

Dear Professor Belli and readers,

During the course of this research project, I have found a better understanding of how I actually feel while I'm watching a film. The realization that I even empathize with the characters in a film, or a book caught me off guard because I never viewed it in that light. I was just watching a film that I enjoyed.

When deciding the topic, I didn't even know what I wanted to start writing about. I didn't think of anything but I started thinking of the movies that I have related to and that had left an impression on my life that fit under the genre of Science Fiction. The first two films that came to mind were "Her" and "The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind". "Her" was so special to me because I remember the frustration that Scarlett Johansson felt as she played Samantha. I remembered her screams and breakdowns and the relationship began to end and that she could do nothing but be captured in her own box alone hoping to be turned back on. "The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" was special to me because of my first heartbreak. I remember when I'd wake up feeling like Jim Carey woke up every morning and so desperately wanting to delete that person out of my mind.

These vivid memories of these sci-fi films made me think of these emotions and is the reason I chose the first topic "How does science fiction affect our emotions?". Looking back on that question I was extremely vague because I couldn't narrow real research to that question as I was stating how we received that emotion or target any specific emotion and how science fiction differed from any other genre.

Through the progression of my research, I found that scientists weren't talking about how we gain new emotions or feel new emotions but how empathizing and feeling the same emotions that the characters are feeling. I later then developed the question "how can we learn about our emotions through the empathy we experience in science fiction?". This question is more narrow because it focused on how we empathize on those characters and how we learn about those emotions specifically in science fiction.

This switching of topics made my work during my proposals much different because at the beginning I felt like I was chasing after such a vague concept that I wasn't getting at any solid evidence but with more research came clarity of what the true question was meant to be.

The research itself was pretty easy. The films I chose were plenty emotional and had articles writing about how it impacted them. The directors would even discuss how these films had done emotionally for them and the messages they tried to portray through the film. This made my work a lot easier as we had concise reasoning and a good understanding of the emotional impact the directors wanted to place on us.

The two hardest parts of this project were writing the presentation itself and making the presentation. The writing is hard because I honestly love to write. I don't know if I'm excellent or even good at writing but I enjoy writing a lot. Condensing so many ideas especially with a topic so entangled such as emotions into a 6-8 minute bracket is very difficult to me. The second hardship of this writing piece was citing. I may love writing but the formalities kill me. It is very

tedious work sitting there and figuring out dates, names, production companies and other specifications while having to punctuate properly. It's time consuming and boring to me.

What I think that went well was me having a great direction I was heading towards. I formed my first presentation pretty well but it was too fast to have too many details but I knew that's what it lacked and I was prepared for that feedback. I was very aware of all my mistakes and generalizations I was making and I was waiting to fix them all during the final presentation itself.

Overall, I feel like the project helped me get a better understanding of how reading, watching films and even listening to music is helpful for our emotions as we empathize with characters in these works. I feel like it has also taught me valuable lessons in how to target research more aggressively to leave generalization out of research projects and show a deep understanding of the topic I choose to research.

Best regards,

Derick