

Movie analysis of alcohol use disorder

Business



Lass Vegas and Drunks are two films created in the 1990s that attempt to accurately depict the hardships of addiction involving Alcohol Use Disorder.

Leaving Las Vegas, a 1995 film, depicts an alcoholic and nightingale's last resort to find something special after a lifelong struggle to stay afloat.

Director Mike Figgis recruits actors Nicolas Cage and Elisabeth Shue for the main roles Ben and Sera.

Ben turns to alcohol after his wife and child abandon him, and after breaking down and quitting his job, he burns his possessions, buys as much liquor as possible, and drives to Las Vegas so he can drink himself to death. In Vegas, Ben meets Sera, who is working as a street walker, and they maintain a romance based upon the mutual need to be loved and accepted.

In a last ditch effort to diminish their remorse, the two end up falling in love and helping each other through the struggle of life's obstacles.

Drunks, produced in 1997, depicts a recovering alcoholic, Jim, as he returns to his daily Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. Director Peter Cohn enlists Richard Lewis as Jim, the main character. Jim is encouraged to speak up during a particular meeting, and reluctantly takes the stage to deliver an outburst of remembrance and rage. Jim storms out of the meeting and ventures into the night, revisiting his alcoholism and ruining his track record before returning to another Alcoholics Anonymous meeting the next morning.

Comparatively, Leaving Las Vegas achieved \$10,000 per theater income upon initial release, premiering in seven theaters and grossing \$70,000, while Drunks only made \$8,500 per theater with an opening weekend

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income of \$17, 000 with only two theaters. In total, Leaving Lass Vegas grossed a whopping \$32 million in total sales and became the 22nd biggest box office hit of the year, due to its second release in 1, 310 theaters. Drunks did not do as well, becoming the 88th biggest opening weekend limited release film, and 80th box office film of the year.

These measly numbers may be attributed to the fact that Drunks suffered from limited releases and restricted theater exposure. Whereas Drunks took home no awards, Leaving Lass Vegas, during the Oscar, was nominated for Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Director and Best Screenplay.

Drunks also received a number of accolades given by the Golden Globes, Independent Spirit Awards, and Screen Actors Guild. Rotten Tomatoes, a popular movie review site, included commentaries about both films. Leaving Lass Vegas earned a 90% on the Audiometer, whereas Drunks fell second with a 50% rating.

Similarly, Leaving Lass Vegas remained in first place with a 7. 7/10 rating by acclaimed critics, and Drunks only received a 5. 5/10 rating.

The Rotten Tomato ratings accurately predict comments made by reviewers, as commenters had many more positive remarks to make about Leaving Lass Vegas than Drunks. Significant observations about Leaving Lass Vegas include clear connections between the solemn nature of the film's plot, a common understanding of desperation, a lack of identity, and a universal last resort scenario that more accurately describes a wide range of alcoholic behaviors. Figs' film, one of the few to show the sleazy flip-side of the glossy city of Lass Vegas, offers an unblinking portrayal of alcoholism. " Apparently <https://assignbuster.com/movie-analysis-of-alcohol-use-disorder/>

reviewers enjoyed Flagg's ideology of Alcohol use Disorder more than presentation of Conn's AAA meetings incorporating forced perceptions of alcoholism and the inclusion of an overly diverse group of members that ruins the sense of calamity that Cohn attempts to present. Regardless, many commenters enjoyed the film and Conn's attempt at displaying addiction in a realistic scenario.

This reveals the spiritual underpinnings of AAA and the service it provides to those on the path to recovery. "Leaving Las Vegas received more theatrical attention as it was released in more theaters than Drunks; this may explain why Leaving Las Vegas had more positive reviews. The resultant lower level of reviewer attention that Drunks received exerted a particularly large effect on the overall perception of the film, as people follow suit with the opinions of acclaimed viewers.

