

The Anatomy of Hits and Flops: Review analysis of IMDb's top and bottom-rated movies

Introduction

For my research project, I wanted to understand what makes a movie resonate with audiences or stand out in a bad way. This research project aims to study the information offered by movie reviews to uncover the features that contribute to the success or failure of films across different genres. Utilizing the IMDb movies dataset from Kaggle, I will first identify the highest and lowest ranked genres in IMDb. After I have done so, I will identify the top five highest rated movies from the highest genre and the last five rated movies from the lowest genre. Once I have identified these movies, I will locate the most popular reviews from each movie from IMDb. I will do this manually, as reviews are not a part of the dataset. Here are my precise research questions for this project:

1. Which genres have the highest and lowest overall scores on IMDb?
2. What makes the highest ranked movies of the best genre so good according to reviewers?
3. What makes the lowest ranked movies of the worst genre so bad according to reviewers?

To do this, I will extract information from the dataset using Python Jupyter notebook and the Pandas and Seaborn libraries. I will limit my research to focus on movies published in 2020 or before, so that the movies have had time to accumulate reviews. Once I have determined five movies from each category, I will visit the IMDB webpage and locate the most popular review from each movie. I will then analyse the reviews with the help of the appraisal framework and content analysis.

Through my analysis, I seek to provide insights into the key characteristics that contribute to a movie's success or failure. By understanding these patterns, I can gain a deeper

appreciation of the elements that make a movie memorable or forgettable. My research not only sheds light on the subjective nature of movie reviews but also offers a systematic approach to evaluating cinematic quality.

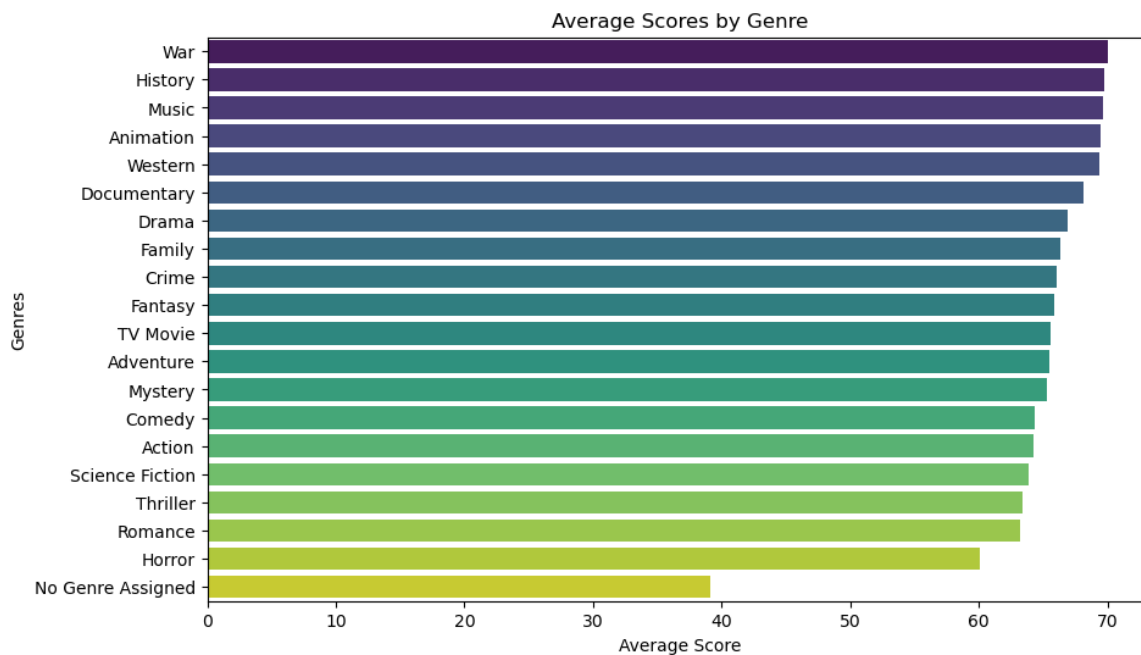
Data cleaning and processing

My project began with the acquisition of the IMDb movies dataset, which was downloaded as a zip file from Kaggle. Kaggle is an online platform that serves as a hub for data science and machine learning enthusiasts. I unzipped the file and opened the raw dataset in excel. The data is a csv file which consists of the names, publication dates, ratings, genres, overviews, crews, original titles, status, original languages, budget, revenues, and countries of over 10 000 movies. Then I imported the dataset as a csv file into a Python Jupyter Notebook. I imported the Pandas library in order to process and clean the dataset. This process involved filtering and sorting the data to pinpoint the top-rated genre and the lowest-rated genre. I also imported the Seaborn library with which I created the plot which showcases the results.

First after downloading the csv file into the Jupyter notebook, I imported the defaultdict from the collections library for simpler data manipulation. I imported pyplot from matplotlib in order to make a clear diagram of the average scores of the genres.

I filtered out the movies that have been published before 2020, so that the average ratings have had time to accumulate and therefore offer more accurate results. Then, I labelled the movies that did not have a genre assigned and removed unnecessary symbols from the genres of movies that had multiple genres assigned. Then I grouped the genres with their respective scores, such that each genre of the movie is appointed the full score of the movie.

Now that each genre is associated with scores from each movie in that genre, I averaged the scores and grouped the genres with their average scores. Finally, these average scores of the genres are made into a Pandas data frame object and sorted for simpler presentation in a bar plot. The plot obtained using Pyplot and Seaborn shows the average scores of all the genres. The plot also shows that the most popular genre is 'War' and the least popular is 'Horror.'



