

Even on Editorials

Belligerent Spectator- My Life as a Stereotype

By Caitlin Olszewski - *Lion's Eye Entertainment Editor*
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The other night my friend text messages me in all caps urging me to turn on MTV to watch their new "reality" program because it reminds her of me in high school. The show is titled My Life as Liz or as I like to refer to it, the new Daria. The show revolves around Liz and shows the world through her point of view whilst dealing with formulaic high school situations.

At first glance I suppose there are some similarities. The character wears skinny jeans, converse, and wayfarers. She is sarcastic and satirical, a self-proclaimed indie rocker, avid thrift store connoisseur, a comic book reader, and an overall social outcast. Her friends spend their study halls playing Dungeons and Dragons and go LARPing on the weekends. In many scenes she is pounding her head against the wall or face palming at the stupidity of her classmates. In a two-dimensional world, I am Liz. And I have accepted the fact that the superficial majority of the world will only ever see me as that.

Upon further analysis I have decided that this show is worse than a homeless person vomiting in your mouth. The handheld camera work and quasi-reality aesthetics do not work and the hyperbolic situations make the show appear horribly scripted. My Life as Liz is a cookie cutter show. Liz is like every quirky, clumsy, and alternatively dressed

chick in an independent film. Take Garden State or even Ghost World for example. The characters and situations in My Life as Liz are not unfamiliar.

I think that what really disappoints me about this show is that Liz was previously a peroxide-clad pageant queen wannabe and to socially rebel she got an edgy hairstyle and started listening to obscure music. She even used to make fun of the kids she currently hangs out with. To me, that seems like since the so-called popular crowd did not accept her, she feels like she has to settle for the stereotypical nerds. I feel as though the show casts these "nerds" in a bad light. They are portrayed solely by the hobbies they have and the differences between themselves and the mainstream students.

I thought this whole concept seemed kind of exaggerated, until I witnessed a similar event on campus. An overly self-tanned girl with apparent low self-esteem was attempting to insult a group of people for no obvious reason, other than to gain some kind of self worth. She was trying to make some of the kindest most interesting people on campus feel bad about themselves, for playing cards and wearing Star Wars shirts. All because she was so bored during common hour, and had no dignity. I, of course, belligerently intervened to send her back to her socially assigned table and keep the peace.

Ordinary Tipster

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Blue Fever - Avatar the Movie

Everyone has a little bit of Blue Fever - I know I do. Whether we've seen it in all three formats, 2-D, 3-D, and IMAX 3D or just in traditional 2-D, Avatar has captivated and awed us with its beauty, depth, and vastness. With a budget of \$237 million, Avatar surpassed what it spent, earning nearly two billion and counting.

Because of its success and sensationalism, Avatar draws in both the frenzied fans and pretentious critics. As a result, many people specifically search for reasons to criticize the film, maybe even simply seeing it for that purpose. A common complaint is that Avatar's plot was cliché and recycled and that its characters were clearly undeveloped. Some would attribute Avatar's success solely based on its achievements in special effects.

I think it's hard to call a film "bad" or to say it "sucks" when it has become one of the highest grossing films worldwide. And to make those sorts of comments shows a lack of appreciation for an artist, be that a director, writer, painter, and so on, who gives their life to their craft which James Cameron has obviously done. Not only did Cameron direct Avatar, but he wrote the 80 page screenplay, produced and edited the film as well.

More than a thousand people worked on this film. In the Hollywood Reporter, Cameron states that Avatar is composed of 60% computer generated images and 40% live action, as well as shots of traditional miniatures. This doesn't mean the actors and actresses didn't have much to do. The live action shots in the film required the actors to undergo professional training for archery, hand-to-hand combat, use of firearms, horseback riding, and in speaking the Na'vi language.

In terms of special effects, if that was Avatar's only claim to fame, why didn't 2012 do just as well? 2012 was an extremely visually amazing film, but it didn't achieve the longevity and fan reception that Avatar clearly has.

Yes, Avatar definitely makes use of themes that are not new to us and Cameron has mentioned that films like Dances With Wolves and Pocahontas contributed to his inspiration. Yet Cameron rekindled time-


less themes of lovers from different worlds and the clashing of cultures and breathes new life into them with modern technology and breath-taking creativity.

I will admit I felt there could have been even more character development explored with Jake Sully and Neytiri, but first of all, Avatar has so much packed into two and half hours that further additions to the film would have left us saying, "Should have made it into two movies." But acknowledging that there's more to be discovered is a good sign for a film, demonstrating it has left you wanting more.

No one can deny, however, the immense creative involvement and creation put forth into the world of Pandora. You felt like you were walking with Jake, through the thick foliage and under vine-bound branches, feeling the heavy moisture of the jungle air against your skin. Avatar has bloomed into a living universe unto itself, sitting side by side Middle Earth and the galaxy systems of Lord of the Rings and Star Wars.

Avatar's popularity continues to be attributed to being a must-see-in-theatres kind of movie because Avatar truly is spectacular on the big screen, even in traditional 2-D formatting. Unlike other high-grossing movies like Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, or Cameron's other film Titanic, Avatar is unique in its creation by not being based on a book series, film franchise, or historical event; it is an original screenplay which we don't see too often.

Avatar is not just a film - it's an experience. It re-invigorates the entire film business because it's the kind of film you have to see in a theater to fully appreciate. It's a cinematic experience that went beyond plot and performance and made a powerful statement about our wasteful and consuming ways. In a nation that is soaked with visual stimuli in the media and entertainment, perhaps the only way to convey such an impactful statement across to the masses is through visual means. Even if it leaves a bad case of Blue Fever in its wake, Avatar will continue to captivate and inspire its audiences with strength and hope for the future.

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The Lion's Eye



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