



FILM: **LADY BIRD**

FDG RATING: 3.7 😊😊😊😊😊

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Greta Gerwig: *Director, writer*

Saorise Ronan: *actress, Lady Bird*

Laurie Metcalf: *actress, Marion (mother)*

DATE: December 17, 2017

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **LADY BIRD**

Not everyone in our Film Discussion group agreed with the NY Times verdict that Greta Gerwig's 'Lady Bird' Is Big-Screen Perfection. But one participant summed up her similarly enthusiastic response to the film by saying she was "blown away at what a wonderful writer and director Greta Gerwig had become. [Through the character of teenage Lady Bird, the name Christine McPherson gave herself] Gerwig captures the confusion teens go through, the little fights they pick with their parents, the teen angst to be 'anywhere but here attitude'. Gerwig presented the whole physical landscape, the family problems, coming of age, and that point of being on a brink...getting away and becoming who you want to be and the slight twinge of fear as you leave home to begin your own life. It was a wonderfully funny and poignant love letter to 'youth and coming of age' as well as the family and hometown [2002 Sacramento, California] that shaped her."

Quite an endorsement from one of our film discussion group participants. So maybe Greta is finally outgrowing her immature ditziness and fine-tuning her craft. Based on her own upbringing, she channels the angst of her own experiences but empowers the story with the exceptional performance of Saorise Ronan, perfect in the role of Lady Bird: a bit of a quirky, insecure rebel, trying to self-assuredly exercise her individuality during her senior year at a private Catholic school in Sacramento. And the stellar Laurie Metcalf as Marion, Lady Bird's habitually judgmental mother who often expresses her disappointment in her daughter's decisions. In one favorite scene, the quip from each is spot on: Shopping at the local Thrift Town, Mom is not entirely pleased at her daughter's choice of a prom dress and philosophically says "I want you to be the very best version of yourself." Lady Bird, shoulders slumped, eyeliner smeared, retorts before disappearing into a dressing room, "But what if this is the best version?"

We watch Lady Bird experience all the usual rites of passage: her first "puppy" love, has sex for the first time, trades her best friend for a spot in the snooty popular clique, etc. And though she's destined to stay in her hometown Sacramento for college, Lady Bird dreams of attending a fancy "East Coast liberal arts school" while her parents struggle to make ends meet after her father loses his job. The situations are portrayed with a relatable realism touched with just the right amount of humor. One of our participants who grew up in Sacramento and recognized many of the popular spots, remarked that almost all teens want to get out of the town they grew up in.

For a coming of age film, most of us applauded the authenticity, being able to personally relate to many of Lady Bird's experiences; and now have the benefit of a comedic perspective. The mother-daughter relationship perfectly balanced irritation with affection better than in other similar storylines. The ending was very satisfying although Lady Bird's academic venture was one instance where authenticity seemed dubious.

Some of us thought the film was biasedly over rated compared to other coming of age films that arguably had more depth such as *The Way, Way Back* and *Boyhood*. But we agreed the acting was very good, especially Laurie Metcalf who deservedly was nominated as best supporting actress in the 2018 Golden Globes.

Good but not great was the general consensus with ratings of several 3s, 3.5s & 4s with a single enthusiastic 4.5 added to an exuberant 5, culminating in an admirable average of 3.7 after all scores were tallied. (scale is 1-5; 5 is the best)



See you at the movies!

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Film Discussion Group: www.filmdiscussiongroup.com