Next, I want to find the top-rated movies of the best genre (war) and the worst rated movies of the worst genre (horror). This is done by filtering the movies in these genres from the original data and sorting them. The results are printed as shown in the following figure. The first column in the printed output is the index of the movie in the original dataset.

Top movies in the best genre (War):

	names	score
1552	Schindler's List	86.0
1594	The Pianist	84.0
3687	Come and See	83.0
2445	Apocalypse Now	83.0
6247	Paths of Glory	83.0

Worst movies in the worst genre (Horror):

	names	score
2118	Chinese Erotic Ghost Story	20.0
6687	I Spit on Your Grave: Déjà Vu	30.0
7618	Alone in the Dark	33.0
8075	Dracula 3D	33.0
7535	Children of the Living Dead	34.0

As a final part of the computational data analysis, I wanted to find out the top-rated genre combination. Here, each genre combination assigned to a movie is considered an individual entity contrary to the above. For example, the score obtained by a movie with the genres comedy, drama and romance is not counted towards the score of the comedy genre alone. This analysis reveals that

movies with the genres romance, animation and drama have the highest average score of 85. However, the main focus in this work is the ratings and reviews of individual genres.

Analysis of reviews

For my project analysing movie reviews to understand what makes the best films stand out and the worst ones fail, I have decided to use the appraisal framework alongside content analysis. These methods feel particularly suited to the task because they allow me to systematically examine both the subjective language used by reviewers and the recurring themes that emerge across reviews. I am basing my analysis on the appraisal framework on Martin and White's Appraisal Theory (2005). My content analysis is based on Krippendorff's method (2019).

The appraisal framework is rooted in systemic functional linguistics and provides tools for dissecting how people express their evaluations, emotions, and attitudes in text. It focuses on three main systems: attitude, which deals with feelings and judgments; engagement, which involves how other perspectives are included; and graduation, which captures the intensity or scaling of emotions and evaluations. This framework is perfect for analysing reviews because it helps me unpack the specific ways people praise or critique films. For instance, when reviewers use phrases like "heartwarming performances" or "clunky dialogue," these evaluative choices reveal what elements they value or find lacking. By applying this framework, I can uncover consistent patterns in how the best movies evoke positive appreciation or avoid harsh judgments compared to the worst ones.

Content analysis complements this linguistic approach by offering a way to categorize and quantify the textual data in reviews. Through this method, I can systematically identify recurring themes—like mentions of acting, plot, or special effects—and see how these topics differ between highly rated and poorly rated films. For example, if the worst movies consistently receive negative comments about pacing or character development, while the best ones are praised for originality or emotional impact, this will provide clear insights into what makes or breaks a film.

These methods work well together because they balance detailed linguistic analysis with broader thematic pattern recognition. The appraisal framework provided a structured approach to evaluate the emotional and evaluative language used in the reviews. This method helped in identifying the affective terms, judgments, and appreciations expressed by the reviewers. Content analysis, on the other hand, focused on categorizing and quantifying the thematic elements

mentioned in the reviews. By combining these two analytical methods, I aim to uncover the specific features that make the best movies stand out and the worst movies falter. By combining them, I will be able to identify the key factors driving positive and negative evaluations in movie reviews and make meaningful observations about what distinguishes great cinema from the forgettable. My exact research question for this part of the analysis is: Which features of film make movies good or bad?

I am conducting the analysis based on the previously extracted best movies from the highest ranked genre in IMDb and the worst movies from the lowest ranked genre on IMDb. The highest ranked genre was “war,” and the lowest ranked genre was “horror.” I specified the analysis by deciding to focus on movies that have been published in 2020 or earlier, so that they have had time to accumulate reviews and offer more accurate results because of that. I am focusing on ten movie reviews. The then reviews are split equally, five to the best movies from the highest ranked genre and five to the worst movies from the lowest ranked genre. I am analysing one review from each movie. I located the reviews from the IMDb webpage and the reviews I chose were the most popular, as in ranked the most useful and were at the top of the reviews list.

Next, I will be conducting an analysis of each review using the appraisal framework and content analysis. I will first present the review and then perform the analysis. I will start my analysis on the five reviews from the five best war-movies. After analysing each review, I will collect a summary in which I form patterns on the characteristics that made the movies in question so liked.

Part 1. Best of war

1. Schindler’s List

Amazing!

This Movie was sensational. It was a piece of art along with being informational. It told people about the holocaust, and it also told people about the human spirit. It shows how people can just triumph over anything with just some help from one person The things that Spielberg did with the movie was

incredible too. The black and white was genius, and how he had the little girl in red and the fire was phenomenal. I have never seen anything like it, Schindler's List is beyond all words.

Appraisal framework:

- Affect: "Amazing," "sensational," "incredible," "genius," "phenomenal," "beyond all words" (Positive emotions)
- Judgment: "The things that Spielberg did with the movie was incredible" (Positive judgment of Spielberg's direction)
- Appreciation: "It was a piece of art," "informational," "The black and white was genius," "the little girl in red and the fire was phenomenal" (Positive appreciation of the film's artistic and educational value)

Content analysis:

- Artistic merit: "It was a piece of art," "The black and white was genius," "the little girl in red and the fire was phenomenal."
- Educational value: "informational," "It told people about the holocaust."
- Human spirit: "It also told people about the human spirit," "It shows how people can just triumph over anything with just some help from one person."
- Cinematic techniques: "The things that Spielberg did with the movie was incredible," "The black and white was genius," "the little girl in red and the fire was phenomenal."

