

"steel magnolias" directed by herbert ross essay sample

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



“ Steel Magnolias” directed by Herbert Ross Essay Sample

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the movie called “ Steel Magnolias” (1989) directed by Herbert Ross. Steel Magnolias has been one of my families favorite films for many years; however, my intentions are to carefully critique the movie based on storytelling, acting, cinematography, edit, sound, style, and finally my interpretation of the film from a critics point of view. Storytelling and review should start with the Goethe’s three questions then the truth test. “ from late 18th/early 19th-century poet and playwright Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s autobiography that form the basis of virtually all critical reaction to theater, film, literature, or creative art ask three questions: What is film trying to say?, How well does the film say it?, and Was it worth saying?” (Goodykoontz & Jacobs, 2010). The truth test asks: is the film true to itself? And does the film explore some deep truth about human nature? (Goodykoontz & Jacobs, 2010). Steel Magnolias is about film is about the bond among a group of women from a parish in the Natchitoches, Louisiana, area. Steel Magnolias is a metaphoric title that suggests the main female characters can be as delicate as magnolias, but are as tough as steel.

The internal conflict is between the mother and daughter relationship. The married daughter, who has type one diabetes, is contemplating on having a child, however the mother indignantly disagrees. The mother is concerned her daughter’s body chemistry cannot handle child birth. The daughter, being tough as steel, becomes pregnant. The majority of the town including the father is excited, but the mother is concerned. Several months pass, the

daughter successfully delivers a baby boy. However, several months later Shelby begins showing signs of kidney failure and starts dialysis. The mother offers to donate a kidney to her daughter and the transplant takes place on her son's first birthday. Three to four months following the transplant, Shelby's body rejects the kidney and she collapses into a coma. The doctors inform the family that Shelby will likely remain comatose indefinitely, and her family and husband jointly decide to remove Shelby from life support.

The resolution of the conflict is when the mother finally accepts the daughter's death and focuses her energy of helping raise her grandson. The story is true to itself. It describes a very strong willed mother, who is very protective of her daughter; however the mother's strong will was instilled into her daughter by her mother. The actors in the film included: Sally Fields (mother), Julia Roberts (daughter), Shirley MacLaine, Olympia Dukakis, Dolly Parton, and Daryl Hannah. Although the story revolves around Sally Fields and Julia Roberts as the main actors, the cast mixed with character and wild card actors, played their part by holding the film together. Steel Magnolias is set entirely within a beauty parlor (nice set designed by John Whittington), where the women gather to laugh, gossip, cry, and offer friendship and understanding to each other in a safe, man-free environment. " The lead actresses all lived close to each other in rented houses in Natchitoches during the brutally hot Louisiana summer shoot. They spent a great deal of time together off camera and became genuine friends in the process. With so many top actresses together sharing the spotlight, it seemed inevitable that there would be drama. However, that didn't happen. " From day one,"

said Dolly Parton in her autobiography, " people were predicting trouble on the set because the cast included so many strong actresses with distinct and different personalities.

That trouble never developed. We all got along fine"(www. tmc. com). Many feel that the comic drama to be insightful and accurate about the way women respond to life's serious crises, such as illness and death, and how they draw strength from relationships, even when those relationships are tempered by differences of taste or opinion. Herbert Ross was adamant about shooting Steel Magnolias on location in Natchitoches, Louisiana, the actual town in which the action of the story took place. He felt that the character and flavor of the picturesque small town would bring the story to life. Most of the sets used throughout the shoot were real places, and many local citizens were used as extras, giving the film a feeling of authenticity. For her role as salon owner Truvy, Dolly Parton even trained for a time with local beauticians. " There were even brave people from Natchitoches who volunteered to have me do their hair," said Parton in her autobiography, " although I doubt many of them knew exactly how courageous they were"(www. tmc. com).

