels he is stuck in a very complex situation. He starts questioning everything within him and gets in a state of not knowing what he wants and what he is really doing. Gradually, he starts realizing the small things that make him happy and slowly recovers from all the things that made him suffer.

Through this project, I aimed to practically apply theories of media, film, and cultural studies learned during my undergraduate coursework at BRAC University. The report discusses each stage of production, the theoretical framework supporting the creative decisions, and the lessons learned through this process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Film, as an expressive medium, combines visual art, literature, and performance to reflect human experiences and cultural realities. My thesis project, the short film “*When I was someone else*”, represents my attempt to transform theoretical knowledge into practical creative work. The process of writing, filming, and post production was great learning for me. The process of making something entirely from scratch always gives me a wonderful feeling.

The things that we got to learn from the process are always fascinating.

The film explores the life of Tanvir, a man of 30, suffering from depression and a disease that causes his isolation from the rest of the world. He feels disconnected from the rest of the world and slowly loses grip on his surroundings. We see his struggle coping with his daily life relationship and which also affected his career. As the story unfolds, we see how he makes his path and how he turns around to fix everything that he loves.

Chapter 2: Concept Development and Scriptwriting

The idea for “*When I was someone else*” came to my mind from one of my old scripts, which was about a patient with sleeping paralysis. As it drew some inspiration from my previous draft script, you can notice some of the ideas were also drafted from that. I watch a lot of Imtiaz Ali films, which also have a significant influence on my short film.

For cinematography and sound choice, I was looking for something that the audience can feel connected to, and also feels like something might be off. I draw inspiration from Satyajit Ray. In my first draft, there was no mention of the disease apathy syndrome. The story was scattered into pieces and I had not felt connected. With Sir’s feedback, I introduced apathy syndrome to the story and started gradually building the story around it. Then I started finding the gaps in between the stories and trying to make it a whole where all the scattered pieces will be woven like a story.

Chapter 3: Pre-Production Planning

With several feedback from my supervisor, I finally started planning the execution of the film. I needed to first organise things and create a to-do list

1. Casting
2. Schedule
3. Location
4. Shooting equipment

3.1 Casting

Casting was done among friends and classmates who volunteered. For the main cast, SM Abdullah was in my mind. I showed him the draft and started planning accordingly. And the second lead was Mrityika Rahman. Initially, I planned to shoot a doctor scene with Shakur Mahmud, but just before the shoot day, he had an accident and I had to find another cast for the shot. Masud Rana, one of my seniors and a professional doctor, came to help me with my film.

3.2 Schedule

It was the most difficult thing to arrange as we all have different academic classes, and it was tough to maintain. And during the shoot, there were even Eid vacations, which hampered the shoot even for a bit. We shot the film in three parts. The first part was done nicely, and in between the second part and the first part, my protagonist's father was hospitalized for a very long time. That was a very crucial time for the whole team. We were not able to shoot, and when we started the second slot of shooting there Eid vacation was coming, so we had to take a break.

3.3 Location

There were several locations I chose to shoot. For home and garden shots, it was in my house, and we shot several shots in Bhairab, like railway station shots, riverside shots, and hospital shots were also shot in Bhairab. And for park and metro, we chose Chandrima Uddyan and metro rail for a few shoots, then for the rest, it was Bisshya Sahitya Kendro Building.

3.4 Shooting Equipment

The whole film was shot with several cameras. One of my juniors helped me during the filming process as an assistant cinematographer.

- Sony a7 mark 4
- Sony a6400
- Canon200D
- Tripod
- Gimble
- Few filters

Chapter 4: Production Process

Filming took place over several weeks in May and June 2025. The first day covered indoor scenes, mostly his isolated sequences. Shooting the first few shots was very difficult as what we were looking for was difficult to shoot, and for the first day shoot there were several takes of the main cast.