The review of "Schindler's List" highlights several key features that contribute to its positive reception. The reviewer expresses strong positive emotions with words like "sensational," "incredible," "genius," and "phenomenal." These affective terms indicate a deep admiration for the film. Spielberg's direction is praised for its brilliance, particularly in the innovative use of black and white cinematography with selective colour, described as "genius" and "phenomenal." This judgment of Spielberg's work underscores the film's artistic merit. The film's educational value is also noted, as it informs viewers about the Holocaust and the human spirit, which falls under the appreciation category. The reviewer appreciates the film's artistic merit, calling it a "piece of art," and emphasizes its emotional impact by stating that "Schindler's List is beyond all words."

2. The pianist

Brilliantly Narrated, Visually Stunning!

Polanski has depicted the gory details of the holocaust without much restraint. But, the most wonderful aspect of the film is that the director has not lost focus of his story and instead of focusing too much on the holocaust horror he has weaved the true-life narrative of survival around devillish happenings. Every single act of escapade Szpilman goes through is depicted like a drop of water on a barren desert. However, the Oasis in the driest desert comes in the end and it is here that Polanski captures the essence of human emotion. I had this very strong urge of jumping into the theater screen and magically adopting a character in the movie and doing something about the helplessness portrayed so convincingly. Overall, Polanski has given a stunning visual narrative of the cold war. Survival indeed is a privilege though it is taken for granted today. Performances by Brody, Kretschmann deserve applause. Pawel Edelman's camera work is moving and he has brilliantly captured the dark sadness in the visual canvas in an effective way. The lighting is amazing. Pre-dawn shooting schedule could have helped a great deal. Hervé de Luze's editing work has ensured that the narrative does not slip away from focus. Most notable is the scene where the human bodies are lit on fire and the camera raises to show the smoke. The darkness of the smoke is enhanced and is used effectively to fade the scene out. The scene where Brody's fingers move as he rests his hands on the bars of the tram handle only goes to show the brilliance of Polanski as a film-maker. Great film that will be in the running for this year's Oscars. I will give it a 9 Out of 10.

Appraisal framework:

- Affect: "Brilliantly Narrated," "Visually Stunning," "stunning visual narrative," "moving," "amazing," "brilliance" (Positive emotions)
- Judgment: "Polanski has depicted the gory details of the holocaust without much restraint" (Positive judgment of Polanski's direction), "Performances by Brody, Kretschmann deserve applause" (Positive judgment of actors)

- Appreciation: "stunning visual narrative," "Pawel Edelman's camera work is moving," "The lighting is amazing," "Hervé de Luze's editing work has ensured that the narrative does not slip away from focus" (Positive appreciation of the film's technical aspects)

Content analysis:

- Artistic merit: "Brilliantly Narrated," "Visually Stunning," "stunning visual narrative," "Pawel Edelman's camera work is moving," "The lighting is amazing."
- Human emotion: "Polanski captures the essence of human emotion," "helplessness portrayed so convincingly."
- Cinematic techniques: "Polanski has depicted the gory details of the holocaust without much restraint," "Hervé de Luze's editing work has ensured that the narrative does not slip away from focus."
- Performances: "Performances by Brody, Kretschmann deserve applause"

The review of "The Pianist" focuses on the film's powerful narrative and visual storytelling, analysed through the appraisal framework. The reviewer expresses positive emotions with phrases like "Brilliantly Narrated," "Visually Stunning," and "stunning visual narrative." These affective terms convey the reviewer's admiration for the film's storytelling and visual appeal. Polanski's direction is commended for depicting the Holocaust's horrors without losing focus on the story of survival, which is a positive judgment of his directorial skills. The review highlights the emotional impact of the film, with the reviewer expressing a strong urge to intervene in the helplessness portrayed, indicating a deep emotional connection. Content analysis reveals that the review emphasizes the film's artistic merit, emotional impact, and technical excellence. The performances by Brody and Kretschmann are praised, and the technical aspects, such as Pawel Edelman's cinematography and Hervé de Luze's editing, are described as "moving" and "amazing." These elements contribute to the film's overall excellence and its ability to convey a powerful narrative.

3. Come and See

Jaw-droppingly powerful and truly disturbing Russian war drama.

"Come and See" has to be one of the most powerful war movies ever made. It left me emotionally drained. The film tells the story of 12-year-old Florya (Alexi Kravchenko), whose desire is to join his countrymen in the battle against the fascists. His enthusiasm is written all over his face: in the opening scenes, which show Florya's recruitment by partisan soldiers, he wears the blissed-out smile of a hopeful child. After a bombardment, which leaves him temporarily deaf, he is left behind and stumbles across Glasha (Olga Mironova), who has also been abandoned. Together they return to his village, the atrocities witnessed there anticipating horrors to come. "Come and See" is a deeply unsettling film. It's hallucinatory, hellish, traumatizing and uncompromising. There's an aura of profound sadness here, as Florya ages dramatically over the course of the story's events. The film's most disturbing sequence revolves around the raising of one village and the slaughter of most of its inhabitants. The acting is excellent, the cinematography is stunning and the use of Mozart on the soundtrack is particularly effective. 10 out of 10. A must-see!

Appraisal framework:

- Affect: "Jaw-droppingly powerful," "truly disturbing," "emotionally drained," "deeply unsettling," "hallucinatory," "hellish," "traumatizing," "uncompromising," "profound sadness" (Mixed emotions)
- Judgment: "The acting is excellent," "the cinematography is stunning," "the use of Mozart on the soundtrack is particularly effective" (Positive judgment of actors and technical aspects)
- Appreciation: "one of the most powerful war movies ever made," "The film's most disturbing sequence revolves around the raising of one village and the slaughter of most of its inhabitants" (Positive appreciation of the film's impact)

Content analysis:

- Emotional impact: "Jaw-droppingly powerful," "truly disturbing," "emotionally drained," "deeply unsettling," "hallucinatory," "hellish," "traumatizing," "uncompromising," "profound sadness"
- Cinematic techniques: "the cinematography is stunning," "the use of Mozart on the soundtrack is particularly effective."

