The Feminist Superheroine: A Critical Evaluation of Patty Jenkins' Wonder Woman

Abstract
The study attempts to ascertain to what extent Patty Jenkins' 2017 film Wonder Woman can be considered a feminist text and if a female superhero film can be categorized as feminist within the constraints of Hollywood norms. The first chapter introduces the subgenre of superheroine films, feminism in film, and how Jenkins' Wonder Woman fits into this narrative. Chapter two provides historical context on the creation of the Wonder Woman comics, the various adaptations of Wonder Woman, as well as the complex layers in William Moulton Marston’s inspiration to create the character of Diana Prince. In chapter three I explain the multifaceted nature and contested terrains of feminism and feminist film theory, then analyze moments of feminism in Jenkins’ Wonder Woman. In chapter I assess media viewpoints of feminist films and discussions surrounding whether Wonder Woman can be considered a feminist film. I consider the importance of women behind the camera in the industry, I analyze the character Wonder Woman in the later 2017 film Justice League, and I take a closer look at how superhero films have been seen to reflect concerns of post-9/11 America. Patty Jenkins’ Wonder Woman may not be the perfect depiction of feminism, but I argue that it is a progressive step forward for women as lead superheroines and for women leading behind the scenes.

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Wonder Woman has largely been praised by critics, hailed as “a masterpiece of subversive feminism” by some, though others believe it’s “not the feminist fantasy we’ve been told it is”. It became the highest-grossing live-action film to be directed by a woman (replacing Mamma Mia!, which was directed by Phyllida Lloyd) with more than $800 million so far (approximately £620m) and broke records by raking in millions over its opening weekend in June. The sequel will be in cinemas December 2019, with both Patty Jenkins and star Gal Gadot already signed on. Images: Rex Features. After James Cameron criticized “Wonder Woman” as a “step backwards” for women, director Patty Jenkins shared a powerful response. Patty Jenkins Shared A Must-Read Response To James Cameron's 'Wonder Woman' Criticism. "There is no right and wrong kind of powerful woman," Jill O'Rourke. Aug 25, 2017. The film Wonder Woman debuted earlier this year to a hugely positive response. Not only did it smash box office records, but it provided much-needed, valuable on-
screen representation for women and girls in the superhero genre. Unfortunately, not everyone was as impressed with director Patty Jenkins’ take on the classic comic book heroine. Patty Jenkins’ Wonder Woman may not be the perfect depiction of feminism, but I argue that it is a progressive step forward for women as lead superheroes and for women leading behind the scenes. URI. http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11875/2360. Collections. Thesis and Dissertations. DSpace software copyright © 2002-2016 DuraSpace. Contact Us | Send Feedback.