CTZN Final Analysis

1. Poverty and the Outsider

An individual is produced to be an outsider through poverty as seen in the film Roma. Romaemphasizes the concept of loneliness leading to isolationism in the midst of work and being surrounded by others. Cleo is a domestic worker in the 1970’s in Mexico. She lives with Antonio and Sofia and helps to take care of not only her 4 children but also chores around the house. Throughout the film, Roma, we see Cleo portrays a feeling of loneliness which leads to isolationism. One of the first times we see Cleo feeling lonely is when she loses her love Fermin. He was the closest thing she had that felt like family. This made her feel like an outsider and she felt like she had nowhere else or no one to go to. Sofia told Cleo at one point in the film, “We are alone. No matter what they tell you, we women are always alone.” Although Sofia and Cleo are from 2 different social aspects, social class did not matter anymore after Sofia’s husband left. This connected the 2 individuals. Once Cleo was finally overcoming the loss of Fermin, her baby was not born alive. She began to isolate herself all over again. The family took a trip to the beach, along with Cleo, and this was a new beginning. After saving the children from the water, Cleo emerged out the water and this identifies as a new beginning. Although Cleo had to keep her job because it was her way to live, she was viewed as an outsider from the family the entire film due to her poverty. She was simply just a maid and was viewed as impoverished and outside of the family status. She relied on the family as her source of living and without them she would be in the poverty she had already escaped once. However, certain life experiences drew these two individuals together and social status did not matter anymore, and Cleo was no longer an outsider viewed as an outsider within the family.

1. Genre

A genre arranges elements to produce a certain feeling and is a set of affordances or abilities that a film exerts. The love story is the production of autonomy through the category of desire, specifically Eros. Science fiction answers philosophical questions in terms of problems in the future. Throughout the film, Her, one can discover the idea of freedom from social viewpoints through a romantic desire and relationship, even though is may not be what society views as the real. Theodore forms this bond with an OS, Samantha, that would not seem logical in one’s mind today. However, this is a science fiction film which made this relationship be viewed as normal to those in that time period. Her brought together philosophical questions about love and social problems with identity and relationships. Philosophical questions include “Where does true happiness come from?” and “What makes a relationship real?” Her answers these questions through the desire of love. This relationship Theodore formed was becoming reality. Theo was often reminded that Samantha was just a computer, but he viewed her as something more. When Theo thought he lost Samantha, he was devastated and could not compose himself. This emphasized the idea of science fiction and how the world is beginning to rely everything on technology, even their relationships. The claim that this film is both science fiction and the love story is evident due to the fact that he has found love in its own form. He was able to find freedom from societal pressure and viewpoints to find the love he thought he was desiring. Furthermore, the science fiction genre becomes evident because this form of relationship is not viewed at a normality in today’s world. However, in the future it might become a new reality. For Theo, Samantha was the “realist” thing that he had felt in a long time. It was real love and real happiness it its own way to him. This mobilized the science fiction genre by showing that technology could go as far as having a relationship with a non-human entity. It mobilized the love story genre by Theodore finding freedom and finding himself through a desire and a relationship. The formal elements seen throughout the film included the color, sounds, design, and words. For example, red is used throughout the film to emphasize love and hurt at the same time which is the emotions that Theodore is experiencing. Sounds and music are used to focus attention on the rising of intensity or the calming of a situation. Voiceover and words are also used as formal elements to convey information such as emotions that viewers may otherwise not recognize.

1. Immanent critique of Taxi Driver and Drive

In lecture we studied the following quote. “The basic levels of experience that motivate art are related to those of the objective world from which they recoil. The unsolved antagonisms of reality return in artworks as immanent problems of form.” An unsolved antagonism is a gap between two experiences or a political issue. Problem sin form include contradictions and inconsistencies. Looking at Drive and Taxi Driver we see how problems of reality return in the films as immanent problems of form. Travis and the Drivers displaced needs of identity led to an obsession. In Taxi Driver, Travis developed an obsession with Betsy, viewing her as an angel coming out of the sewer, due to his need for identity. He explains in the film that the street is the scum of the city and he separates himself from that. However, throughout the film we see problems in form such as voiceover, sounds, and contradictions used to show how he in fact is the person he is talking about, he is part of the scum. In Drive, the drivers displaced needs of lost identity led to his obsession with protecting others and himself. His identity was lost due to the fact that he did not need one until his desire to protect others emerged. Throughout the film, the driver uses a mask to hide his identity as a form of a barrier separating himself from his action. In the beginning of the film, he did not want to be a danger to others, and he was strictly just the driver. However, we see the dark side of his identity emerge when he is no longer just a driver and has become part of the crimes. The immanent problems of form in Taxi Driver and Drive include the sounds, silence, lights, voiceover, music and contradictions of them. The problems of reality, one’s identity, found throughout each film are able to present the immanent problems of obsessive characteristics through their needs of desire and obsession.