- Performances: "The acting is excellent"
- War realism: "one of the most powerful war movies ever made," "The film's most disturbing sequence revolves around the raising of one village and the slaughter of most of its inhabitants."

The review of "Come and See" emphasizes the film's emotional and psychological impact, analysed through the appraisal framework. The reviewer uses a mix of emotions, with phrases like "Jaw-droppingly powerful," "truly disturbing," and "emotionally drained." These affective terms highlight the film's ability to evoke strong emotional responses. The film's disturbing and hallucinatory nature is highlighted, along with the excellent acting and stunning cinematography, which are positive judgments of the film's technical and artistic aspects. Content analysis shows that the review focuses on the film's emotional impact, artistic merit, and technical excellence. The use of Mozart on the soundtrack is praised for its effectiveness, adding to the film's emotional and psychological depth. The review underscores the film's ability to leave viewers emotionally drained and deeply affected by the depicted atrocities, describing it as "one of the most powerful war movies ever made."

4. Apocalypse Now

One of the best and most important movies ever

This movie changed the art of film making, telling a complex story in a powerful new way. It's a damn beautiful film. The mood, as they slowly drift up the Vietnamese river, keeps building and building and you can smell the heat and wetness in the air; feel the sweat dripping down your back, hear the hollow echoing screaming around you. The film mixes brutal realism with fantasy, intercutting a modern war with strange scenes full of technicolour smoke. The film uses music not as a score laid in later, but as a practical part of the scene playing from speakers, radios etc. Coppola uses a classic piece of literature as inspiration, taking scenes and characters, and putting them into entirely different surroundings. That is a tricky and brave thing to do. Then he takes a superstar, Brando, pays him a

fortune, and films him so that you can barely see his face. The pure guts that such a move requires is astounding, and it works beautifully. This movie belongs in the top ten.

Appraisal framework:

- Affect: "One of the best and most important movies ever," "damn beautiful film," "astounding," "works beautifully" (Positive emotions)
- Judgment: "Coppola uses a classic piece of literature as inspiration," "The pure guts that such a move requires is astounding" (Positive judgment of Coppola's direction)
- Appreciation: "changed the art of film making," "telling a complex story in a powerful new way," "The mood...keeps building and building," "The film mixes brutal realism with fantasy," "The film uses music not as a score laid in later, but as a practical part of the scene" (Positive appreciation of the film's artistic and technical aspects)

Content analysis:

- Artistic merit: "changed the art of film making," "telling a complex story in a powerful new way," "damn beautiful film."
- Cinematic techniques: "The film mixes brutal realism with fantasy," "The film uses music not as a score laid in later, but as a practical part of the scene."
- Direction: "Coppola uses a classic piece of literature as inspiration," "The pure guts that such a move requires is astounding"
- Atmosphere: "The mood...keeps building and building," "you can smell the heat and wetness in the air, feel the sweat dripping down your back, hear the hollow echoing screaming around you"

The review of "Apocalypse Now" highlights the film's innovative storytelling and atmospheric impact. The reviewer expresses positive emotions with phrases like "One of the best and most important movies ever," "damn beautiful film," and "astounding." These affective terms indicate a high level of admiration for the film. Coppola's direction is praised for its bravery and creativity, particularly in mixing brutal realism with fantasy and using music practically within scenes, which are positive judgments of his directorial skills. Content analysis reveals that the review emphasizes

the film's artistic merit, innovative cinematic techniques, and atmospheric impact. The film's ability to immerse viewers in the setting, allowing them to feel the heat, wetness, and tension of the Vietnamese river journey, is a significant achievement. The performances, particularly Brando's, are commended for their subtlety and impact.

5. Paths of Glory

Hard-hitting anti-war movie

PATHS OF GLORY is a typically powerful anti-war movie from director Stanley Kubrick, starring Kirk Douglas in one of his most mature roles. The setting is WWI and the film follows the French army as they attempt to defend and retaliate against a massive German bombardment. Conflict comes from the machinations of an over-zealous officer who is determined to see success achieved at all costs, no matter the casualties taken along the way. An ensemble of fine performances, taut direction and an intelligent script all combine to make one of the hardest-hitting war movies out there.

Appraisal framework:

- Affect: "Hard-hitting," "powerful," "intelligent" (Positive emotions)
- Judgment: "Kirk Douglas in one of his most mature roles," "taut direction," "intelligent script" (Positive judgment of actors and direction)
- Appreciation: "one of the hardest-hitting war movies out there" (Positive appreciation of the film's impact)

Content Analysis:

- Artistic merit: "powerful anti-war movie," "intelligent script"
- Performances: "Kirk Douglas in one of his most mature roles," "An ensemble of fine performances"
- Direction: "taut direction"

- War realism: "one of the hardest-hitting war movies out there"

The review of "Paths of Glory" focuses on the film's powerful anti-war message and strong performances. The reviewer highlights positive emotions with words like "Hard-hitting," "powerful," and "intelligent." These affective terms convey the film's emotional and intellectual impact. Kubrick's direction is praised for its tautness and intelligence, and Kirk Douglas's role is noted as one of his most mature, which are positive judgments of their contributions. Content analysis shows that the review emphasizes the film's artistic merit, performances, and direction. The film's ability to convey the harsh realities of war and the moral dilemmas faced by the characters is a significant achievement, described as "one of the hardest-hitting war movies out there." The intelligent script and ensemble of fine performances contribute to the film's overall impact and excellence.

