INITIAL IDEAS –

When I first read the brief for this unit, I became rather
worried as the music video format isn't one that I'm extremely
interested in and the memory of my group's previous attempt at
making one still haunts me. I also didn't understand how I could
possibly make a conventional music video from home. It was only
until I re-read the brief that I realised that it said to 'make a
music video or a similar creative media product.' This motivated
me as I realised that I had a much broader scope with which
direction I took than I had originally believed.

Although I now better understood the task at hand, I was still
very worried as I couldn't think of an idea that didn't include
me having to appear in the video. Because of this fear, I began
considering fairly stupid ideas such as filming my pet tortoises
or even better, filming the annoyingly large clan of pigeons that
terrorise my back garden. After wasting a great deal of time
considering such stupid possibilities, I had the thought of
making an animated music video. I thought of this as, not only
did it allow me to avoid having to appear in the video, it also
allowed me great freedom with what images I could include with my
ability at drawing being the only limit. Also, I knew that making
an animated video would be a must less stressful process than if
I had chosen to make a real video as I didn't have to rely on
anybody else and it removed a lot of potential problems
significantly.

Although I now desperately wanted to make an animated music
video, I was well aware of the slightly daunting fact that I had
never made one before and how I also had no idea how to go about
making one, especially from home. However, my desire to avoid
starring in the video motivated me enough to make me
learn.

From the moment I understood the brief, I was fairly confident
that I knew which song I was going to be using. And when I
decided to do an animated video, I was certain as the song, which
was only 44 seconds, seemed perfect considering how short the
animation would have to be and, as the song had no lyrics, the
visuals didn't need to be connected in any way.

MY FINAL IDEA -

My final idea for this project was one that I thought of just
after I had decided upon the song as it made me think of a scene
from the film that it's from where the main character is shown
gliding up through the clouds in the opening dream/ nightmare
sequence. Whilst trying to find a way to justify such an event
was when the thought of psychedelia came to me and so I began
thinking of how I could approach that in a funny way.

My idea was to follow the comically nightmarish journey of somebody under the influence of psychedelic drugs. Although that is an extremely vague synopsis, the images and events that took place in my video were thought of and developed in the only way that I thought suitable given the deadline and my lack of experience which was by developing only short sections at a time. If I had instead completely developed the story of my video before I began animating, the video would have either turned out completely different to the plan, or it would have suffered negatively because of how loyal I was to the planning. This is why I chose to develop the idea in the way that I did as I was confident that I could trust the chaotic content of my brain and the rough outline that I had already created to make the music video the way I wanted to.

PRE-PRODUCTION

Before I began the animating process, I conducted both primary and secondary research in the hopes that it would better my understanding of the task ahead and help me when it came to developing my idea.

PRIMARY RESEARCH-

As primary research I found a video that was very funny to myself and analysed it to try and found why exactly it was that I found it funny. This process helped me identify my sense of humour and why I find certain things funny and some things not funny. After completing this task, I then analysed a video that one of my peers found funny and detailed my own reaction and considered why it differed to theirs.

For my primary research I also conducted a survey. My aim for the survey was to learn more about what others found funny and what things made them happy as I hoped that the results would greatly benefit my planning and I could then adjust my ideas accordingly.

The reason I decided to do so little primary research was because I had to consider how much time I had and how much the research would benefit my final product. I made this decision when analysing my primary research as I realised that all I had really learned by collecting this research was that humour truly is subjective and, considering the time given for this unit, I couldn't take the risk of targeting my video at one specific sense of humour as it was far too risky and could have drastically impacted my video. And so I decided to focus on my own sense of humour as I knew that it wasn't overly strange or uncommon and that the quality of my music video would be much better if I didn't attempt to cater to a specific sense of humour that wasn't my own.

SECONDARY RESEARCH -

For secondary research I looked into a range of topics in the hopes that it would benefit my final product. Firstly, I looked into the science behind smiling as it intrigued me and I thought that, depending on what I focused on in my music video, it may have helped me very much. Although the research I did was very interesting and I learned a lot, when looking back and considering which route I decided to take with my video, it wasn't overly impactful on my final product.

I then began my research into music videos by looking at all of the different forms and styles. This research helped me decide which type of music video I wanted to make as I was then able to find other videos in the style I chose so that I could use them as inspiration.

I decided to analyse the lyrics of one of my favourite songs 'All Along the Watchtower' by Bob Dylan as I wasn't certain whether I was going to use a song with lyrics and if I did, I wanted to make sure that I could interpret the lyrics in a way that would give me an extended amount of freedom in regards to what images I used and how I could create a relationship between the visuals and the audio.

Once I had decided that I was going to make an animated music video I directed the remainder of my research toward animation as I wanted to know more about it before I began making my own. Firstly, I did research on all the different types of animation to try and decide which would be most suitable for my lack of experience and lack of equipment.

I intentionally delayed analysing music videos until I decided what type of video I wanted to make so that I could analyse those that were in some way related to my idea. And so the two videos I chose to analyse were not conventional music videos. The first video I analysed was 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' by The Beatles which was taken from the film 'Yellow Submarine' and wasn't an official music video. I chose to analyse this because the style of the animation was something that I was considering trying to replicate and the song was obviously very influential to my idea.

The second video I analysed was 'Another Brick in the Wall' by Pink Floyd which was much more conventional than the previous video but was still very influential when I was developing my idea. I chose this video as I liked the subtext in the lyrics and how the video used imagery to relate to those lyrics. The way that the true meaning of the song was hidden beneath the obvious meaning above was something that I wanted to replicate in my video.

