

Final Paper Proposal

Vertigo: From Box Office Flop to Cinematic Masterpiece - An Analysis

Neil Sawhney

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Instructor: Professor Awad

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1 Introduction

The aim of this paper will be to examine the transformation of Alfred Hitchcock's "Vertigo" from its initial status as a box office disappointment to its current recognition as one of the greatest films of all time.

At its release in 1958, Vertigo was met with mediocre reviews and lukewarm audience reception, leading to a subpar performance at the box office. Over time, however, the film has risen in esteem and is now celebrated as a cinematic masterpiece. It is currently ranked as the ninth greatest film of all time by the American Film Institute. The reasons behind this dramatic shift in perception warrant an in-depth analysis.

The turnaround in the reception of Vertigo can be attributed to the evolving understanding of Hitchcock's innovative filmmaking techniques, and the film's exploration of dark and complex psychological themes which was quite a departure from the typical

Hollywood film of the era.

2 Argumentative Points

Analysis of Hitchcock's Filmmaking Techniques: Hitchcock's innovative use of camera techniques, such as the dolly zoom (known as the "Vertigo effect"), was ahead of its time and perhaps not fully appreciated by audiences and critics of the era. A detailed examination of these techniques and their impact on storytelling will illuminate how Vertigo's cinematic value has been reassessed.

Exploration of Psychological Themes: Vertigo weaves a complex narrative around themes of obsession, identity, and fear. While these themes might have been challenging for audiences in 1958, subsequent societal and cultural changes have led to a broader understanding and appreciation of these issues.

Role of Pacing: Hitchcock's deliberate pacing in "Vertigo" is another critical factor to consider. While the slow progression of the narrative might have contributed to the origin confusion and boredom that met reviewers, it is now commonly seen as a strength. The pacing allowed for a deep, immersive exploration of the characters' psychological states. With time, viewers and critics came to appreciate this pacing as it served to heighten the tension, suspense, and ultimately, the impact of the film's climax.

3 Referenced Paper

Vertigo - D.A Miller: Miller shares his experience with the film from the time it came out to the present day. He mentions how he was initially disappointed and confused to the point that he required many explanations from his mother just to understand it. He also dives into specific visual elements of the film that he deemed distracting and confusing, and how he later came to appreciate them.