

Nell Reflection Paper

It has been a while since I have seen this movie, and I welcomed the opportunity to share this experience with my daughter. I've forgotten how moving this movie actually was, and how well the acting and directing was. However, it is quite different to watch a movie with homework on the brain rather than just for sheer entertainment value.

As I did the first time I watched the movie, I continually tried to decipher the Nellig language in the movie. I received the introduction of the new language as almost a personal challenge. One phrase I did happen to pick up on my own was "guar ang" or "guardian angel". Nell uses this term to describe the role of Dr. Lovell two times in this movie. The first time, was in the beginning of the film when Nell's mother died, and Nell is extremely distraught at being alone. Dr. Lovell enters her life and proceeds to calm, soothe and befriend her in her time of trouble. As a researcher, Dr Lovell does this not only just to observe his subject, but because of his moral compass. He is put in a situation that he must use his logic observational skills to determine a solution to the situation. His encounter with an obviously distraught person who might or might not be handicapped in some way, sets off his own protective instincts and he proceeds to develop a relationship as he observes the situation.

At the end of the film, Dr. Lovell's guardian role is again revisited as he realizes that Nell cannot handle the real world. She is out of her element, she is afraid, and he knows what the courts will do to her. He rallies to her cause again, pleading with the courts that she does not need us and she was fine in the woods by herself, as he translates her language for the judge and jury. As a researcher, it is sometimes difficult to remain impartial or unbiased to the subject of our research, especially when a living entity is involved. Maybe that is why some fields of Chemistry and Physics can be coined the simple sciences? They have no emotional aspects to their nature and are more or less, predictable, with the right model.

The movie also showed two different styles of research techniques. Dr. Lovell's was a more hands on technique, where he actually presented himself to his subject to be able to observe first hand. This allowed him to actually interview and communicate with his subject on a personal level. Dr. Olson, on the other hand, used technology and computers to observe and analyze the subject. She relied on her previous knowledge of numerous test subjects to make her observations rather than communicating and relating directly to her test subject.

The difference between observing and interviewing also comes into play during Nell's trial. Her observed behavior is irrational, unpredictable and dangerous. She is apparently, someone who needs assistance and protection. It is not until she is interviewed and allowed to communicate with Dr. Lovell that she is seen as a caring and compassionate person who is obviously distraught with her "test" situation. She observes that we as a society "[Dr. Lovell, *translating for Nell to the court*] you have big things. You know big things. But you don't look into each other's eyes. And you're hungry for quietness." As a researcher you would not be able to hear this from a test subject without getting to know them, and interacting with them. This is definitely a tricky thing to learn.

I, again, appreciate the required viewing of this movie. I hope to be able to use some of the insights this film has shown as this class progresses.