Summary on the characteristics of the best reviewed war-movies

The reviews of the best movies highlighted several key features that contributed to their positive reception. The most prominent of these features included artistic merit, innovative cinematic techniques, strong emotional impact, skilled direction, powerful performances, and compelling themes.

Artistic merit

The artistic value of these films is a recurring theme in the reviews. For instance, "Schindler's List" was described as a "piece of art," while "The Pianist" was praised for its "stunning visual narrative." Similarly, "Apocalypse Now" was noted for changing "the art of film making" and being a "damn beautiful film." The reviewers consistently emphasized the films' artistic achievements, which contributed significantly to their high regard.

Cinematic techniques

Innovative and effective use of cinematography, lighting, and music was another common feature. In "Schindler's List," the use of black and white, with selective colour, is described as "genius" and "phenomenal." "The Pianist" is applauded for its moving camera work and amazing lighting. "Come and See" was noted for its stunning cinematography and effective use of Mozart on the

soundtrack. "Apocalypse Now" was praised for its mix of brutal realism with fantasy and the practical use of music within scenes. These innovative techniques enhance the visual and auditory experience, making the films stand out.

Emotional impact

The strong emotional impact of these films is a significant factor in their positive reception. Reviewers described "Come and See" as "jaw-droppingly powerful" and "emotionally drained," while "Schindler's List" is said to be "beyond all words." "The Pianist" captures the essence of human emotion, and "Apocalypse Now" creates a mood that allows viewers to "smell the heat and wetness in the air." The ability of these films to evoke deep emotions and connect with viewers on an emotional level seems to be a key aspect of their success.

Skilled direction

The directors' skills were highly praised across the reviews. Steven Spielberg's direction in "Schindler's List" was described as "incredible," while Roman Polanski's work in "The Pianist" was noted for its focus and restraint. Francis Ford Coppola's direction in "Apocalypse Now" was highlighted for its bravery and innovation, and Stanley Kubrick's direction in "Paths of Glory" was praised for its tautness and intelligence. The directors' ability to tell complex stories and evoke strong emotions is a crucial factor in the film.

Powerful performances

The acting performances in these films are consistently praised. Adrien Brody and Thomas Kretschmann's performances in "The Pianist" were pointed out, while the acting in "Come and See" was described as excellent. Kirk Douglas's role in "Paths of Glory" was noted as one of his most mature, and Marlon Brando's performance in "Apocalypse Now" was highlighted for its subtlety and impact. These powerful performances bring the characters to life and contribute to the films' overall impact.

Compelling themes

Further, themes of human resilience, survival, and the harsh realities of war were prevalent in all these reviews. "Schindler's List" and "The Pianist" both address the Holocaust and the human spirit's triumph over adversity. "Come and See" and "Paths of Glory" focus on the brutal realities of war, while "Apocalypse Now" explores the complexities of the Vietnam War. These compelling themes resonated deeply with the reviewers and added depth to the films' narratives.

In summary, the best-reviewed movies were highly regarded for their artistic merit, innovative cinematic techniques, strong emotional impact, skilled direction, powerful performances, and compelling themes. These features contributed to the films' positive reception and made them stand out.

Part 2. Worst of horror

Next, I will be analysing the worst five movies from the lowest ranked genre, horror. I will again first present the review and then conduct the analysis. Afterwards, I will summarise the key characteristics, which made these movies bad according to viewers.

1. Chinese erotic ghost stories

Unfunny

This is essentially the joke of the farmers daughter stretched to 90 minutes. For my taste thats 89 minutes too long. Think of it as a good looking sex comedy that isn't really funny or sexy. Clearly its suppose to be and many of the cast mug shamelessly, in the hopes of getting a laugh or disrobe in the hopes of getting a rise out of the audience unfortunately its all for naught, little of this film actually works, or works in such away that is interesting to watch. Honestly I picked this up thinking this was "An Erotic Ghost Story" which I had heard is pretty good. Clearly I'll have to make sure I get the right name next time. Pass this one up, its just a waste of time.

Appraisal framework:

- Affect: The reviewer expresses negative emotions with words like "unfunny," "waste of time," and "not really funny or sexy." These affective terms indicate a strong dislike for the film.
- Judgment: The reviewer criticizes the cast for "mugging shamelessly" and the film for being "a joke of the farmers daughter stretched to 90 minutes."

- **Appreciation:** The reviewer finds the film lacking in humour and sex appeal, describing it as "not really funny or sexy."

Content analysis:

- **Lack of humour:** The film is described as unfunny, failing to deliver on its intended comedic elements.
- **Poor execution:** The reviewer criticizes the film's execution, stating that "little of this film actually works."
- **Misleading title:** The reviewer mentions picking up the film thinking it was another, better-known title, indicating a sense of disappointment.

The reviewer expresses strong negative emotions with words like "unfunny," "waste of time," and "not really funny or sexy." These affective terms indicate a strong dislike for the film. The reviewer criticizes the cast for "mugging shamelessly" and the film for being "a joke of the farmers daughter stretched to 90 minutes," which falls under the judgment category. The appreciation category is evident as the reviewer finds the film lacking in humour and sex appeal, describing it as "not really funny or sexy." From a content analysis perspective, the review highlights the film's lack of humour, poor execution, and misleading title. The film is described as unfunny, failing to deliver on its intended comedic elements. The reviewer criticizes the film's execution, stating that "little of this film actually works." Additionally, the reviewer mentions picking up the film thinking it was another, better-known title, indicating a sense of disappointment.