The second day focused on outdoor shots capturing Raihan's movement through crowded streets, emphasizing his isolation in a crowd. I directed while also handling the camera work, with help from a friend as an assistant director. The biggest challenge was controlling ambient noise during street shoots, which we solved by recording additional voiceovers later.

Lighting was crucial in conveying Raihan's inner state. We used low-key lighting for moments of distress and natural daylight for scenes showing his public persona. Despite time constraints and unpredictable weather, the shoot was completed successfully with minor improvisations.

Chapter 5: Production

5.1 First Part Shoot

Post-production took place over two weeks. Editing was done using Adobe Premiere Pro. The first rough cut focused on selecting the best takes and arranging them according to the script's non-linear structure. The first day was coping with everything. We shot the morning brush shoot and dream sequence shoots on the first day. We also shot a few isolated shots during the first day shoot, then with the second day shoot, we were planning to shoot the doctor chamber shoot, but last night, my original cast member, Shakur Mahmud, had an accident and was not able to attend the shoot. Following the second day of shooting, Dr Masud Rana came forward to help me with the shoot. With the doctor's scene and a movie-watching scene, we wrapped up the first part of the shoot in Bhairab.

5.2 Second Part Shoot

For the second part shoot, we took just one day. We started shooting at Chandrima Udyan. There was Nahiyan who assisted me with the shoot. We searched for perfect frames. We tried to capture some of the movements and different angles of the shoot. After shooting in the park, we moved to the next shoot on the metro. After the metro scene, there was a launch break. After the launch, we shot the evening cafe scene, particularly this scene. I wanted a bluish tone to showcase the sadness that they both are dealing with. With the sun going down and still giving some light, the sky was spectacularly blue and gave the exact mood that we were looking for in this particular scene. Though there was less light to shoot and it was going dark, somehow, we had to push iso up and were able to capture the essence.

-Break-

After shooting those scenes, the main character's father was hospitalised. We had to take a long break from the shooting; meanwhile, during this break, I started developing the story a bit more, had a little feedback from my supervisor, and started making a few new plans. I also started searching for the appropriate music and sounds for the film. There was an Eid break also. During those 12/15 days of shooting everything was stuck.

5.3 Final Part Shoot

The final part of the shoot was about getting the last important scenes. This included the strong emotional parts and any extra shots we needed before seeing the first version. This time was very important for making sure the movie felt deep and told the story well. We focused on getting close-up shots and shots of people's reactions to make the acting better and to show the feelings of the story. This was the very last time we shot anything before getting ideas back or starting to put the movie together. These scenes were filmed specifically in a place called Bhairab.

Chapter 6: Post-Production

After completing all the shoots, I finally started doing post-production. There were some aspects, Sound mixing, finding the perfect color, scene selections, and so many things to do. Of all the Sound mixing was the hardest, we have to go through so many sounds to find the perfect fit. We even recorded some sounds for many scenes. There were several shots in which voice recording was needed. This was a tricky and tough part. There were laying of audio sections, some of them even overlapped with one another during the editing process.

One of the most important parts was cutting down the scenes in exact timing, we were experimenting with sounds and videos to see where it goes naturally and trying to find a perfect cut. The sound design was important to show the difference between outside noise and inside quiet. I used city sounds, people talking, and soft music to show Raihan's feelings. I used cold and dull colours to make the film feel sad and empty. I added subtitles so people can understand and also to show what Raihan is thinking. After some feedback from friends and teachers, I changed some parts, like timing and sound.

Chapter 7: Theoretical Framework

The working title of my short film before it became "*When I was someone else*" from a personal and creative journey rooted in emotional complexity and human vulnerability. This story, at its core, is about losing oneself and finding pieces of that self again. In the film we see the story of isolation, and broken relationships. Through the character of Tanvir, I aimed to reflect a universal struggle: how the weight of emotional numbness, identity crisis, and life's unanswered questions can fragment the self.

