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Honor's Program Essay

"A good film can push a viewer to identify with a person different from themselves, can provide new perspectives on historical events, and can inspire students to analyze and explore the world around them."

— Liz Richards, Cinema and Digital Arts, Point Park University faculty member

Do films really push viewers to jump into their character's shoes and create a sense of exploration? I would say so. In Liz Richards quote, she pinpoints the exact same concept I have been grappling with every time I watch a movie either in my own room or at a local theater. As I watch a film, I instantly connect with a character because I have the ability to understand the conflict that the character is enduring. This could very well be an inner battle or an outside force that causes some tension between two or more parties. Liz Richards claims that a "good film" can "push" the viewer, I do agree with this idea, but all movies are different and each viewer is not the same person. Therefore, rating the film is dependent upon the person watching it so; one film may not be as appealing or "good" as another may for each viewer. However, I do believe that Liz Richards does understand this concept thus she used a "good film" in such a way to clarify the dependence of rating a movie based on knowing that there will be various viewers. Liz Richards continues to state that watching a "good film" can lead to "new perspectives" on history. The films that capture various historical events attract different audience members and those members who are not familiar on a specific historical subject in the film can create a new perception or idea about that historical event or about the world around them.

For example, for much of my advanced placement history class during my senior year, I had to watch historical movies for extra credit. One movie or film that I watched for extra credit was *The New World* directed by Terrence Malik. Prior to watching this movie about the real Pocahontas and John Smith, I made assumptions from the *Disney* version of Pocahontas for example, when Pocahontas arrived to England and how ruthless the English settlers were to the Native Americans. Therefore, I quickly understood that a "good film", *The New World* in my case, does create a different or better sense of history for viewers. Liz Richards finally explains that after relating to the movie and understanding that a change in perspective does or can take place; the student after being inspired will "explore the world around them". This is true on my behalf because I too am inspired after watching movies that I find to be good in quality.

Consequently, I view the world around me to be quite different. Referring to *The New World*, I understand the concept of love better and have gained an appreciation for people more as well as my country and how much a sacrifice has been brought forth to establish a new world. Following the morals learned through watching films, I am now better equipped to evaluate and begin to venture throughout the world knowing that lessons can be learned from simply watching a “good film” .