

Assignment 1 - Steve Jobs

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Questions

1. How would you describe the leadership style of Steve Jobs as depicted in the film? Use examples.
 2. Aaron Sorkin has been accused for unfairly depicting Jobs in a bad light. Do some research and write your opinion on that? Is there a problem if that's true or it is acceptable artistic freedom?
 3. Steve Jobs was forced out of the company he co-founded. Was he a victim or did he have responsibility for that?
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Executive Summary

This Report is intended to function as an analysis of the *Steve Jobs (2015)* movie under consideration of Jobs's, notoriously known, leadership style and the depiction in movie in contrast to reality. This report also looks at the timespan in which Jobs was *forced* out of *Apple* and later on reinstated.

The movie, as all movies are made to be pleasing towards a certain audience and thus has made changes to how certain events went down or how a character is depicted. The artistic freedom is an important freedom to wield when adapting a movie to be more pleasing for commercial reasons, making the movie more interesting for watchers.

Jobs's Leadership Style

Steve's Leadership style was lacking any glimpse of politeness or gentleness. He treated his employees in a verbally rough manner and didn't restrain his impulsiveness nearby. Jobs pushed his people to do better and work harder, which he is also often being praised for. The fact that his leadership style dramatically changed after the point of his returning, wasn't particularly *outstanding* to the watcher in the movie. Before leaving Apple, his leadership style was

commanding with an autocratic undertone. He was impulsive and didn't hesitate to publicly express his anger nearby or directed towards employees. Employees were intimidated by him and feared the consequence of failure. Jobs himself saw his leadership style as more motivational in nature than suppressive or abusive. He famously said that *the people working for him are skilled enough and wanted enough to go to any big corporation, but rather stay at apple to get amazing things done*, which emphasises the point of him being motivational instead of being suppressive. The leadership style in the movie was clearly depicted as rather suppressive, but considering that the majority of the movie was in fact within the time period in which Steve was young, immature and impulsive, it makes sense that there is a major presence of these (young age negatively attributed) traits in his character and thus his leadership style. His leadership style is though not only defined by his employee's or how he treats them, but requires many more perceptions to grasp a full image. An example of such would be the public perception of Steve and the projected image of his leadership style, based on the public's image of Steve. In the movie there was an obvious change in public opinion of Steve Jobs, given that the time period in which the movie takes place spans from before the creation of Apple to the return of Jobs to Apple with the acquisition of his company *NeXT*. The public image of Steve at the end of the movie was very clearly as how most of today's people have him in mind, being very positive indeed about his work at Apple. Hence, the leadership style one could conclude from having the *average* public image of Jobs is as well positive. The flaws of his character are not to be anticipated until further knowledge about him is acquired. On the other hand, in the beginning of the movie the public image of Steve was not as heroic, but rather ridiculous. Very much so, due to the fact of being head of a small startup et cetera and being called a *dreamer* frequently for his *visions* and ambitions of the personal technological industry for the consumer. Thus, it can be concluded that during the beginnings of his career, Steve didn't only project a proportional negative perception within the firm, but also within the public. Where as at the end of the movie, as above stated, that changed to the opposite.

The depiction of Jobs in the movie in contrast to reality

First of all, choosing *Michael Fassbender* as an actor for the role of Steve instead of a rather look-alike such as the choice of *Ashton Kutscher* in the 2013 version of the movie, who definitely has much resemblance with the young Steve, is a rather important choice to make as it accentuates the character and the well acted performance, as in reality, instead of resembling reality in a visual form. The question asks whether or not Jobs is being portrayed in a bad light in the movie and whether that is a problem or artistic freedom. It is important to say that artistic freedom is limitless as far as limits of other subjects do not encircle it, meaning that there is only a problem if there is someone to have a problem in the first place. Artistic freedom is an especially difficult topic to argue about and becomes nearly impossible when wanting to declare a scope for it. The question

rather could be answered with *whether or not the movie as a whole needs to be re-labelled to more adequately fit the depiction of events and character for future watchers with certain expectations given their knowledge about the real Steve Jobs*. These expectations are drastically more important when people don't know (the *real*) Steve Jobs, but maybe his work/achievements and hence have a certain image of Jobs, which could be demolished by a movie depicting him in an unfairly bad light. To answer whether or not he is in fact being depicted in an unfairly bad light, the question of whether or not people that did in fact know Steve Jobs, do clearly distinguish between the real and as in the movie depicted Steve. *Walt Mossberg*, an American journalist, most known in the technology commentary/review scene did know Steve Jobs for over 14 years, interviewed him several times and *spent scores of hours in private conversation* (Mossberg, 2015). At the time of the release of the movie, he released a column in the *Mossberg weekly commentary* about his most urging thoughts about what he needed to address to his audience to prepare them for the movie, in terms of expectations.

