

1. Under the Skin

About 3 years ago, I came across a piece called “Love” by Mica Levi. It was during a time of isolation, disassociation, and uncertainty about my future, more specifically, my relationship with my partner at the time. Mica Levi did an amazing job channeling these emotions, and when I later discovered that the song was from a film, even without knowing what it was about, I could almost *feel* its core message. I never really had the opportunity to watch the film, so this research project feels like the right moment to immerse myself in the world of *Under the Skin*. From a commercial standpoint, the film was a flop, with a budget of \$13 million and a total gross of \$7 million, but from my experience, some of the most creative and impactful films are “flops”, and this trend is maintained with this film, as it garnered high critical acclaim, which attracted me to this film even more. The production of this film was pretty strenuous, with a lot of the original plot being scrapped and reduced to just involve one character as the protagonist, as well as removing character names and elaborate special effect scenes. What interests me is how the reduction and reframing of the film elevated how it related its message to the audience. Usually, when a film does this, it's from a point of cutting costs or creative laziness, which diminishes the value of the movie, but given the acclaim *Under the Skin* received, this decision was intentional and added rather than subtracted value.

2. 12 Monkeys

I've never heard of this film before researching for this project (initially confused it with 12 Angry Men), but learning that it's influenced by a French film piqued my interest in the trouble with translating foreign works and the adaptation of content from other sources into your own film. How does an American director, with all of the cultural baggage that comes with being an American, handle the work of a French director and all of their cultural baggage, and even more so when the source material is a short film, and you're working it into a feature-length film? Additionally, *12 Monkeys* follows a non-linear storytelling format, which is usually hard to tell since the coherence of it all is a fine line to balance, and I'm interested to see how using non-linear storytelling affects the delivery of the film's message. The director, Terry Gilliam, described the film as “very much about the twentieth century’s inundation of information and about deciphering what, among all this noise and imagery, is useful and important to our lives.” Even though this film is from 1995, this description of the film seems very much, if not more, relevant in today’s time with the oversaturation of content through social media and news. It’s hard to decipher what is “real”, and if the concept of “real” is even a valid thing to question in the world we live in now.