6.1 Identity, Apathy, and the Psychology of Disconnection

Tanvir's condition in the film is not only a psychological state but a metaphor for emotional stagnation. His sense of detachment from the world, his loved ones, and even himself echoes the experiences of many who silently suffer from depression and burnout. In line with psychological realism, the film avoids dramatic confrontation and instead shows how isolation grows slowly, quietly, and invisibly. The story does not follow a traditional hero's arc; rather, it mirrors real-life struggles, fragmented, uncertain, and deeply personal.

This emotional realism was shaped by observing real human behaviors and grounding the story in clinical empathy, rather than sensationalism. The depiction of Tanvir's internal world was meant to resonate on a psychological level, allowing the viewer to not just understand him but to feel the slow erosion of meaning in his life.

6.2 Inspired by Imtiaz Ali's Emotional Journeys

Much like Imtiaz Ali's protagonists, Tanvir is lost, and searching not just for love or connection, but for himself. I was inspired by how Ali constructs characters that are emotionally broken yet poetic, wandering through cities and memories trying to rebuild their sense of being. *When i was someone else* draws from this tradition: Tanvir doesn't run toward

a goal he drifts, questions, and eventually begins to find pieces of his identity through reflection and stillness. The story's rhythm, emotional undercurrent, and focus on inner dialogue were heavily influenced by Ali's narrative style.

6.3 Aesthetic Influences from Satyajit Ray

Visually and emotionally, the film is deeply influenced by Satyajit Ray's attention to detail, realism, and silence. Ray's use of *mise-en-scène*, the arrangement of space, objects, and characters within a frame taught me that meaning can be conveyed in subtle ways. I tried to follow that philosophy. The isolation is even surrounded by many, the blue tones, his dream that scattered, all reflect Tanvir's state of mind. I wanted to craft scenes that speak more through mood than through dialogue. The pacing and quiet intensity of Ray's films also inspired my editing choices, particularly the non-linear structure that mirrors Tanvir's fragmented perception of time and self.

6.4 Sound Design as Emotional Landscape

The film's sound design was used as a narrative tool. I layered ambient noise, city traffic, distant, overlapping whispers to reflect the chaos around Tanvir, which contrasts with his emotional silence. These audio textures served as an extension of his mind, not just his environment. Moments of silence were equally important. In scenes where Tanvir confronts his inner emptiness, I allowed the soundtrack to breathe or to disappear giving the audience space to feel what he cannot express. There was chaos during his dream scenes. The soft emotional romantic sound track on the first part scene, the sound of satyajit ray, i tried to make the fit perfectly with the film.

6.5 Semiotic Symbolism and the Fragmented Self

Influenced by semiotic theory, I incorporated visual metaphors throughout the film: the train play an important role as it shows that you can take a break in a station but you have to move forward, there were scenes with river which also shows the constant flow of life, the garden in the film also plays a very important role as in the beginning of the film we see the gray faded garden but eventually during his revival in catches its natural vibrant color.

Chapter 8: Challenges and Barriers

Creating a short film alone was really a long journey for me. Challenges I faced also led to the path to overcome those. Challenges and barriers facilitated my journey with some positive outcomes – I figured out how to deal with those in a creative way with a flexible mindset.

7.1 Challenges

First of all, transforming the story into a screenplay was a huge challenge. There were a few plot holes, and it was really hard to figure out how the story connects and unfolds. I was watching several movies back and forth, trying to read articles and discuss with my supervisor how to get everything connected. My supervisor helped me a lot with that, and with the guidance of my supervisor. I was able to somehow complete the script. After completing the script and revising it a couple of times, I started the real journey. Then the actual challenge came; it was making the actors understand what I wanted. As this was my solo project, I had budget limitations and was not able to hire professional actors. There were problems during the dialogues; the initial dialogues that were written in the script somehow felt unnatural during the shoot. I had to change a lot of dialogue. Another challenge that I had to face was the timing and schedule of the shoot and processing the whole thing. Timing was crucial. There were vacations, EID, finals, and also my main cast father was diagnosed with a sickness. And finally, the last challenge was the color grading and fitting everything in pieces during the post-production.

