Thomas McCarthy

Ms. Charla Hughes

ENC 1101-48

20 September 2012

The Power of Movies to Shape Life

For the past one hundred years movies have shaped our way of life. Whether it’s taking someone to the movies on a first date or meeting with other friends, the movie theater serves as a wonderful place of enjoyment that would not be possible without one thing, movies. It immerses us, the viewers, into a world that is imaginary or real where anything is possible. All throughout my life I’ve grown up with movies and I’ve had a strong attraction to them ever since I can remember. Some of my earliest memories as a small kid are watching the *Star Wars* series. Movies has completely changed my life in a sense that it has opened my eyes to what this world has to offer me, and what I can give back to the world that I live in.Movies have changed my life beginning with the movie *Spirit*,which was the very first movie that brought me into the magical world of movies, followed by *Transformers* which opened my eyes to the vast possibilities of a career in filmmaking and ultimately leading up to the moment after I saw *Avatar* where I became completely positive that I wanted to enter the Hollywood business and make movies for the rest of my life.

One of my earliest memories of attending the movie theater is going as a family to watch *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*. At the time I was about eight years old and when I walked out of the theater I was completely mesmerized by the movie and all I wanted to do was watch it again and again. All I could think of for the next couple days was *Spirit* and how much fun I had. After watching the movie my imagination began to soar into new heights that I never thought were possible. As a small kid my social circle wasn’t what is now and so I used my free time to day dream about farfetched fantasy lands filled with fire-breathing dragons and magical elves. My rapid expansion of imagination would not have had been possible had I not watched *Spirit*. However, one aspect of the movie that inspired my imagination to reach new heights was the beautiful score that was that was written by Bryan Adams and Hans Zimmer.

From the very beginning to the entirety of the film, the score brings you into the beautiful landscape of the Wild West. Part of the reason why I fell in love with *Spirit* was based on the fact that the music was so on point throughout the entire movie. The music helped catapult the movie into new unfound heights by adding emotional depth, whether it was sorrow or happiness, that could not have had been reached if the music wasn’t in place. After watching the movie I realized something that would forever change the way I watched movies; a movie cannot capture the heart of the audience without music. Music adds an aspect to the movie that cannot be replaced. To this day if I’m ever in the imaginative mood I plug in my headphones, listen to *Spirit’s* score, and enter a whole new world.

*Spirit* was the very first movie in my lifetime that I was deeply attached to. As soon as I got the movie on DVD, I watched it every day for the next three days and would continue to watch it regularly for the next couple weeks. This moment marked a pivotal moment in my life because it was the first time that without knowing it I began to start a passion for movies that would last a lifetime. When I was about ten years old I was very fortunate that my family ordered Netflix. Netflix gave me an abundance of opportunity and gave me the ability to have any movie I wanted in my fingertips. I quickly began to watch at least one movie a week and sometimes if time allowed I would watch up to three movies in one weekend. *Spirit* introduced me into a universe that I never knew existed. Although, it wasn’t the first movie that I ever watched, it was the first movie to introduce me to the endless possibilities that can be achieved within one single movie. After my list of movies that I’ve watched piled up very fast, I realized that not only did I enter the world of *Spirit* but also I began to enter an unknown territory that was the movie world, and the catalyst to this can be traced all the way back to the first time I watched the movie *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*.

*Spirit* introduced me to vast world of movies and I quickly began to watch a ton of movies, but it was as if I was watching senseless movies. I just watched movies because I enjoyed watching movies but there wasn’t an emotional tie to a movie that was even close to what I felt when I watched *Spirit*. There just wasn’t a connection or a strong bond between me and movies. It’s as if movies was my friend, but nothing more, they weren’t my best friend whom I know everything about or share secrets with, movies were just like a friend that I enjoyed talking to but nothing more. In 2007, when the movie *Transformers* was released everything changed. Something as simple as an action movie, yet *Transformers* carried so much power and influence in it that would forever change who I am and now a new found love grew in my heart.

Although most people’s memories fade I still remember the exact moment I first saw the trailer for the new up and coming movie, *Transformers*. I was with my father in the movie theater and we were going to see *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Unfortunately, a year later when *Transformers* came out for various reasons I never had the opportunity to watch it in theaters. It took me a long time to finally be able to watch it since I had to wait for it to be released to DVD. My memory is still clear in my mind when I first put in the movie and saw the title *Transformers* appear on screen. Halfway through the movie I knew that this wasn’t the typical movie that I just watch, enjoy it, and then leave it; no, this movie heightened my passion for movies in a way I never thought was possible. Once again the music was orchestrated so beautifully to tie in with the movie that I clearly remember adrenaline rushing through my veins while I was watching and listening to everything that was unfolding right in front of me. I honestly couldn’t believe what I was watching; I was at the edge of my seat completely engulfed in this imaginative universe where transforming robots are fighting to save the human population. As soon as the credits rolled by I was completely amazed by the movie and I continued to watch it every day for the next three days. A love for my first movie franchise was born.