In nearly every conversation we had, Steve Jobs bragged about his children and asked about mine. When he was battling the disease that killed him too young, he took time to ask me about my own health and to admonish me to stop smoking cigars. That person doesn't appear in the Sorkin film. Steve Jobs wasn't perfect. He was difficult. He was unnecessarily rude and brusque at times. He lied. But he also mellowed and grew as a person, and that mellowing coincided with the best part of his career. Mr. Sorkin opts to hide all of that from his audience. The best of the real Steve Jobs begins to unfold just as Steve Jobs ends. (Mossberg, 2015)

His commentary was only about Steve's depiction, accentuating his strong disagreement and concern about the movie. Hence, it can be said that there is an unfair depiction of Steve in the movie. This unfair depiction is highly depending on the above mentioned presence of *young steve*, thus the presence of his early-age impulsiveness and coldness. Thus, the movie had a preprogrammed domination of Steve's characters over time, which led to the induction of feeling of wrong depiction of Steve in people that did know Steve, such as Mossberg. On the other hand, Mossberg may be biased towards Steve, given that they had a personal relationship and emotional moments. Such can be seen in following quote from Mossberg:

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Steve most of the movie was very emotionally cold, absent and distanced, especially to people that should be close to him. Though, at the very end of the movie that all changed and the warm, understanding, caring and sensible

side of Steve, of which Mossberg would have liked to see more of, surfaced and presented itself to the audience in an adequate manner. Henceforth, Mossberg's opinions about this movie coincide with mine, in that the movie had a focus on the early part of his life, filled with his impulsiveness, rather than being a balanced, actual representation of Steve. But that is what happens when one limits the scope of coverage of a movie, parts are being left out, which may be important for the overall picture, but are not what the movie produces by intending to show his struggles rather than his experienced and wise character at the more mature state of his life.

Steve Wozniak, the second most known Apple co-founder, also gave a statement on the movie after its release, but had seen in pre-production already, thus had a less spontaneous, but more prepared and developed opinion. His opinion was also not about whether the movie showed a realistic depiction of the overall Steve. Rather, knowing that it is only a part of the whole of him in the movie allowed him to give an opinion about whether or not the actor performed well at depicting Steve at those particular points in his life and whether or not *Michael Fassbender* did well with making it easy for the watchers to gain insights into how he thought. When Wozniak was asked about the particular aspects of Jobs's personality that are shown well, he answered:

It deals with what we are all very familiar with - a lot of his negativism. [...] This comes about less with him doing negative things to other people, and more him just sort of standing [there] and not caring as much about others as himself, and not being able to have feelings very much. [...] But when you see it portrayed dramatically, not the way it really happened but in a way that is emotionally graphic, it really conveys what Steve Jobs was really like inside... And what it was like to be around him. (Woz, 2015)

His quotes are obviously with the given acceptance about the fact that the movie is focusing on his *negativism* and thus centered around the true depiction of what Steve could be like. Considering all said, the question of whether or not the movie is a problem and is or isn't artistic freedom, depends on who is asked and under what considerations they are answering. The movie did a great job at portraying the things that it wanted to portray, necessarily leaving out other parts of his personality, such as his warmth, compassion which surfaced at the more mature point of his life. Thus, generally and most objectively said, what should be done, is to put a big disclaimer in front of the movie or rename the movie to a more fitting title, adjusting potential watcher's expectations accordingly. If the movie states clearly what it is going to depict without giving it away, which cannot be done if the movie's qualities are the performance of the actors, the movie won't leave room for misunderstandings/inadequate expectations in the first place.

Jobs's removal and reinstating Jobs

Given what has been said above, it is clear that his removal was definitively character forming and ultimately for the better for his character. Him being reinstated happened twelve years after him leaving, thus the Steve who came back to Apple was not the one who left, in terms of character. The acquisition of *NeXT* was also quite important in terms of technology for Apple, due to the superior operating system, which the *Lisa II* was lacking. Thus, him having been reinstated has more reasons than Sully wanting/needing Steve back. Whether or not he was a victim or it was fair to remove him, depends on what one sees in his role. Steve is a very similar CEO to Elon Musk, thus their *specialities* when it comes to running their firm. They aren't CEO's in the traditional sense, but inspiring leaders that have a vision they want to see be reality and want everyone else to see. Were he CEO instead of Sully, he wouldn't have been removed, but maybe would have been in similar troubles on the forefront of innovation of operating systems for example, which was the particular reason for the end of Sully's CEO position, combined with many failures like the Newton (In which Jobs did actually see potential, but without the stylus, ultimately having become/resemblance the iPad). Steve was rightfully removed, in that he, in his position was wrong and did actually step outside of his borders within the team/company. Sully was responsible for the well-running of the company, including harnessing the *energy* of Jobs, which he as known occasionally exerts *in exteriorem* negatively. Henceforth, Sully had the responsibility of ultimately removing Steve from the team. Was Jobs a victim? - Definitely not, because he has given up the position to have the power to prevent his removal in the first place and additionally, as above mentioned, stepped outside his borders attached to his position, not being CEO. In the movie, Jobs saw his removal being due to the impulsive and overall negative Image he presented to the board and the problems with the Mac.

Conclusion

Steve changed over time and the movie focuses on the early part of his life, thus the predominant negatively impulsive image of him. The Steve that many would liked to have seen in the movie, the more mature Steve, had his presence confined to the last scenes, thus the public "*outrage*" regarding Steve's depiction in the movie. Aaron Sorkin though defended his creative freedom with the artistic, realistic and sublime performance of the actors. The 2013 version starred *Ashton Kutscher*, the 2015 version *Michael Fassbender* who has no resemblance with Jobs at any part of his life, where as *Kutscher* does resemble Jobs at a young age. This is important for Sorkin's argument of artistic freedom and his look in the movie, which is intended to balance the artistic depiction of his character. His removal was his responsibility, considering that Sully had responsibilities as well, which unfortunately converged with Jobs, due to Steve creating reason and scenario for Sully to enact his responsibilities in the first place.

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