Privacy Film Review Assignment

Recommended Film List

You Only Live Once (1937)   Dogville (2004)
The Philadelphia Story (1940)   Code 46 (2004)
Rear Window (1954)   V for Vandetta (2005)
The Conversation (1974)   Good Night, and Good Luck (2005)
All the Presidents Men (1976)   Cache (2005)
Nineteen Eighty-Four (1984)   A Scanner Darkly (2006)
Sneakers (1992)   Look (2007)
Brazil (1995)   We Live in Public (2009)
The Net (1995)   Catfish (2010)
Gattaca (1997)   Erasing David (2010)
The End of Violence (1997)   The Social Network (2010)
Enemy of the State (1998)   ~~The Lives of Others (2006)~~
The Truman Show (1998)   Citizenfour (2014)
Charlie's Angels (2000)   Snowden (2016)
Minority Report (2002)   The Circle (2017)

The goal with this review is to illustrate how privacy, surveillance, and technology are portrayed in the medium of film. Remember that the different films are products of their time and they are additions to a public debate or view of their time.

This review will be double spaced, 1000 words without footnotes or bibliography.

HOW TO REVIEW

The film review is a popular way for critics to assess a film's overall quality and determine whether or not they think the film is worth recommending. Film reviews differ from scholarly film articles in that they encompass personal and idiosyncratic reactions to and evaluations of a film, as well as objective analyses of the film's formal techniques and thematic content.

To Write the Review
While film reviews tend to be fairly short, they require a lot of preparation before you begin writing. Prior to viewing the film, you may want to get a sense of the bodies of work by the director, writer, or individual actor. For instance, you may watch other films by the same director or writer in order to get a sense of each individual style. This will enable you to contextualize the film and determine whether it works as a continuation and/or disruption within the broad trends of the director's or writer's work. Writing a film review often requires multiple viewings of the film. Plan to watch the film two or even three times.

During the **first** viewing, surrender yourself to the cinematic experience; in other words, get lost in the narrative and enjoy the film without worrying about the argument you will eventually cultivate. During your second viewing, try distancing yourself from the plot and instead focus on interesting elements of the film that you can highlight in the review. You may separate these elements into two broad categories:
1) formal techniques such as cinematography, editing, mise-en-scene, lighting, diegetic and non-diegetic sound, genre, or narratology, and
2) thematic content that resonates with issues such as history, race, gender, sexuality, class, or the environment.

After watching the film a **second** time, take careful notes on the formal and thematic elements of the film. Then attempt to create a central idea for your review that brings together the film's formal and thematic elements. If your second viewing does not yield a strong central claim for the review or if you need to take more notes, you may have to watch the film or parts of the film a third time.

The review
Although there is not a set formula to follow when writing a film review, the genre does have certain common elements that most film reviews include.

1) Introduction
In the opening of your review, provide some basic information about the film. You may include film's name, year, director, screenwriter, and major actors. Your introduction, which may be longer than one paragraph, should also begin to evaluate the film, and it should allude to the central concept of the review. A film review does not have to contain a thesis or main claim, but it should focus on a central analysis and assessment.

2) Plot Summary
Remember that many readers of film reviews have not yet seen the film. While you want to provide some plot summary, keep this brief and avoid specific details that would spoil the viewing for others.

3) Description
While the plot summary will give the reader a general sense of what the film is about, also include a more detailed description of your particular cinematic experience watching the film. This may include your personal impression of what the film looks, feels, and sounds like. In other words, what stands out in your mind when you think about this particular film?

4) Analysis
In order to explain your impression of the film, consider how well the film utilizes formal techniques and thematic content. How do the film's formal techniques (such as cinematography, editing, mise-en-scène, lighting, diegetic and nondiegetic sound, genre, or narrative) affect the way the film looks, feels, and sounds to you? How does the thematic

content (such as history, race, gender, sexuality, class, or the environment) affect your experience and interpretation? Also, do the formal techniques work to forward the thematic content?

5) Conclusion/Evaluation
The closing of your film review should remind the reader of your general thoughts and impressions of the film. You may also implicitly or explicitly state whether or not you recommend the film. Make sure to remind the reader of why the film is or is not worth seeing.

This exercise has been adapted from Duke University's Writing Studio at the Thompson Writing Program.

https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/film-review-1.original.pdf