2. I spit on your grave: Déjà vu

I spit on this film

This has got to be a contender for the worst sequel of all time title. I was so looking forward to this as I really enjoyed the first one all those years ago and was interested in seeing where Jennifer Hills character ended up after the first movie. But whoah! I didn't expect this dross. I've no idea who this is even aimed at, it's not shocking or graphic, it's so badly written and poorly acted and is full of some

of the most awful characters ever put onto film. Maria Olsen's character is so weird and over the top that she ruins every scene she's in. There's countless scenes where people just turn up at the right place and time to push the film onto the next scene, almost as if they have psychic powers and teleportation devices. (Oh look, our main protagonist just ran off into a massive forest and within seconds runs straight into the bad guys who are standing around at the exact spot for her to run into, what a coincidence) The film rolls in at nearly TWO AND A HALF HOURS and there's a reason for this. Countless scenes of things that should last a few seconds like a character raking up leaves that go on for minutes at a time. Scenes of dialogue that just go on and on without ever adding to the story etc etc

Appraisal framework:

- Affect: The reviewer expresses strong negative emotions with phrases like "worst sequel of all time," "badly written," and "poorly acted."
- Judgment: The reviewer criticizes the writing, acting, and character development, describing the characters as "awful" and the scenes as "countless" and "pointless."
- Appreciation: The reviewer finds the film lacking in shock value and graphic content, which were expected based on the original film.

Content analysis:

- Poor writing and acting: The film is criticized for its bad writing and acting, with characters described as "awful" and scenes as "pointless."
- Lack of coherence: The reviewer mentions the film's lack of coherence, with characters appearing at the right place and time without logical explanation.
- Excessive length: The film's nearly two-and-a-half-hour runtime is criticized, with scenes described as unnecessarily long.

The review focuses on the film's poor writing, acting, and character development. The reviewer expresses strong negative emotions with phrases like "worst sequel of all time," "badly written," and "poorly acted." These affective terms convey the reviewer's disappointment and frustration. The judgment category is evident as the reviewer criticizes the writing, acting, and character

development, describing the characters as "awful" and the scenes as "countless" and "pointless." The appreciation category is highlighted as the reviewer finds the film lacking in shock value and graphic content, which were expected based on the original film. Content analysis reveals that the review emphasizes the film's lack of coherence and excessive length. The reviewer mentions the film's lack of coherence, with characters appearing at the right place and time without logical explanation. Additionally, the film's nearly two-and-a-half-hour runtime is criticized, with scenes described as unnecessarily long.

3. Alone in the dark

Shockingly bad

I was honestly surprised by Alone in the Dark. It was so bad, I could hardly believe what I was seeing. There are no characters, just a few stereotypes wandering around and getting killed. The extent of the character development was giving each character a name and an occupation, and that's about it. There was no real plot, and none of the characters seemed to have any motivation. In fact, many action scenes just began on their own, coming from nowhere with a pounding techno track. While I was watching this movie I kept asking "Where is this happening? What's going on?" The acting was high school drama quality, with stiff wooden delivery, as though the actors were reading from cue cards without comprehending their lines. Their trouble delivering lines was made even more obvious by horrible sound design. ADR sounded like it was recorded in an open room. The actors were constantly taking obvious care to hit their marks, looking almost robotic in their movements. So, these listless automatons are whisked through a series of implausible and confusing scenarios, often without even the benefit of transition scenes. They were here, now they're there. This was happening, now that's happening. Random scenes with little rhyme or reason.

Appraisal framework:

- Affect: The reviewer expresses strong negative emotions with words like "shockingly bad," "no characters," and "no real plot."

- Judgment: The reviewer criticizes the acting, sound design, and character development, describing the acting as "high school drama quality" and the sound design as "horrible."
- Appreciation: The reviewer finds the film lacking in plot and character motivation, describing the scenes as "random" and "confusing."

Content analysis:

- Lack of plot and character development: The film is criticized for having no real plot or character development, with characters described as "stereotypes."
- Poor acting and sound design: The acting is described as "high school drama quality," and the sound design is criticized for being "horrible."
- Confusing scenes: The reviewer mentions the film's random and confusing scenes, with action sequences starting without context.

The review of "Alone in the Dark" emphasizes the film's lack of plot, character development, and poor technical execution. The reviewer expresses strong negative emotions with words like "shockingly bad," "no characters," and "no real plot." These affective terms highlight the film's failure to engage the viewer. The reviewer criticizes the acting, sound design, and character development, describing the acting as "high school drama quality" and the sound design as "horrible." The reviewer finds the film lacking in plot and character motivation, describing the scenes as "random" and "confusing." The film is criticized for having no real plot or character development, with characters described as "stereotypes."

4. Dracula 3D

If this is Dario Argento's vision of Dracula, it would have been better if he kept it to himself

I am a huge fan of Gothic horror and Dracula films in particular. I am especially fond of the Hammer films with Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. I also like the Bela Legosi ones, as well as big budget Hollywood epics by directors Francis Ford Coppla and John Badam. Hell, I even found Dracula 2000 to be somewhat enjoyable. So it is a huge disappointment to me that the legendary Dario

Argento dropped the ball on this production. It seems Mr. Argento, who should know better forgot how to make a film. This flick is poorly edited, looks like crap and is put together haphazardly. Words truly cannot express how bad and fake the digital f/x look in this film. By far THE WORST CGI I have ever seen! The storytelling is inept, made worst with terrible editing. The cast lacks direction and chemistry, which makes it harder not only to view a cohesive film, but care about the characters outcome. Thomas Kretschman lacked intensity and screen presence to make a good Dracula. Casting Rutger Hauer as Van Helsing was one of the things Argento did do right. However, his screen time is limited and was'nt given enough time to develop his character. There is blood (mostly CG) and the lovely ladies of Dracula 3D show us their breasts and backsides.(including Dario's own daughter, the ever so attractive Asia Argento) The erotic elements will receive no complaint from me, but do not make up for such a bad film. Argento's Dracula is 110 minutes long and I would have found that time better spent rearranging my sock drawer.