Amazon's commentaries were similar to those provided by Rotten Tomatoes in terms of comparison of the two films. However, Leaving Las Vegas received an Amazon rating of 4/5, whereas Drunks received a 3.

6/5, a lesser gap between ratings than Rotten Tomatoes. Nevertheless, the number of positive comments about Leaving Las Vegas outweigh positive comments about Drunks. Comments on Leaving Las Vegas range from the discussion of clear connections between the relationship between love and alcohol dependence to the cinematic perfectionism in concentrating on alcoholism and obsessions.

The few negative comments on the site briefly comment on the reviewers' dislike for the film's movie quality, although the production value is

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irrelevant in this case due to higher ratings and concentration on the films' plot. Drunks received an interesting collection of comments, more concerned with the Conn's description of the hardships of addictions in general rather than specifically those associated with Alcohol Use Disorder. The film depicted some AAA members, including the main character, as having addictions other than alcohol, which, according to Amazon's commenter's, creates an "all star game of addicts".

Drunks received a higher level of negative comments, speaking on topics of the misuse of alcoholism to portray hardships and lack of purpose, forced plot twists to misinterpret alcoholism, and unenthusiastic, cookie-cutter renditions of alcoholism itself. The reviewers commenting on Drunks were much harsher with their disdain for the film than commentators discussing Leaving Las Vegas. Leaving Las Vegas also had an overall greater number of comments than Drunks, featuring a higher ratio of positive to negative remarks.

Leaving Las Vegas earned a number of awards from some of the highest ranking and etched award ceremonies, which contributed to the fact that Leaving Las Vegas received better reviews in every respect. Drunks won no awards, premiered in two theaters, and suffered accordingly. In terms of the main characters, the films had similar ideas when it came to constructing a main character to display Alcohol Use Disorder.

Both main characters are middle aged, white males from middle class backgrounds.

This provides the widest range of possibility for a viewer to assimilate with the character. Both characters are relatively well kept, show obvious signs of being attracted by women, and are relatively passive when making decisions. Cohn and Figs attempted to recreate the perfect middle class American to identify with their audiences. When evaluating the directors' ability to display Alcohol Use Disorder and its criteria, it is important to identify which criteria were displayed the most often, and what effect displaying these particular criteria has on the audience. Covers to find alcohol over a long period of time.

In the opening scene of Leaving Las Vegas Ben exuberantly dances through the aisles of a liquor store, buying any and all alcoholic beverages in sight (00: 00). Drunks takes a more elapsed approach to splaying Jims addiction, as the first time we see Jim in his quest to get drunk is when he ditches his AAA meeting and goes straight to the liquor store (21 : 13). He proceeds to fantasizing about drinking and endlessly forgetting his problems, but leaves his purchased pint of bourbon on a park bench.

This is a reoccurring experience for Jim that night, as the rest of his night is spent continually drinking and performing illegal actions. This leads into the next major criterion displayed in both movies, the desire to or action of drinking heavily in areas of physical hazard, leading to an increased risk of hurting oneself or others.

In doing so, the film creates a connection between each characters' ability to function semi-appropriately while heavily boozing and maintaining a high level of tolerance for liquor.

Leaving Lass Vegas shows Ben driving while heavily intoxicated, sometimes drinking while driving. The first of these scenes occurs when Ben remains at the bar till closing time, then proceeds to drive to a strip club while chugging vodka next to a police officer (00: 05). While driving to Lass Vegas, Ben proceeds to display high levels of tolerance towards liquor, as he continuously drinks fifths of liquor as he approaches his destination. Correspondingly, Jim proceeds to act dangerously under the use of alcohol during the majority of his night.

Jim, in a drunken blackout, uses a dirty needle he found on the street to shoot up heroin in plain sight, and is then removed from the bar after attempting to fight a bouncer (80: 15). Another AAA member reminisces of driving his five-year-old son, only to wake up in prison and discover that he was the cause of his son's death (21: 35). The stories presented in Drunks cause the film's identification of the criterion to be displayed in a more severe light than Leaving Lass Vegas. This is because Cohn emphasizes the relentlessness of living life with Alcohol Use Disorder.

