correct me if im wrong
Posted by cappi - 2007/06/24 17:31

Hi Guys!
I was watching 'Lolita' the other night.I was really grossed out!So much in fact that I had to switch the channel.My girlfriends were all on about how it's such a "classic",and how everyone should see it at least once.I can safely say that my idea of a classic would border more on the lines of "Pulp Ficton" or "Rocky".The most disturbing part I think is the fact that it's a true story.
So I decided to have a game of online poker instead.Now that's the way I like to but an end to my weekend when I'm dying of a hangover ;)
What movies would you describe as true "classics"?Am I wrong in thinking Lolita is gross?

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Posted by jackattack - 2007/06/24 18:37

I've never seen either movie adaptation, nor read the novel, but I know the story and some of the criticisms (negative and positive).

The BOOK is considered a classic example of the 20th Century novel for stylistic reasons (the writing itself) as much as for its controversial subject matter. There are literary elements present in the narrative that probably don't translate to the screen, even if the filmmaker wanted to try (and only rarely is a filmmaker interested in a direct transposition of book to screen). I don't think I've ever heard of either movie being considered a classic.

Technically, it isn't a true story. (Or, sadly, it may be hundreds of true stories.) Nabokov referenced a real-life instance of child abduction in the story, but there is also evidence that he was writing an expanded version of a short story written by a German author some 15 or 20 years earlier.

You aren't wrong in thinking that the subject matter is gross. And this is not a book I would think of when looking for something to adapt for the silver screen. But my understanding is that this is not a novel that gloriifies or excuses the subject matter, as the principle character is portrayed as a wretched excuse for a human being who is destroyed by his own obsession.

There are many subjects that are uncomfortable or painful or disturbing. The thing is, a lot of these subjects could stand to be brought into the light of day, to be exposed and examined, and many times it is entertainment media that bring them to the attention of their audiences. I found out about the Taliban and their vile treatment of women on a sappy WB show; To Kill a Mocking Bird and They Call Me Mr. Tibbs showcased the very real state of inequality in the American south; some recent movies have done more to expose the atrocities going on in Africa than any news program or publication can. In 1955 the public was generally unaware of pedophilia and child abduction unless it happened locally, and often not even then; such incidents were often kept quiet to "protect" the children's welfare, the families' privacy, and the sensibilities of the public. Today, we are very well informed, and hopefully we are much better prepared to prevent, stop, and deal with the aftermath of such cases.

Enough heavy stuff. If your girlfriends are interested in Lolita as a classic, tell them to read the book.

Only a few nights ago, CBS aired the American Film Institute's "100 Greatest Movies of All Time". Go to www.afi.com to find their various lists of great movies, great moments, great lines, and so on. (Both movies you mention, by the way, are on the AFI list.)

If you want a guaranteed classic, pick up Casablanca.

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