*Transformers* was the first movie that really introduced me to the business of making movies. I became a fan of the franchise and my whole world started to become *Transformers*. I talked about it endlessly with friends, my backgrounds turned to *Transformers*, even my screen saver, my whole world was *Transformers*. I quickly began doing research about cinema and I read reports that kept me up to date on news or rumors regarding the sequel to *Transformers*. Additionally, I began to do research on the director, Michael Bay, because I was interested in what he had to say about his plans on the sequel. This all occurred close to the end of 8th Grade and at the time many people began to ask me what I wanted to be when I grow up. In all honesty, no school subject interested me; I was terrible at math, science was not for me, I hated the books I read in English class (although I do enjoy reading books just not the ones assigned from school), and I just felt that there was no profession out there for me. For some reason, filmmaking completely escaped my mind until one day when I was watching *Transformers*, for about the fifteenth time, I began to think of different methods/action sequences/shots that I would’ve done if I was the director and then it instantly hit me; I knew what I wanted to be, a film director.

Soon after I began to conduct my research on how to become a film director and what schools had well respected film programs. As a sophomore I didn’t think that much of college but in the back of my mind I knew where I was going to apply. Each time I read information about the Film Industry and it scared me about all the risks involved. Few ever make it to Hollywood, and if you do make it it’s not certain that you stay in there for a while. It’s a huge risk where those who are at the top of Hollywood succeed in a huge fashion and those at the bottom may never get a chance to reach to the top. The business has slowly started to become one where it’s who you know to land jobs whereas almost every other job in America is based on your skillset. This provides a huge challenge in that hypothetically speaking I can be one of the best filmmakers but if never land a job or have the opportunity to show what I know, I can be stuck in an endless circle of unemployment. The thought of this scares me because I worked very hard throughout High School hoping and dreaming that I would attain success in the future. However, one movie would completely change my mindset and bring faith in myself that this was my calling.

Two weeks prior to the release of *Avatar* I read an article that talked about how this movie would change the way movies are made. I quickly dismissed this as stupidity, but later on I would soon discover that I was completely incorrect. *Avatar* is a movie unlike anything else that brings you to into a completely made up universe with and extremely hostile environment that can be tamed through respect. *Avatar* soon became the highest grossing movie of all time grossing $2.7 billion dollars.

In order to make this movie possible it required state of the art filmmaking to bring the made up world to life. The world of Pandora is what captured my heart and with it captured my desire to pursue a career in film at all costs. To me the way I look at filmmaking, there’s nothing else that I want to do. I want to be a part of future movies, and leave my stamp on Hollywood whether it’s a director, producer, or even a position as small as a camera man. Watching *Avatar* and the Behind the Scenes footage cemented my desire to pursue a career in film. There is no other work setting where I feel more alive than being on a movie set. Sure, I have secondary options and backup plans because it’s naïve to believe that I will be able to make it to Hollywood considering how tough it is, but no other job can equate to the love and passion that I have for filmmaking.

When I walked out of the movie theater after seeing *Avatar* I told myself that I would stop at nothing to become a filmmaker. Until I’ve exhausted all of my opportunities and chances, I will continue to persevere and make my dream of entering the Film Industry a reality. To this day I continue to fight this battle. I’m currently working on my application for the FSU Film School and soon after I will begin working on a script that will be a short movie. This short movie will be used for separate applications that will be sent to other film schools. Although I want to stay at FSU and it’s my dream to study Film Production at this great university, I must apply to other schools because there’s no guarantee that I will be accepted to FSU’s Film School. However, one thing is for certain, I will never stop trying to find ways to join the Film Industry and I will always try my hardest and do my best to prove to those around me that there is nothing that I want to do but make movies.

Movies have been a huge part of my life ever since I can remember. From the very first time I saw *Spirit* to watching *Transformers* and finally *Avatar* my life would not be the same if those movies did not exist. Before these movies, I was lost in what in what I wanted to be when I grow up and my future was shrouded in mystery, but now I have a clear vision of what I envision for what lies ahead. These movies have given my life a sense of purpose; it’s given me a direction to aim towards a life-long goal and dream, which is to ultimately win an Academy Award for Best Picture and Best Director. Few people understand the gravity of movies because most people don’t see the affects that movies have. For me the affect is clear, because I’ve been watching movies for a long time I wish nothing more in my life than to be able to enter a career where I can make movies. For other people it may be that watching *The Hunger Games* or *Twilight* sparked them to read the books and then for the rest of their lives they enjoy reading books, and who knows maybe even then that person may write a book of their own. *Avatar* started an environmental movement that James Cameron continues to pursue and it brought attention to the damage we as humans are causing to the Earth. From watching movies people have fallen in love with franchises, for me its Transformers, and for others it maybe Batman, or the Avengers. Movies can influence people to travel to certain areas across the globe that they would’ve never gone too had they not watched a movie. The possibilities of how one movie can change a person’s life are endless. My passion and love in my life can be traced back to watching movies. In just a total of six hours of screen time my entire world changed and in those six hours I’ve realized my purpose in life, set a life-long goal for myself, and made a dream; all this because I watched three simple movies. Movies are one of the most influential and effective instruments to change the way people live, think, and act because of its ability, accompanied with its power, to be able to change life.