In presenting Jim and Ben's dangerous habits primarily over other criteria, the directors make themselves liable to be criticized for exemplifying a set of criteria that includes physical dangerousness instead of the mental deterioration that accompanies Alcohol Use Disorder.

Regardless, these criteria for Alcohol Use Disorder were displayed accurately, as Cohn and Figs give countless accounts of the crippling nature of the disease. The directors excellently portray symptoms of trihedral

throughout both films, and use the characters' struggle to find alcohol to stop the pains of their addiction.

Specifically, in *Leaving Las Vegas*, Ben awakens in a cold sweat after blacking out in a casino and causing a ruckus, struggles to the fridge and chugs whatever liquor he could find, before crawling up in the fetal position (01: 04). Another time, Ben wakes up in a similar state and leaves Sera for the quest for and consummation of liquor (01: 23). Jim vocally expresses his withdrawal from alcohol when exclaiming of his “two missed years” when he was sober and dating his soon-to-be wife (78: 30).

Jim's whole night is an example of his withdrawal from liquor, as he commits many of the same crimes he did while a full-on alcoholic.

Each director uses cleverly selected cinematographic tools to better exemplify the hardships of addiction. While roaming the streets in search of an outlet or solution to his alcoholic tendencies, Jim is shown walking down the desolate streets of city creepily illuminated liquor lights (20: 00). When Jim enters his third liquor store and finally capitalizes on drinking his purchased alcohol, the camera remains still while Jim walks away from the shot to signify Jim walking away from his recovery from Alcohol Use Disorder (29: 19). *Leaving Las Vegas* comparatively uses similar cinematographic perspectives to illustrate alcoholism.

Figs displays desperateness using Ben's victimizing delusions by changing the sign for “The Whole Year Inn” to “The Hole You're In” (00: 28) and playing solemn music with desolate themes, metaphorically eluding to alcohol. Figs' clever use of music enhances the perceived severity of Ben's

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situation, and Alcohol Use Disorder in general. Both Figs and Cohn select ingenious uses for cinematographic angles and musical manipulation to play on the fact that Alcohol Use Disorder is a particularly serious issue. My main concern of the directors' portrayal of those affected by Alcohol Use Disorder is the concept of “super drunks”.

While watching the films, I got the perception that the actions of the main characters were slightly traumatized in order to add emphasis to the plot and themes. For instance, both Ben and Jim maintain an exceptionally high level of functioning while black out drunk.

Ben is able to drive while under the supervision of a police officer while holding a handle of liquor and perfectly abiding by all laws of the road. Jim maintains himself for a full night of binge drinking and bar hopping, even though his alcohol tolerance should have been lost after two years of remission.

Otherwise, Cohn and Figs covered all the major criteria for Alcohol Use Disorder. The scenes that depicted Jim and Ben's disease stealthily craft experiences that cover multiple criteria in one condensed action. Therefore, each director did a great job in not singling out a certain criterion, which caused for the least possible biasness when evaluating the moral fiber of each character.

In commenting on “The Diagnosis of Mental Disorders: The Problem of Reification” it is important to utilize this critique as a starting point for the analysis of the media's bias concerning mental disorders.

The text reinforces that mental illness is continually stigmatized and that people with mental illness are targeted as outcasts. The incorrect perception that runs rampant among millions is that the affected population of mentally ill are somehow “ Dangerous; Developmentally disabled, of low intelligence, have communication disorders, or all of these. ” Psychiatrists maintain similar tragedy in pop culture and current ideology, as they are portrayed in media imagery as being outlandish and overly sexual towards their incomprehension patients and coworkers.

Such mass media outlets serve as a massive source of similar bias, emphasizing the determination of murders caused by mentally ill or violence by the mentally ill against the general public.