7.2 Barriers

There were a lot of factors that were not in my hands. Like a big crew for a shoot, fully professional camera setups, and a few gadgets. Budget was also an issue. Finally, the limited resources and not-so-professional actors to shoot with.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The short film “*When I Was Someone Else*” was my thesis project. This film explored the cinematic representation of identity, emotional detachment, and apathy syndrome within the context of urban life. The film serves as a narrative exploration of how non-linear narrative structures and visual storytelling approaches.

The film's visual and narrative decisions were a synthesis of ideas like Freud's concept of the unconscious and cinematic techniques influenced by Imtiaz Ali and Satyajit Ray. The goal of the film was to show how people can feel lost inside. It tried to show feelings that are hard to say with words. The story was about someone who feels like they are not themselves anymore. It also showed how people can feel far away from the world and even from who they are.

We made the film step by step, just like building something from pieces. First, we came up with the main idea. Then we wrote the story and planned out what we needed. After that, we chose where to shoot, picked the people to act, and started filming. When filming was done, we edited all the parts to make it into a complete film. Since this was a student project, we had some problems. We didn't have a lot of money or time. We also couldn't use very expensive tools or big teams. Because of this, we had to work with what we had. We made quick decisions and solved problems in smart ways to keep going.

The film shows how feelings that are hard to say can still be shown with pictures, sound, and movement. The story is not told in a straight line it jumps around in time, just like how someone might remember things when they feel lost or confused. We used quiet sounds, simple scenes, and broken pieces of the story to show what the main character was feeling inside.

In the end, this project became more than just a film. It became a way to mix school knowledge with real creativity. What we learned in class helped us shape the story, and the film helped us understand those ideas better. It shows how making something with care can be both art and learning at the same time.

Appendix

List of Figures

Figure 1:

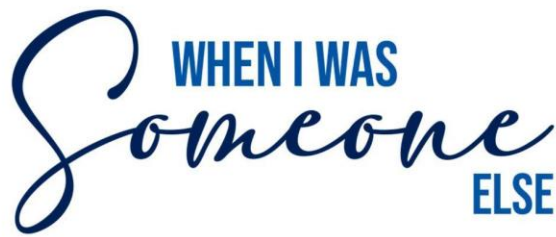


Figure 2:



Figure 3:

