

# Brokeback mountain analysis



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BUSTER**

Although the story of “Brokeback Mountain” has been classified as “the gay cowboy story”, it contrarily is the tale two young men who strive to come to acceptance of who they are in a society which demands something so different from the taboo nature of this union. Originally written as a short story by Annie Proulx, this story that started off as one of the most real tales of her fictitious stories took up almost 30 pages that covered a relationship that lasted 20 years and was adapted into film with a delicate yet balanced symposium of cinematic screenplay and cinematography.

The elements of the story and its adaptation go to reinforce different aspects and beliefs that have been developed and poeticize the relationship of Ennis and Jack paralleling the beauty of the surrounding landscapes and mountain ranges. In the process of adapting this short story to the silver screen, screenwriters Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana added to Annie Proulx’s story certain details and elements to enhance the development of the plot and characters. The most obvious of these additions that take place for both Ennis and Jack with the expansion of different relationships with some of the minor characters, some of which were not in the original story. Jack’s relationship with his father-in-law was always a tense one. L. D. felt as though Jack was not only completely inadequate for Lureen but also for the greater community.

This resentment brewed inside Jack until one Thanksgiving Day where he established his competence and authority by threatening his father-in-law into submission. L. D. fell silent to Jack after he commands “Sit down, you old son of a bitch... This is my house.

.. or I'll knock your ignorant ass into next week" (66. ). Jack's unsteady grasp of who he was and what his role in life as a closet homosexual was further expanded with the introduction of a couple who just moved to Texas. While at some social function, the two husbands, Jack and Randall, were out having a cigarette and Randall suggested to go up fishing at a cabin nearby with some whiskey to just " get away" (76. ) thus introducing a new relationship and chapter in Jack's homosexuality that supposedly brought his demise at the end.

In comparison, Ennis' added element in the film was a bit more drawn out and expanded on to further develop his sense of solidarity and relationship he maintained with his daughter Alma Jr. A new character not originally from the short story was introduced as a waitress named Cassie who he develops something of a relationship with for a short period of time. This relationship would develop so much so that time spent with his daughter would be at the same bar Ennis and Cassie met. despite the resentment Junior felt for sharing what little time she had with her father. In the end, his distance in the relationship, caused by his feelings for Jack, drove her away thus being twice " burned" (16) and further sinking into solidarity. In Proulx's supplementary essay " Getting Movied", she describes herself to be " something of a geographic determinist, believing that regional landscapes, climate and topography dictate local cultural traditions and kinds of work" (129). Director Ang Lee must use numerous visual elements that enhance Proulx's belief and portray it to the audience.

Producer and screenwriter Larry McMurtry had a vision in mind based off of Ansel Adams' Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico. This became the

foundation for the locations that were to portray Riverton and the other towns and establishments in Wyoming. The vastness of space that filled the background with nature's beauty of the Big Horn Mountains would contain the foreground of a somewhat desolate ranching society scarcely filled and obviously behind in the times to comment on the simplicity of the culture where most of its inhabitants lived paycheck to paycheck and ranch to ranch. The cinematography of "Brokeback Mountain" would not only play a crucial part with Proulx being a "geographic determinist" but also with Larry McMurtry's classification "lyrical pastoralism". In his essay "Adapting Brokeback Mountain", McMurtry describes director Ang Lee as "a reluctant, even an unwilling, pastoralist...

[getting] as much of the grit of the towns as he can" (141). Having the foundation set with the Ansel Adams photograph mentioned earlier, this would set the dichotomy between the two lives both Ennis and Jack choose to lead poeticizing their relationship with the majestic mountains and landscapes of the Big Horn Mountains be the symbol and meeting place for their unadulterated love to flourish and the grit of the poverty-stricken towns be a symbol of their daily torment of leading a double life. Annie Proulx's "Brokeback Mountain" started as fictitious story inspired by some random lonesome bar patron who was staring at a group cowboys shooting pool and grew to be a Pulitzer Prize finalist entry and an Oscar-winning feature for best director and, most importantly, best screenplay adaptation. From the imagination of the writer to the technical skills of a film crew, "Brokeback Mountain" became a testament to the times and trials of the American West and its inhabitants who struggle throughout their lives to either sustain their

way of life or find who they truly are. With the realistic foundation, drive of the creative team, unique cinematography and superb acting, the story of Ennis and Jack came to life not only as a struggling love story but one of sorrow and joy, suffering and bliss, serenity and violence, simply love and hate. Their tale lasted through the troubling times of the homophobic conservative American West and unfortunately succumbed to intolerance and hatred unfortunately much like the characters' neighbor in Laramie, Matthew Shepard. Struggling each step of the way throughout this relationship, the main characters would finally come to grips with the hinderance of their relationship and even their own mortality only to say at the end of all things " if you can't fix it, you've got to stand it" (28).