This is due to the level of unclear statistical evidence, especially in commenting on crimes committed by the mentally ill, and a continued over exaggeration and over emphasis of these programmed violent behaviors as documented in film and television dramas. The general population is effected on a personal level to believe that mental illness is accompanied by characteristics of insanity, lack-luster, and overall inability to function in society.

Stigma in Mental Health Care” sets out to exemplify the unfavorable penalties of depression, social and occupational relationships, and the adverse stigma that accompanies these factors, among those affected with mental illness. Such categorization leads to inferior Job intellectual capacity; decreased housing opportunities due to their perceived tendency towards

violence; and severely diminished social life based upon parental blame for children's mental illness through poor parenting skills.

The misunderstanding that parents are somehow responsible for their child's lack of socially acceptable behavior, as well as the thought that parents with mental illness somehow have an effect on the outcome of their children's development and mental capacity, demonstrates how general public is misinformed. Overall, the aim of the article in analyzing the issues concerning mentally ill people naturally assimilating into society is to establish an understanding that one's level of education, medical background, and experience with mental disorders does not reduce or traumatized the systematizing notions of mental illness.

A more accurate dissection of a single episode of media bias towards mental disorders is illustrated in "Media Coverage of Gun Violence May Further Stigmatize Mental Illness". Media coverage of a recent mass shooting by a man diagnosed with mental disorder was collected in the efforts of allocating blame for the public perception that the crime was based solely upon the man's mental disorder. The subsequent rally for reduction and implementation of safer gun laws and increased fear of the mentally ill influenced researchers to interview people based upon their access to and regarding their knowledge of current news reports on the subject.

Respondents were asked to comment on their knowledge of the subject, indicating whether or not they watched the news reports on the issue and then state their opinions on the restricting the purchase of large magazines of ammunition by mentally ill. The survey provided a 79% response rate

supporting restrictions on such gun laws, and 54% of respondents, after watching news reports on the shooting, were lead to believe that mental illness caused a tendency towards hostility, brutality, and deep-seeded issues of drug use.

‘ One Flew over the Psychiatric Unit’ Mental Illness and the Media” presents an interesting outlook on the immense effect of media coverage on mental illness and how it indirectly moves the general pubic. Commenting specifically on the representation of public image, the article determines a permanent effect on attention and source bias towards the mentally ill, influencing public anxiety and fear of “ the unknown” through acceptable entertainment and pop culture.

A wide variety of films, newspaper articles and media portrayals of those with mental illness display a higher level of effectiveness in diminishing positive persona of mental illness by tapping into the audiences “ pleasure, gratification, and entertainment”, which therefore outweighs viewers’ past experiences and previous knowledge of mental illness. Furthermore, audience members are active in depicting the somewhat obvious messages delivered by movie directors, who aim to emphasize the unavoidable social experience in dealing with and adapting to living with persons with a mental disorder. Mental Illness inDisneyAnimated Films” attempts to make a connection between a higher level of animosity and negative emotional responses present in young viewers of Disney films and the Disney films themselves.

The purpose of this study was to formulate reasoning behind stereotypical negative relationships between the younger generation and its exposure to mental illness on a less than daily basis. Researchers hypothesized that the creation of lovable and recognizable Disney who constantly watch Disney's films.

Accordingly, the research performed in the article was to determine if mental illness was negatively portrayed in Disney's film characters. Researchers examined 40 different Disney films and analyzed each for characters displaying mental illness and derogatory accusations including "crazy" or "lunatic". Of these films, 85% maintained a character with a perceived mental illness and 21% of such characters interacted with and displayed commonalities of being bizarre and ill.

The information found a higher than average number of references to mental illness than the national daily average on television or in the daily lives of adolescents; this elevated exposure to mental illness in Disney's films possibly causes a skewed thought process behind reacting to mental illness due to children's difficulty in separating reality and fiction at a young age.

