

The Avenger's Life – THE CRITIQUE OF A DRAMATIST

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ABSTRACT

This study is an exploratory approach, seeking to identify the impact on audience when the vision of the director is different from the author's. I have created this research and posed a question since there are some bits of information that were left out in the film. Those vital pieces could have helped the audience in fully understanding the story characters along with their motives. This project will also include as part of its scope articles as well as reviews regarding the book, as well as the movie bearing the same title (*The Avenger's Life*) including the author and director. The study will also take into consideration my personal analysis regarding the facts presented in the book and the movie. It will not only provide a stark comparison and contrast on the perspective of the reviews, but also my point of view according to the dramatic method of criticism by Kenneth Burke. For the reason that both the movie and the novel present extensive plots, I have selected a single scene which will represent each of the primary characters. With the use of Burke's pentad method, I can find answer to my research question.

Statement of the Problem

Jenny Forster is a renowned American author. She has received attention with her fourth book, *The Avenger's Life* in 1999. It was definitely a big success, staying on the best seller list of the New York Times for several months. Forster's *The Avenger's Life* is a book of essence since it has been represented by relatable female characters as protagonists. Since the day it was released, it has already created a huge impact on several women all over the country, most particularly African-American women. It has provided questions on the issues revolving around the life of a black woman trying her best to find a good black man. It touches several issues in between such as gender, race, Alzheimer's, and even the support system given by black women to one another. In 1998, Michael Gump directed this hit with a movie carrying the same title. When it was released, it became the first movie ever to showcase four black protagonists with the leading characters in Hollywood. After turning the hit into a movie, a wider range of audience are becoming aware of the issues discussed in the book.

Significance and Purpose

This study explores the impact that the audience can get when the vision of the director differs from the author. (Myella & Kinsella, 1997). This is often a major problem which will leave the audience with unanswered questions regarding things and may not completely understand the relationship of women with each other, and why they do the things they do, make decisions and how their own families as well as family background have an impact on it all. I am personally aware of a lot of people who have both read the book and watched the movie like me and left with different perspectives. I watched the movie first and I just loved it. I focused

more on the job that the actors and actresses presented. I just loved the movie because of several reasons, including having an all-black cast.

Missing Material

After reading the book, I watched the film again. I noticed that there were several interesting things which were missing. The heart attack of Gloria was missing. I felt that it should have been there since it conveyed a very important part of her character. That scenario was actually a vital turning point because she almost died of it. It discussed issues about her weight and it was at that point that she realized she needed to lose weight, start eating healthy, and not be confused with it anymore.

Comparison

All in all, I think that most of the audience end up losing more than gaining by implementing the vision of Whitaker rather than that of McMillan's. Whitaker focuses on his film the relationship among women and in searching for Mr. Right. Even though the movie may give glimpses but it does not really give in dept information on the background of the characters for the audience to completely understand both their past and current motives. One of the sections in this study focuses on how the friendship of the women was not really convincing in the movie and how the movie removed the essence of each character. The highest gain on the part of the audience is actually seeing the film. Since the movie also turned out to be a big hit, people want to learn more about it. Whitaker did a great job in selecting his

actresses well, choosing an all-star cast. He really did a great job in both directing as well as in bringing out the best possible movie according to his vision.

Future Research

If anyone wants to do their own review on this similar project, it is highly suggested to have an interview with the actual director and author themselves. This would be an actual stretch but it would prove to be great sources understanding how they were able to visualize the plot and the project according to their visions. Whether it is possible to interview them or not, it is also suggested looking at more literature regarding the novel and the film. There are several literatures critiquing the actresses, characters that they play, the author, director and everything that they can find worth writing about. As a matter of fact, even the research question can be altered into something else, in order for the direction of the research paper to move to a different perspective and focusing on a different point of view.

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