

Dangerous liaison vs cruel intentions



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Running Head: Dangerous Liaisons vs. Cruel Intentions Topic: Dangerous Liaison Vs Cruel Intentions Instructions: i need to compare the book dangerous liaison by Choderlos de Laclos to the modern movie cruel intentions i need to examin how the original text was modified in plot, character, theme/setting, audience, morals/values and also cultural/historical context i need to support my theme " sex for revenge"

Dangerous Liaisons vs. Cruel Intentions

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Dangerous Liaisons vs. Cruel Intentions

Dangerous Liaisons was a novel written in the eighteenth century by a French author, Pierre Choderlos de Laclos. The novel is about decadent French aristocrats that use sex and manipulation for their own nefarious purposes. The story revolves around Marquise de Merteuil and the Vicomte de Valmont (Laclos, 392, 1961). Cruel Intentions is a modern day adaptation of the novel with love, evil, gullibility and manipulation combined with moral cynicism and lust for domination by the primary protagonists. The main characters in the novel were French aristocrats and adults, while the movie depicts the protagonists as young adults who combine manipulation and revenge to achieve their ulterior goals. The lack of social and moral authority which is denounced by Laclos in the novel is transformed into the lack of parental influence on Catherine and Sebastian in the movie. The two siblings are free to pursue their dangerous game of playing with others' feelings and reputations. The movie also has many erotic messages which create a mental image of what the protagonists is up-to. The novel on the other hand provides the action through a veil of language. Laclos establishes the

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hypocrisy of the main characters by a series of letters in which they show their various facets to different recipients. The movie highlights the hypocrisy of the lead characters in the opening credits as they get ready to mingle with society. Both Merteuil and Catherine are respected members of their societies without anyone their true nature. In *Dangerous Liaisons*, Valmont dies in a sword fight with Danceny. Before dying he gives him letters which would ruin the reputation of Merteuil. Her reputation is shattered and she eventually dies of misery. *Cruel Intentions* provides a more heroic and tragic ending of Sebastian who is killed in a car accident. He pushes Annette out of the care before being killed. Annette and Cecile ensure that Catherine is humiliated in front of the student body. Her drug addiction becomes public which tarnishes her reputation. The subject of drug abuse amongst young adults is a major theme of the movie.

The movie also portrays the independence of modern women. Cecile and Annette fight back against the manipulation and deceit of Catherine by ruining her reputation (*Cruel Intentions*, 1998). Further the novel depicts Merteuil as having suffered financial hardship and small pox, yet she escapes with jewels to a foreign country. Catherine is not allowed such an escape because she is publicly humiliated and her virtuous image is shattered. The impossibility of a relationship between Cecile and the music teacher in the movie is depicted on the basis of racial prejudice unlike the novel where a financial barrier was used. Another theme in the movie is that Sebastian blackmails a homosexual football player into delivering letters which will destroy Cecile's reputation. This exposes the homophobia of the lead characters. The novel on the other hand depicts Valmont blackmailing a maid named Julia.

Dangerous Liaisons was written in the eighteenth century before the French revolution. Laclos's novel is heavily influenced by libertinism. Libertines believe in acting according to their own choices and to dominate a situation. The main characters of the novel are both libertines who represent the values of their movement. Dangerous Liaisons was banned during its time because it represented views and values which were incompatible with French society. Cruel Intentions is a modified version of the book which has some changes in structure, theme and characters to depict contemporary society.

References:

Cruel Intentions. Kumble, Roger. Columbia Pictures, 1998.

Laclos, Choderlos de. Dangerous Liaisons. London: Penguin Classics, 1961.