This rallies for a conception or misapplication of the severity behind negative emotional responses to the mentally ill. "Depictions of Mental Illness in Print Media: A Prospective National Sample" provided a different angle on the analysis of printed media bias.

A New Zealand research group collected a national sample of printed media depicting mental illness from February 3rd to March 2nd, 1997, in order to analyze the context and subliminal objective in displaying critiques and
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appearances of mental illness. These articles, photos, cartoons, and advertisements were not only evaluated by action, size, gender, and a number of other predetermined characteristics of possible portrayals, but also were thoroughly analyzed and examined for a conclusive relationship.

The study did just that, finding that most articles displayed mental disorders in a predominately negative fashion, mostly characterizing mental illness with dangerousness and vulnerability. A quarter of the media sources analyzed remained positive about the promotion of human rights through depiction of mental illness as well as the acknowledgement of negative categorization on a more educational level, further displaying the high level of demutualization in New Zealand literature.

"Categorization of People with Mental Illness" provides an in-depth account of the catalyst effects providing prejudice and social handicaps on mentally ill, as analyzed by the opinions of British adults. A "campaign to combat categorization" organized the perceptions of 1737 British citizens on seven different mental disorders and how these members of society can assimilate back into regular life. The questionnaire received a 65% response rate and received respondents' minimal inappropriate ideology of perceived drug use, alcoholism, and schizophrenic violence leading to unsafe and erratic behavior.

Also, many respondents reported believing that such mental diseases were "self-inflicted" and rendered the affected persons as being difficult to converse with, even though many respondents knew someone with a mental disorder. The survey concluded that regardless of the level of

affiliation with or knowledge about mental disorders, populations influenced by media bias and social crutches against mental disorders still have negative preconceptions regarding mental illness.

Similarly, “ Psychology ignored and depression neglected in the media’s coverage of mental health research” provides a theoretical article scrutinizing the coverage of mass media on mental illness in the I-J. In neglecting the psychosocial aspect of problems involving mental illness, the I-J provides a distorted imagery of “ neurological aspects of mental illness. ” BBC from 1999 to 2008 and New Scientist Magazine from 2008 to 2010. 148 relevant stories were collected and analyzed for “ disease burden”, a relationship between time lost due to dying early and time affected by disability. Both news sources showed a lack of coverage of depression, alcoholism, and misunderstanding towards diseases that are prone to violence. Both sources similarly showed a lack of interest in psychological interventions.

In altering the public perception of mental illness, there is a consequential effect on government funding and healthy public education.

Negative mental health stigmas act as parasites by greatly affecting both the lives of people with mental illness while also touching the mindset of the general public, causing the community to discriminate and contain prejudice against mental disorders. Mass media interventions for reducing mental health-related stigma” set out to find if mass media interventions, an expensive alteration to individual reform, are worthwhile. Each intervention was evaluated for the nature of such intervention, content and type,

collected from 11 scholarly databases. 2 studies from 4490 participants were chosen, all random trials with five discrimination outcomes, having no evidence of effect, and three trials with continuous outcomes, with a negative effect on viewers. Similar to the discrimination trials, interventions with prejudice outcomes were found to favor the interventions.

In conclusion the data collected found that astigmatism in the interventions collected had a small to medium effectiveness in reducing viewer's bias. Specifically, prejudice was slightly reduced in each trial, but discrimination was found as a harder problem to solve.

In order to further diminish prejudice and specifically discrimination, more research must be collected in these interventions in order to determine which mass media interventions work most effectively. When probing whether common patterns of social and physical impairment are unique to or increase issues with health-related laity of life for persons with a mental disorder, it is important to recognize the lack of information and consideration for the effects of media and social bias against the mentally ill. "Health Related to Quality of Life in Primary Care Patients with mental Disorders" sets out to survey four primary care clinics, including 1000 adult patients questioned about mood, anxiety, consumption of drugs and alcohol, and eating problems. 31 primary care physicians collected the data, eliminating any survey bias.

