



B R I E F B I O J A R E D S U A R E Z

I saw my first movie at 16, had to listen to the radio in the car – but come Saturdays we could watch cartoons on TV. The effect of religious segregation created an alternate reality, where media seemed more real than all the prohibitions. I would steal glimpses of this outside world reading magazines at the grocery store. After declaring myself pre-med, I fell into film studies because a girl in anthropological biology asked me over to make video and eat soup. I was curious about entertainment because it was a force that seemed like magic, a more ideal version of reality.

In the film program, my teacher was an A.B., M.A., J.D., Ph.D. with liquid intelligence. He was a film theorist, and like an airplane traveling the stratosphere I was able to make up for what seemed like lost decades of my childhood. Upon graduating, I owed my sense of clarity to deep study of media as a text, and to an understanding that the history of media technology was a rather recent development in the evolution of how humans communicate. Because of my outlier point of view, and that media content is sociologically problematic, I was drawn to shape a fundamental question about content. If we can make organic food, hypoallergenic pillows, or non-toxic paint, how do we make a better movie or TV show?

And so I enlisted in a school of one where I watched a lot of movies, listened to the radio, hung out at convenience stores, travelled with homeless kids, and generally explored the identity of the antihero that had emerged in the New Hollywood cinema. By posing as a protagonist, I was slowly becoming a writer, understanding story not as an artifact, but as a life process. And as a left-brained artist, I emerged even more concerned about quality.

Returning to study craft, I went to Art Center which was a kind of anechoic chamber where I could hear myself think. While I had imagined that I would be a director of children's entertainment, I found myself thinking about the studio system and digital cinema. DCI provided a set of industry standards for digital content throughput, but these requirements were metric rather than cardinal. With the same backbone, I imagined a qualitative initiative could be built. So I focused on Rated-S, a social ratings design, and prototyped how it might work considering social, mobile, streaming, and data – framing a new development model for story.

Resolving how I might influence story quality at scale using media technology, I arrived at Mount Saint Mary's University where data science is impacting story and gender, lifting consciousness, and countering systemic forces against women and minority populations. Because gender and diversity demand radical business models and solutions, and we are facing a streaming frontier that is flooding the market with an "old world media, new world medium," approach, it is imperative that we get story straight. The impact of media on identity, outlook, and one's sense of opportunity is a concern recognized as a large industry problem. By using story, data and investing in new tools and platforms, we can represent the values we want to see in the world, on the screens we have in front of us.