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Summary Analysis Response Essay #1

The beautifully subtle, yet dramatic, documentary *Stories We Tell*, presents a family all linked to one Canadian actress, Diane Polley. Her daughter, Sarah Polley, goes on a heartwarming and tragic mission to find out the truth about their family. As time goes on, the story begins to change from person to person, leading to excavations of secrets long hidden. This process includes many emotionally vulnerable interviews with friends and family, immense amounts of research, and confrontation with opposing stories. Sarah is left in what must be an extremely exhausting position, her mind filled with new information that goes against everything she has ever known. Although part of her world must be completely changed, Sarah maintains her curiosity and insatiable attitude, and delves into a past previously foreign to her. The journey is one filled with sadness and grief, but also shows an unbreakable bond between a family that has truly seen it all.

Throughout the film, a constant theme of the importance of family can be seen. Although Sarah's biological father is not who the man she had spent her whole life with, she still holds a connection to both of them. The flashbacks make for a documentary with a non-linear style, and provide more than enough background information to set up the plot. With all that happens in the storyline (death, adultery, loss of children, etc.), *Stories We Tell* seems to be almost built to make those watching it cry. Unless one has a strong emotional wall built up, this film tugs at every

string of the heart. When all is said and done, it seems that Sarah's goal was to show just how much stories can vary (even in just one family) and how important they are all. She most definitely did this, even going above and beyond in her research to show the raw truths of her mother's life.

Being the inquisitive person that I am, I relate to this Sarah's character/personality quite a bit. She has a desire for honesty and she works hard to find it, as do I with my journalistic endeavors. In terms of the film as a whole, the emotionality of it is something that can also be seen in my life. I prefer truth, no matter how much it may hurt me. It is almost as if being overly emotional is what keeps me going. Unlike Sarah, the stories in my life are not quite as interesting or profound. There are no hidden baby daddies, and there are no actors. Of course, I guess that is the point of it all. We all have different stories, and they all matter. This movie has drastically changed my perception on the art of storytelling, and I will never be able to look at it the same way again.