Editing is a true art form. The editor strives to impart visual variety to the picture by skillful shot selection, arrangement and timing. He recreates rather than reproduces the photographic event to achieve a cumulative effort often greater than all the actions in individual scenes put together. A motion picture is a custom-made jigsaw puzzle in which filmmakers fashion the individual pieces. Each piece requires special attention so that it will

merge harmoniously with pieces surrounding it. Many editors prefer to make their cuts on movements so that the actual switch from one shot to another is masked by the action. The editing in Steel Magnolias uses wipes and fades to transition from one scene to the other. The editor uses continuity editing to flow between shot smoothly. " Sound is one of the most overlooked elements of making a movie and one of the most important.

Filmmakers can control the sounds audiences hear while they're watching the picture, using only natural sounds like dialogue and sound effects, using complementary sounds like background music or enhanced sound effects to intensify the moods, or using unrealistic sounds for dramatic or comic counterpoint to the image. Dialogue is usually recorded while a film is shot; however, most sounds heard in films are added later (often including dialogue) using post-dubbing processes like ADR and Foley recording. Sounds may be added and manipulated to suggest states of mind, to anticipate or recall other events of the story, or any other reason a filmmaker decides" (Goodykoontz & Jacobs, 2001). Low pitched sound is used throughout the film which emphasizes the dignity of solemnity in a scene. Background music is used to add emotion and rhythm to a film. Usually not meant to be noticeable, it provides a tone or an emotional attitude toward the story and the characters. In addition, background music often foreshadows a change in mood.

The Director is the driving creative force in a film's production. They act as the crucial link between the production, technical and creative teams.

Directors are responsible for creatively translating the film's written script

into actual images and sounds. On the screen, they must visualize and define the style and structure of the film, then act as both a storyteller and team leader to bring this vision to reality. Director's main duties include casting, script editing, shot composition, shot selection and editing. While the practical aspects of filmmaking are left to the producer, directors must be aware of the constraints of the film's budget and schedule. Being a director requires great creative vision, dedication and commitment. Directors are ultimately responsible for a film's artistic and commercial success or failure.

The director in this film uses the Hollywood style of directing. "Hollywood style" is that it strives to make the reader forget the medium of film altogether. To achieve such invisibility of technique, directors will use shots and cuts that have become so familiar to film audiences that they no longer announce themselves as techniques at all. For example, we now expect to see dialogue in which cameras behind the shoulders of two speakers record the face of whichever character is speaking, switching back and forth to follow the developing dialogue. One would struggle to explain how that camerawork and editing is natural, since the resulting perspective could not represent a realistic human perspective on the conversation. What is more important for the Hollywood style, however, is that the effect feels natural to experienced viewers of film.

Hollywood genre films the western, science fiction film, horror film, gangster film have been the most popular and most lucrative products ever to emerge from the machinery of the U. S. film industry. Critics have long pondered the

genre film's success and have attempted to ferret out the reasons for the public's appreciation of even the most undistinguished "singing cowboy" westerns. In general, critics have examined these films as isolated phenomena as found objects rather than considering genre films in relation to the society which created them. Genre films have been defined as pure myth, as well made plays, and as psychodramas bearing within themselves the working out of unconscious anxieties inherent in the psychological makeup of us all. Certainly any and all of these explanations contain some truth. However none of them explain why U. S. genre films grew and developed and became our most numerous, if not most artistically significant, film productions. Genre is always a vague term with no fixed boundaries.

Many words also cross into multiple genres. Recently, film theorist Robert Stam challenged whether genres really exist, or whether they are merely made up by critics. Stam has questioned whether "genres [are] really 'out there' in the world or are they really the construction of analysts?". As well, he has asked whether there is a "... finite taxonomy of genres or are they in principle infinite?" and whether genres are "...timeless essences ephemeral, time-bound entities? Are genres culture-bound or trans-cultural?" Stam has also asked whether genre analysis should aim at being descriptive or prescriptive. While some genres are based on story content (the war film), other are borrowed from literature (comedy, melodrama) or from other media (the musical). Some are performer-based (the Fred Astaire and Ginger

Rogers films) or budget-based (blockbusters), while others are based on artistic status (the art film), racial identity (Black cinema).

