

The cinematic auteurist

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Auteurist Theory The auteurist (from the French word “*auteur*” which means theory is used as used in film analysis refers to a system of filmcritique wherein the track record of the director is used as the standard of reference (Goodykoontz & Jacobs, 2011). This theory suggests merits (or demerits) of a film largely falls on the shoulders of its author, or in most cases, the director. As such, the auteurist theory does not consider the value of the film as a whole but rather puts it in comparison to what the director is largely known for. This may sound like an unlikely way to critique a film especially when one realizes the many elements that a film has and the multitude of people who work to get it done and to get it right.

The auteurist theory can both work for and against the director. For example, Steven Spielberg is known for his larger than life, science-based-slash-science-fiction type of films. Any film with the Spielberg mark will be associated by the audience with elaborate visual effects and the like. The audience could care less about the acting capabilities of the actors in the film as long as Spielberg directs it. Now, imagine if you go to a Steven Spielberg film and then suddenly find yourself watching a romantic comedy. The actors were great, the script was great, the plot was superb. But seeing that it is a Spielberg film, none of these good points matter if there was nothing grand about the film.

In a way, the auteurist theory limits directors within the tailored perception that critics have of them.

Reference:

Goodykoontz, B., & Jacobs, C. (2011). *Film: From watching to seeing*. San Diego, CA: Bridgepoint.