

Introduction paper
seeks to present a
multi-focal



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Introduction

In this essay I have chosen to review the drama I can do bad all by myself which was released on September 11, 2009. This paper seeks to present a multi-focal criticism of the film. To this end three modes of criticism shall be used namely descriptive, interpretive and evaluative. This film is popular among members of a certain section of society, particularly the African Americans as most of them can easily identify with the characters.

Descriptive criticism

Plot

The film written and directed by Tyler Perry revolves around events surrounding the lead character, April who is an alcoholic singer and works at a local night club.

From the outset, it can be established that April is very selfish from the way she puts off a homeless man who tries to get some change from her. After introducing the main character, Tyler introduces us to Madea and her husband Joe who through a burglary get to meet three orphaned siblings, Jennifer, Byron and Manny who happen to be related to April and live with their grandmother. We later come to discover that the grandmother has been missing for four days. As the story unfolds, we are introduced to two other characters, Randy and Sandino. Randy is April's married boyfriend who is very aggressive and arrogant.

Sandino on the other hand is a gentle and loving immigrant who seeks shelter at April's basement. The story changes pace to reveal that April's mother passed away and that is why she has been missing. The three

children are left under April's care who wants to send them to an orphanage because Randy claims he does not want children. Towards the end, Randy tries to rape Jennifer and it takes the intervention of Sandino to stop him. This serves as a waking point for April who almost electrocutes Randy before kicking him out of the house. Eventually she takes a liking to the children and gets married to Sandino with whom she has fallen in love.

Characters

The film stars Taraji Henson who plays April, Tyler Perry who plays both Medea and Joe, Adam Rodriguez who plays Sandino, Brian White who plays Randy, Marvin Winans who plays Pastor Brian and Gladys Knight who plays Wilma. Other characters are played by Hope Olaide Wilson (Jennifer), Kwesi Boakye (Manny), Frederick Siglar (Byron), Marva King (Helen Johnson), Christian Keyes (Sonny Johnson), Timon Kyle Durrett, (Ronald Johnson) and Elizabeth Malese Jow as Kelly.

Music

The soundtrack of the film comprises a number of songs notably I can do bad by Mary J. Blige and Rock Steady by Aretha Franklin. With the film featuring two musician characters, the Soundtrack is performed live in some instances and in other parts it provides the background as events happen in the foreground.

Setting

The film is set in a poor African American neighborhood in the United States and most of the events happen at April's and Medea's houses. The other locations are the church and the park where April and Sandino go to unwind.

Interpretive Criticism

The film is spun around both comic and tragic events to illustrate that human beings however bad they are can make complete turnarounds if given the chance. April starts out as a very mean and reckless individual who does not see anything wrong with having an affair with a married man. In the initial scenes, she also acts inhumanely towards her own family, refusing to have any association with her sister's children, to the extent of wanting to send them to a home, just so that they don't live with her.

However, as events unfold, she is able to see the err of her ways and apart from accepting her nephews and niece as her responsibility, she vows to learn to take care of them to the best of her abilities. From Madea's character, we are able to see that human beings generally mean well for each other and that women are able to understand the plight of children better than men. This is illustrated when she chooses to give food to the Jennifer and her siblings even though they had broken into her house. Her husband's protests further serve to bring home the point that men are less concerned with the welfare of children when compared to their female counterparts.

Evaluative criticism

The film's strengths are derived from the characters of Jennifer, Randy and to some extent Sandino. Hope Olaide Wilson outstandingly plays her role, by believably presenting the character of a teenager overburdened by the responsibility of taking care of her two siblings.

She is able to bring out the emotion required for this character and as a viewer I found myself feeling sorry for. Brian White also manages to pull off the rough-neck bad boy character Randy. Though as a viewer I already knew that it was not going to end well for him, I was still eager to see how things will turn out. April manages to kick him out of her life in a dramatic fashion and a tense moment is created during the confrontation between the two in the bathroom.

To some extent as the viewer, I found myself cheering April on but at the same time I did not want to see her kill the man. Things however unfold in a way that was difficult to predict and this contributes to the strong-points of the film. The film is generally well presented even though it has a few weaknesses. First, it is not clear how April's career as a musician plays to the overall theme of the film.

Most of the performances that either her or other characters make in the duration of the film do not appear to have any relevance to the development of the plot and the fact that the performances have been given more than five minutes of the film show that the director just wanted use them to add mileage to the film. The way that the character, Sandino has been introduced is disappointing to say the least. The weakness mainly comes in when Pastor Brian decides to ask April to host him even though he admits that he barely recalls him.

It is also difficult to believe that any lady will agree to host a man that she does not know just because he has been recommended by a religious figure.

Conclusion

Though I would not be particularly drawn to see this film a second time, I would definitely recommend it to someone who has not watched it. I however think the weaknesses of the film even out the strengths and this might contribute to it never being a classic.