Film criticism is the analysis and evaluation of films. In general, these works can be divided into two categories: academic criticism by film journalistic film criticism that appears in newspapers and other media. Film critics working for newspapers, magazines, and broadcast media mainly review new releases. Normally they only see any given film once and have only a day or two to formulate opinions. Despite this, critics have an important impact on films, especially those of certain genres. Mass marketed action, horror, and comedy films tend not to be greatly affected by a critic's overall judgment of a film. The plot summary and description of a film that makes up the majority of any film review can still have an important impact on whether people decide to see a film. For prestige films such as most dramas, the influence of reviews is extremely important. Poor reviews will often doom a film to obscurity and financial loss. In conclusion, it took a lot of elements to create a great movie like Steel Magnolias.

The Director is the driving creative force in a film's production. They act as the crucial link between the production, technical and creative teams. The editor strives to impart visual variety to the picture by skillful shot selection, arrangement and timing. Sound is one of the most overlooked elements of making a movie—and one of the most important. Filmmakers can control the sounds audiences hear while they're watching the picture. The story is true to itself; because, it describes a very strong willed mother, who is very protective of our daughter; however the mother's strong will was instilled

into her daughter by her mother. The lead actresses all lived close to each other in rented houses in Natchitoches during the brutally hot Louisiana summer shoot.

They spent a great deal of time together off camera and became genuine friends in the process. Film criticism is the analysis and evaluation of films. In general, these works can be divided into two categories: academic criticism by film journalistic film criticism that appears in newspapers and other media. It is argued that journalist film critics should only be known as film reviewers, and true film critics are those who take a more academic approach to films. This line of work is more often known as film theory or film studies. These film critics attempt to come to understand how film and filming techniques work, and what effect they have on people. Rather than having their works published in newspapers or appear on television, their articles are published in scholarly journals, or sometimes in up-market magazines. They also tend to be affiliated with colleges or universities.

References

Goodykoontz, Bill & Jacobs, Christopher. (2010) Film: From Watching to Seeing San Diego, CA, Bridgepoint Education, Inc . [http://content.ashford.edu/Film Editing, Movie Editing, Video Editing, Become a Film Editor, Video Editor](http://content.ashford.edu/Film%20Editing,%20Movie%20Editing,%20Video%20Editing,%20Become%20a%20Film%20Editor,%20Video%20Editor). (n. d.). WILDsound - www.wildsound.ca home page. Retrieved from <http://www.wildsound-filmmaking-feedback-events.com/film-editing.html>Genre Films and the Status Quo by Judith Hess. (n. d.). JCsplash. Retrieved from <http://www.ejumpcut.com>.

<https://assignbuster.com/steel-magnolias-directed-by-herbert-ross-essay-sample/>

org/archive/onlinesays/JC01folder/GenreFilms. htmlSteel Magnolias (1989).
(n. d.). Box Office Mojo. Retrieved from [http://www. boxofficemojo. com/movies/? page= main&id= steelmagnolias. htm](http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?page=main&id=steelmagnolias.htm)Steel Magnolias |
Chicago Critic. (n. d.). Chicago Critic | Latest Chicago Plays, Theatre Reviews,
stage shows, Opera, Theater Tickets, music critiques, theatre articles, art
beat. Retrieved from [http://chicagocritic. com/steel-magnolias/#](http://chicagocritic.com/steel-magnolias/#)! Retrieved
from [http:// www. tcm. com/this-month/article/188699| 0/Steel-Magnolias. html](http://www.tcm.com/this-month/article/188699|0/Steel-Magnolias.html)
Retrieved from [http://Enter URLwww. creativeskillset. org/film/jobs/direction/article_3880_1. asp|](http://www.creativeskillset.org/film/jobs/direction/article_3880_1.asp)