Appraisal framework:

- Affect: The reviewer expresses strong negative emotions with phrases like "huge disappointment," "poorly edited," and "worst CGI."
- Judgment: The reviewer criticizes Argento's direction, the editing, and the cast's lack of chemistry, describing the storytelling as "inept."
- Appreciation: The reviewer finds the film's digital effects and storytelling lacking, describing the CGI as "fake" and the storytelling as "inept."

Content analysis:

- Poor direction and editing: The film is criticized for its poor direction and editing, with Argento's direction described as a "huge disappointment."
- Lack of chemistry: The cast is described as lacking chemistry, making it difficult to care about the characters.
- Bad CGI: The digital effects are described as the "worst CGI" the reviewer has ever seen.

The review of "Dracula 3D" highlights the film's poor direction, editing, and special effects. The reviewer expresses strong negative emotions with phrases like "huge disappointment," "poorly

edited," and "worst CGI." These affective terms convey the reviewer's dissatisfaction. Judgment is evident as the reviewer criticizes Argento's direction, the editing, and the cast's lack of chemistry. Appreciation category is highlighted as the reviewer finds the film's digital effects and storytelling lacking, describing the CGI as "fake" and the storytelling as "inept." The film is criticized for its poor direction and editing, with Argento's direction described as a "huge disappointment." The cast is described as lacking chemistry, making it difficult to care about the characters.

5. Children of the living dead

Redefining the word 'Bad'

I wrote a very long review before but for some reason only my summary was up, so here goes at a second attempt. Being the dead fan I am (I have a dead trilogy website) I couldn't resist seeing this movie, even knowing that it would be pretty bad in comparison to Romero's movies. Quite simply, I was blown away. Never before (and I mean this) have I seen such a dire plot, such awful acting and such diabolical camera work. This film isn't even one of those 'So bad it's good' events, failing on every possible level. Cue 90 minutes of unbelievably bad dubbing, atrocious story lines and god-awful filming techniques. It is so hard to express how bad this film is. The film jumps forward 14 years, then 1 year and so on yet has no continuity. We do not know what is going on as each time segment has no relation to the previous one. It is criminal that this film was ever made, and the cheek of John Russo (who I would take great pleasure in torturing) to call this the 'long awaited sequel'. How can people possibly believe that this is good? Surely someone on set would have realised that they were making one of the worst films in history (and that's no lie either). To be honest, I would go so far as to pay people not to watch this, in the vain hope that all copies would be pulled from shelves and the negatives be burnt. I can't even give this an IMDb rating of one as it simply does not deserve that kind of credibility. Atrocious.

Appraisal framework:

- Affect: The reviewer expresses strong negative emotions with words like "dire," "awful," and "atrocious."

- Judgment: The reviewer criticizes the plot, acting, and camera work, describing the plot as "dire" and the acting as "awful."
- Appreciation: The reviewer finds the film lacking in continuity and coherence, describing the filming techniques as "god-awful."

Content analysis:

- Terrible plot and acting: The film is criticized for its dire plot and awful acting, with the plot described as "diabolical."
- Poor filming techniques: The filming techniques are described as "god-awful," with bad dubbing and atrocious storylines.
- Lack of continuity: The reviewer mentions the film's lack of continuity, with time jumps that have no relation to previous segments.

The review of "Children of the Living Dead" focuses on the film's terrible plot, acting, and filming techniques. The reviewer expresses strong negative emotions with words like "dire," "awful," and "atrocious." These affective terms highlight the film's poor quality. The reviewer points judgement by criticizing the plot, acting, and camera work, describing the plot as "dire" and the acting as "awful." The reviewer finds the film lacking in continuity and coherence, describing the filming techniques as "god-awful." Content analysis shows that the review emphasizes the film's terrible plot and acting, poor filming techniques, and lack of continuity. The film is criticized for its plot which is described as "diabolical." The film is accused of bad dubbing and atrocious storylines. The reviewer mentions time jumps that have no relation to previous segments.

Summary on the characteristics of the worst reviewed horror-movies

By combining the appraisal framework and content analysis, I identified several common features that contribute to the negative reception of the worst-reviewed horror movies. These features included poor writing and acting, lack of coherence and continuity, bad direction and editing, terrible special effects, and excessive length.

Poor writing and acting

One of the most frequently mentioned issues in the reviews was the poor quality of writing and acting. Reviewers described the characters as "awful," "stereotypes," and lacking motivation. The acting was criticized as "high school drama quality" and "poorly acted." For example, the review of "Alone in the Dark" highlighted the lack of character development and the wooden delivery of lines, making the characters seem robotic and unengaging. Similarly, "I Spit on Your Grave: Déjà Vu" was criticized for its bad writing and poorly acted characters, which detracted from the overall experience.

