Presentation #4

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Film Title: *Her*

Guiding Concepts: how the film places a facade on technology which creates a false sense of safety and how the inconsistencies in the film divert our attention from the “perfect” reality framed by technology

Descriptions of scenes and time stamps:

* (16:50-17:36)- Samantha is proofreading Theo’s letters and the computer is typing them up
* (57:50-58:43)- Samantha is at a birthday party with Theo talking to the little birthday girl, Jocelyn

Argument:

Theo becomes dependent on Samantha thinking that she’s perfect; however, technology as portrayed in this movie is not perfect. In the beginning of the film the writers are speaking and the computers are typing up the letters. In the first scene, viewers see Theodore ask Samantha to proofread the letters. Why would she need to proofread the letters if they were already typed up by a computer? The camera pans extremely close to the computer to where the viewers are able to see the grammar mistakes in the letter (your vs you’re and there’s). Why couldn’t the computer pick up on those grammar mistakes, especially if the computers in the movie were smart enough to become almost human-like? Also, Theo didn’t need to ask Samantha to proofread the letters, he could have just done the work by himself, but he included her. Just like people do today, Theo depended on technology so much to the point where he missed certain miniscule cues that shows technology’s imperfections. Moreover, Theodore is at first impressed with the OS that is supposed to be fit for him specifically, and he builds up the impression that the technology will be perfect for him. However, he forgets that technology can still mess up (just like humans do), and when the technology keeps going against his expectation of perfection, the fantasy is broken. As Theodore’s relationship with Samantha goes on, viewers see the divide between technology and the real world grow stronger. In the next scene, viewers see Samantha supposedly talking to Jocelyn; however, the ear piece is still in Theo’s ear. Viewers watch him put in such ear piece and press it before he starts talking, multiple times throughout the movie; they also normally see him talking with the earpiece in. So how is Jocelyn hearing Samantha without an earpiece in? Or if Samantha and Jocelyn could hear and communicate with each other perfectly, why did Theo not take out his earpiece? Again, this is an inconsistency within the film that blends the technical world with the human world within the film. This aspect of the film (having Samantha communicate with others without the presence of technology) makes viewers feel that Samantha is actually apart of the human world since she is able to communicate with people just like humans can communicate with people. When bringing this inconsistency to the viewer’s attention, it makes them take a step back from this “technology utopia” and recognize the imperfection with technology in the film. In contrast, Theo is so dependent on the OS system that he doesn’t realize this inconsistency or the many others until the technological mistakes become unavoidable. As he becomes more intertwined with the OS and relies on it more, it just makes it harder for him to recognize and accept that fact there can be mistakes within technology. For example, when Theo gets hit with what he thinks is a technology mistake, he goes insane and forgets how to act in a social setting. Theo’s relationship with the OS seems to work out until Theo gets so close to the OS system that there was no way to ignore the differences and inconsistencies between technology and humans. This film plays with the role of “perfection” (even including a scene about being the perfect mom) and has an unhealthy positive outlook on technology. Moreover, the film makes technology out to be this “perfect” thing but then twists and shows viewers that there will always be flaws within technology.