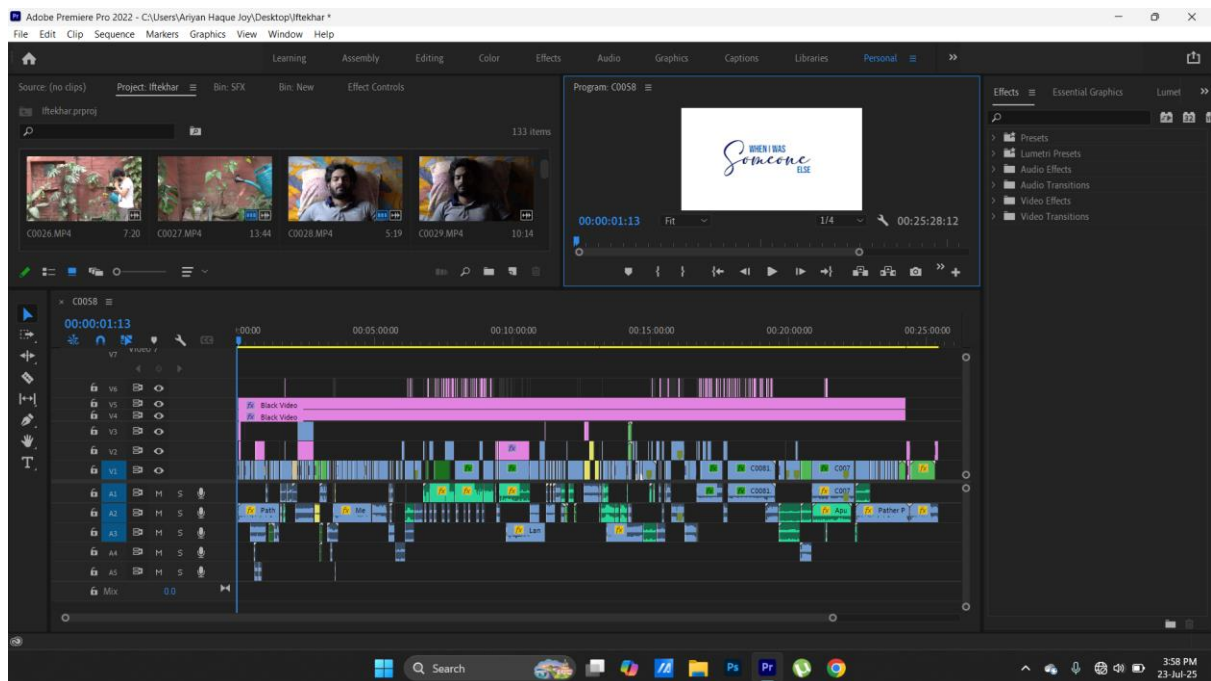
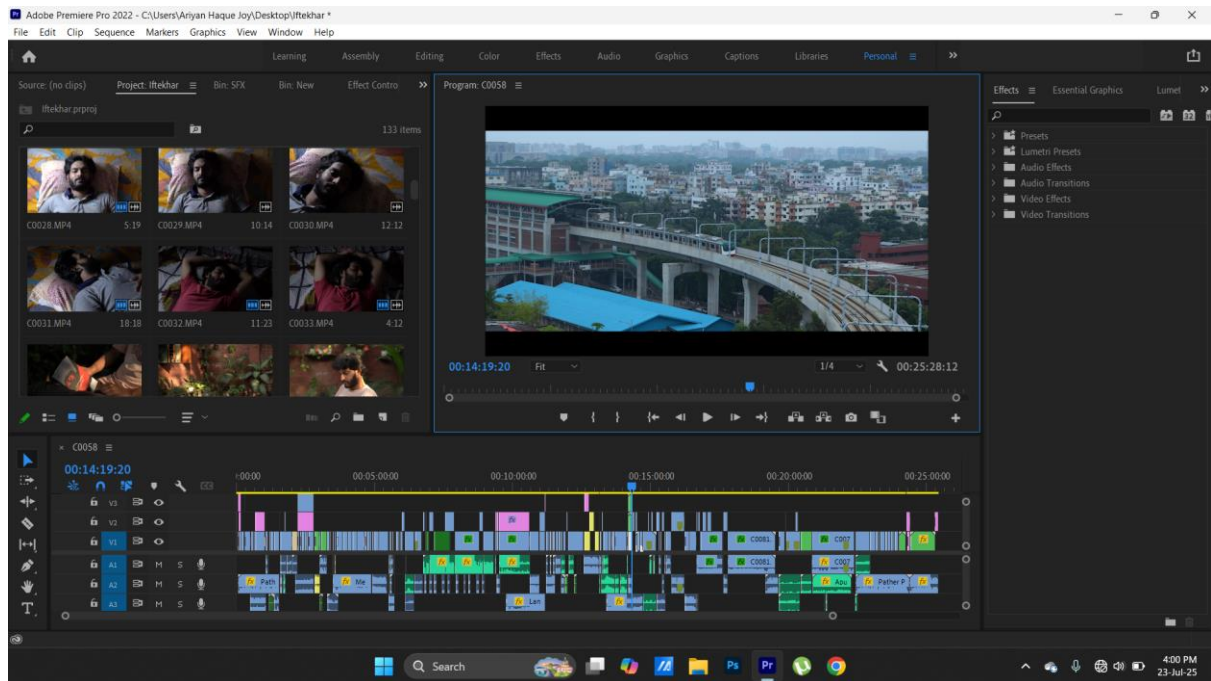


Figure 4