Although it was difficult to document as part of my portfolio, I did complete some research on the topic of psychedelia and psychoactive drugs as I wanted to be accurate with my depiction in the video. This research was secondary research, mostly anyway, and helped me with my understanding and also helped a lot when it came to thinking of images to include.

I believe the secondary research I collected was much more helpful than the primary research however, there was still sections of my research that didn't help as much as I had hoped.

The research I did on music videos and animation was obviously very helpful when it came to developing and producing my idea. However, the research on the science of smiling and the lyric annotation wasn't very helpful as these were completed far before I had decided on what type of music video I was going to make and, as the song I chose to use didn't include any lyrics, the annotation didn't have much of an effect on my video.

RESEARCH ANALYSIS –

Overall, I believe that the research I completed was successful in helping me develop my idea and helping me decide on the best way to tackle the subject I did. However, it would have been more helpful if I had spent more time creating a research plan as the one I followed was made very hastily as I was worried about falling behind and then not making the deadline. I made my research plan well before I had any idea of what type of video I was going to make and so it included quite a lot of research that was ultimately unrelated and, considering the little amount of time I had, rather pointless.

PRODUCTION PROCESS

DEADLINES –

I knew from the moment that I decided to make an animated music video that I was going to have to put in a great deal of time to ensure that the video was to the standard that I wanted it to be. A problem that I came to realise was that, in order to ensure that the animation was as good as I wanted it to be, I would have to dedicate the majority of my time to drawing it which would then result in me being put under a great deal of pressure when it came to completing my portfolio as I wouldn't have much time left. However, I didn't want the quality of the video to suffer because of this and so I decided to deal with the pressure when it came so that the video could be the way that I wanted it to be.

WHAT WENT WELL & NOT SO WELL

As the production process consisted mostly of me sitting at my desk, no great issues arose the way they would have on a filming day. This was one of the main reasons I decided to make an animated video as, although it required quite a lot of dedication to get it finished, the only troubles I could foresee were my legs aching which didn't have any great impact of my video. The process of drawing the animation wasn't an extremely strenuous one as it was, at times, rather therapeutic and relaxing as I love drawing. However, it was also quite frustrating when I couldn't work out how to draw something and it often led to me having to take a break from drawing in order to calm myself with is rather pathetic.

During the drawing process there was a slight worry that lingered on my mind which was because I chose to use an app on my iPad to draw the animation and, as a result of my experience with other apps, I feared that all of a sudden, after drawing however-many-hundred frames, I would be hit with a payment in order to be able to export the completed project. I did do some tests beforehand but the thought stayed with me until I finally completed the animation when no such payment was required. However, the only payment that was required was four pounds in order to remove a little watermark at the base of the frame and, although it was very small, it annoyed me enough to make pay the price.

<u>PRODUCT</u>

STRUCTURE -

Although I intentionally avoided extensively planning the content of my video, I did have a structure in mind which was:

Opening – God – Devil – Death – Ending

Although I had this structure in mind from the beginning because of its symbolic relevance, I avoided planning its narrative structure any further regarding how long each sequence was as I wanted the pace of the video to be chaotic and unpredictable and any further planning beyond what I did would have negatively impacted the final outcome of my video.

SKILLS I HAVE LEARNED –

As this was my first time making an animated video, I obviously learned a lot about the process of animation however, I also learned many things and improved many skills that I will hopefully be able to transfer over to other projects in the future.

For example, the two skills that I have improved upon most during this project are related to pacing and timing. Something that I came to realise whilst making this animation was that even one single frame too many could completely through off the pace of the video which meant that I had to be very accurate and ensure that I cut to the next frame at exactly the right moment. I think the best example of this in my video is when Death reaches forwards to grab the checkers board, as the brief sequence is made up of twenty-one frames in four sections which only lasts two seconds. This was the section that made me realise how much I had learned as I was forced to forget how much time each section took to draw and instead focus on what was best for the video. For example, in the aerial frame of his hands reaching forwards I added a small detail on the checkers board which I thought would be funny but because of the pace of the scene, I could only include the shot for half a second, making it extremely difficult to spot.

Another thing that I learned which I hope I can make use of in the future is finding alternatives when certain frames can't be achieved. As I often found myself unable to draw certain frames that I had planned, I was forced to find alternatives and ensure that they were still suitable for the sequence. This will be helpful on future projects as there will likely be many times where I am unable to achieve exactly the frame I want to and will be needed to find suitable alternatives.

The process of making my music video has helped me a great deal in recognising my own strengths and weaknesses. Simply completing the animation made me aware of my commitment as it was a risky decision considering how little time I had to make it and time management has always been something that I have struggled with but the fact that I completed the video with almost a week left shows that I am improving.

Despite this, there were still times where I found myself obsessing over tiny details that were hardly even noticeable when drawing. I was however, better able to control this by simply reminding myself how little time I had left. Compared to previous projects, I have noticed a difference in how well I deal with imperfections in my project as I no longer lose motivation and instead gain it by wanting to ensure the remainder of the project is better.

CONCLUSION

My overall opinion of my music video is a positive one. There are obvious imperfections but when considering the constraints of current circumstances, the limited amount of time given as well as my complete lack of experience with animation, I believe that my video could have been a lot worse than it was. I also believe that what I have learned and my commitment to completing this project will continue to motivate me for future projects.

Those that I have shown the video have responded positively and so far the positive feedback far outweighs the negative which is good. I also believe that I targeted the correct audience which wasn't easy with the subject matter that I chose and is something that I am very happy with and spent a lot of time trying to get correct. Finally, I believe I fulfilled the most important requirement of the brief which was to make a video that made people smile and when taking into account my dry sense of humour and stale personality, I consider this a great achievement.