"Mood, anxiety, comparators, and eating disorders" maintained a higher prevalence in mental disorder patients and a higher toll on their health

related quality of life. As noted in other surveys, an increase in research and improvisation of treatment should be considered to alleviate the situation.

After evaluating each film for their level of categorization of Alcohol Use Disorder, I have concluded that both films do a superb job in displaying the symptoms and mental crutches of someone affected by a disease, but *Leaving Las Vegas* presents a more realistic scenario. *Leaving Las Vegas* bestows Ben's alcohol troubles as life altering to the point of him leaving his established life and attempting to drink himself to death. *Drunks* presents Alcohol Use Disorder in a similar light, but shows Jim's drinking and heroin use as a common nightly excursion with a full recovery in the morning.

Jim remembers and realizes his mistakes, and returns to another AAA meeting in the morning. Ben, on the other hand, realizes that his goals in life surround drinking; he leaves his wife and child because of his work, he resorts to sleeping with cheap prostitutes because he is too drunk to flirt with sober women, as displayed in his nightly excursions before leaving for *Las Vegas*. The film shows Ben failing miserably at speaking to a less intoxicated woman at a bar, making a fool of himself when he shows up to a friend's dinner party asking for money, and failing to act respectfully in social environments.

Ben accepts his disease and allows it to course through his veins with little restraint until he finds something worth fighting for, Sera. Sera helps him cope with his decision to drink himself to death, but the fact that Ben does not allow Sera to change his decision or alter his mindset on his impending death displays Ben's lifelong commitment to liquor. This provides the viewer

an idea of how serious Alcohol Use Disorder is by constantly flooding Ben with positive reinforcements to stop drinking and reform, but he neglects to realize his positives and drowns out his sorrows of the past with liquor.

Jim, on the other hand, provides contradictory responses in me by allowing himself to return to a different AAA meeting the morning after. To me, it seems nearly impossible that Jim could so easily restarted his recovery process; the whole movie was built off of Jim remembering his past and realizing that he made a mistake in stopping his drinking. It would be a nearly unbearable feat to be in his situation and continue to seek assistance after using heroin and getting hammered for the first time in two years.

In my opinion, Cohn allows readers to believe that Alcohol Use Disorder is easy to be ridden of if the affected person simply “ talks out their problems”. This opinion would be unchanged if I watched the films in a different order, because my opinion of Drunks was unaffected by my opinion of Leaving Lass Vegas.

Reading and writing about ten different research articles allowed me to gain a strong perspective on the level of categorization in current media that would have one unnoticed to me otherwise.

Like other types of stigma in media outlets, the current media uses sly subliminal messages to present a specific mindset to their audience. As displayed in the research articles, the media provides readers and viewers with constant stimuli to influence negative emotions towards mental disorders. Often are the violent and abrasive tendencies of people with mental disorders published for media attention, causing people to perceive

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that mental disorders have a higher chance of unintentional viciousness, when in fact studies prove this not to be true.

If I had a mental disorder, I would be personally offended by the media's attempts at doing so because the media has a huge effect on the general public, who would treat me and act differently to me if they thought I was prone to violence.

Filmmakers have the responsibility to aid this ever-growing wound. In producing popular and widely-acclaimed films like *Leaving Las Vegas*, directors and producers have the opportunity to reverse the effects of media outlets' systematizing qualities by presenting aversive behaviors with a realistic identity in a more accurate setting.

By being an audience member of these movies, it is important to disallow the easier option of accepting negative customizations to ruin society's perception of mental disorders and Alcohol Use Disorders. These motivations should not be instigated by anger or disdain, but the willingness to accept change, even if change does not come quickly. Word of mouth is key.

Spreading an intellectual understanding of how the mentally ill differ from what they are identified by in the world more easily, like *Backbone* or other social media sites.