Lack of coherence and continuity

Another common feature was the lack of coherence and continuity in the films. Reviewers frequently mentioned that scenes are "random," "confusing," and "pointless," with characters appearing at the right place and time without logical explanation. In "Children of the Living Dead," the reviewer pointed out the film's lack of continuity, with time jumps that have no relation to previous segments, which made it difficult to follow the plot. The review of "I Spit on Your Grave: Déjà Vu" also highlighted the film's lack of coherence, with characters appearing in the right place at the right time without any logical progression.

Bad direction and editing

The direction and editing of these films was consistently criticized. Directors were described as having "forgotten how to make a film," and the editing was described as "poorly edited" and "haphazard." For instance, the review of "Dracula 3D" criticized Argento's direction and the film's terrible editing, which resulted in an incoherent and unengaging story. The review of "Chinese Erotic Ghost Stories" also mentioned the poor execution of the film, with little of it actually working as intended.

Terrible special effects

The digital effects and sound design in these films were frequently criticized. CGI was described as the "worst" and "fake," and sound design was criticized for being "horrible." In "Dracula 3D," the reviewer described the digital effects as the "worst CGI" they have ever seen, which detracted from the film's overall quality. Similarly, the review of "Alone in the Dark" highlighted the poor sound design, with ADR sounding like it was recorded in an open room, further diminishing the film's production value.

Excessive length and pacing issues

Reviewers mentioned the excessive length and pacing issues in these films. Scenes were described as unnecessarily long, with dialogue that "goes on and on" without adding to the story. For example, the review of "I Spit on Your Grave: Déjà Vu" criticized the film's nearly two-and-a-half-hour runtime, with scenes that dragged on without contributing to the plot. The review of "Children of the Living Dead" also highlighted the film's pacing issues, with bad dubbing and atrocious storylines that made it difficult to stay engaged.

In summary, the worst-reviewed horror movies were consistently criticized for their poor writing and acting, lack of coherence and continuity, bad direction and editing, terrible special effects, and excessive length and pacing issues. These features contributed to the films' negative reception and made them stand out as examples of poorly executed cinema.

Discussion

The objective of this project was to identify the best and worst-ranked genres on IMDb and the top five highest ranked movies on the best-ranked genre and top five lowest ranked movies on the worst-ranked genre. This was done to answer the second and third research question, about the qualities of movies that make them good or bad according to viewers. The qualities were analysed from the most popular reviews from each of the identified movies using the appraisal framework and content analysis. The project succeeded in answering its research questions. The first research question was answered by analysing the dataset in Python Jupyter notebook. The second and third research questions were answered by qualitative analysis and close reading of the reviews, in addition to the methods mentioned.

The analysis revealed that the highest-rated movies within the top-ranked genre, as well as the lowest-rated movies within the bottom-ranked genre, share distinct characteristics that influence their reception. The best-reviewed movies are praised for their artistic merit, innovative cinematic techniques, strong emotional impact, skilled direction, powerful performances, and compelling themes. In contrast, the worst-reviewed movies are criticized for their poor writing and acting, lack of coherence and continuity, bad direction and editing, terrible special effects, and excessive length and pacing issues.

From a humanities perspective, these findings highlight key characteristics in film, such as narrative, emotional engagement and the direction and acting. The appraisal frameworks'

focus on affective terms, judgement and appreciation aligns with linguistic and literary studies emphasis on the evaluative and emotional aspects of language and art. In linguistics and literary studies, the evaluative and emotional language of reviews may be seen as a reflection of the broader social and cultural values of cinematography. The appraisal framework allows for the dissecting of these values which helps researchers understand how they influence the reception of these films. At the same time, content analysis resonates with the social sciences' approach to understanding patterns and trends in human behaviour and the cultural production of cinematography. For example, by categorising and quantifying thematic elements it is possible to gain insight into the collective preferences and expectations of audiences.

I encountered potential biases and challenges during the research process. The selection of reviews from IMDb may introduce a bias, as the platform's user base may not be representative of the general population. IMDb users who leave reviews might have specific preferences or biases that influence their ratings and comments. Additionally, the reviews analysed were the first ones listed on the IMDb pages, which may not provide a comprehensive view of the overall reception. Moreover, the dataset itself may have potential biases. The IMDb dataset from Kaggle does present the information of over 10 000 movies, but it includes only movies that have an entry on IMDb webpage. This means that movies that have not been entered into IMDb were not a part of the analysis. This may influence the equal representation of countries and time periods.

During the data processing, I had to resolve a few unexpected challenges. I did not expect the results of the movie genres to indicate mixed genres, like the sequence of romance, fantasy, animation. To resolve this issue, I counted the scores for each individual genre instead of each individual movie. Some movies also came up as having ratings of zero, because they either had not been updates to Kaggle yet or they were so new that they did not have ratings yet. To fix this issue, I decided to limit the scope to movies published in 2020 or earlier. A few movies came up as not having a genre. Those movies were also ignored from the analysis stage.

The findings of this research have several implications in the fields of linguistics, literary studies, cultural studies, social sciences, and cinematography. Analysing the features of movie reviews is about several aspects, including language, emotion, content, implications and meaning. Understanding the features that contribute to the success or failure of a movie is vital for directors and the film-industry. Further, critics can use the nuanced information of reviews to provide detailed evaluations.

Future researchers could expand upon the contents of this study by incorporating a more diverse range of reviews and genres. The analysis could be expanded to include reviews from additional platforms and cultural contexts to ensure equal representation. In addition, integrating

other disciplinary knowledge, such as psychology or media studies, could enrich the analysis and offer new insights from other perspectives into the reviews and their implications on the films. For instance, psychological research into emotional responses to films could provide a deeper understanding on to why certain films evoke greater reactions in the reviewers.

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