

English 101 research paper PLEASE NOTE: this was from a summer semester where students needed two fewer sources than you need. It is not a perfect paper but a good enough example. Obviously, if you suddenly decide you want to do your paper on *Carrie*, well, make sure it is not his paper copied! That would be a guaranteed F.

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Film vs. Novel

Carrie Me to the Prom

“Rain of stones reported...” This is how Stephen King’s 1974 novel *Carrie*, about a girl with telekinetic powers in a small Maine town begins. This memorable report from the film was nowhere to be found in the Brian De Palma 1976 film version of the novel. Instead, the film begins with Carrie being bullied and mistreated after being blamed for the loss of a volley ball game. The scene quickly cuts to the girls in the shower room where Carrie gets her first period and she freaks out, not knowing what is happening to her and is taunted by her peers. The novels initial introduction to Carrie seems to highlight her telekinetic powers while the film, on the other hand, introduces her as a bullied, ridiculed, and tormented teenager whose telekinetic powers are later revealed. Besides the introduction of Carrie from the perspective of telekinetic verse persecuted, the novel and the films story line stay pretty closely aligned.

In most film adaptations, character development is cut down for time’s sake. This film is no different. Because of this, many characters are less developed in the film than they are in the novel. The film focuses primarily on the mother/daughter relationship and much of the subtext is abbreviated. One example of this is Carrie’s mother, Margret. In the book, Margret’s family tree is expanded upon. We learn information about her parents and her grandmother (who also

had telekinetic powers) that shed some light on how she became the Bible thumping narcissist that she is. In the film none of Margret's background is revealed. We are first introduced to Margret at a neighbor's home already preaching against sin. We witness her twisted religious need for Carrie to repent for her sins by sending her to the closet for hours on end. One such sin in both the book and the film is Carrie having her first period. "'You're a woman now,'" Margret said softly. Carrie tried to keep her composure, but felt her face twisting and crumpling and could not help but breakdown. "Why didn't you tell me?" she cried. "Oh Momma, I was so scared, I thought I was dying! And the girls all made fun and threw things and..." Carrie saw Momma had been holding her favorite leather Bible, and as she walked towards her, she smacked the Bible on side of Carrie's face. The blow caused her to fall to the floor and she began to weep loudly. "Come to your closet, woman," Margret demanded." In the film, her craziness is toned down a lot, but it is clear that she is mentally ill. She is still abusive and controlling of her daughter, but the novel goes deeper and far more extensively into Margret's temperament and crazed religious outbursts.

The depiction of Carrie in the novel is also very different then the depiction of her in the film. Physically, King describes Carrie as unattractive, slightly overweight and unkempt. Carrie has pimples and is very socially awkward due to her mother's controlling and fanatic ways. In the film Carrie is physically depicted as slender, attractive, shy, and awkward. She evokes empathy as we experience the story primarily through her eyes.

Many scenes from the book are left out of the film, such as the aforementioned rocky rain, but another huge example is that De Palma changed the entire ending. In the novel, Carrie didn't die in her house. Instead, she killed her mom, and went out to the city to punish the townsfolk for mistreating her all of her life. She absolutely slaughtered the town, killing 409

people, but sparing Sue (one of the people who was genuinely kind to her) because she had nothing to do with the prank that caused her to snap. In the film Carrie goes home to her mother, hoping for comfort from her traumatic night, and instead is stabbed in the back (literally), then kills her mother, burns down her house and succumbs to her own injuries.

The book, much like the film, both received good reviews. One critic states: “Maybe, strictly speaking, it is not a mystery book. But it does have action, suspense and, at the end, a holocaust. And it is exceedingly well-written. So don’t miss “Carrie,” by Stephen King, a first novel and one guaranteed to give you a chill” (Callendar). Even more critics claim: “Brian De Palma’s *Carrie* is an absolutely spellbinding horror film, with a shock at the end that’s the best along those lines since the shark leaped aboard in *Jaws*” (Ebert). “More superpowers from Brian De Palma, this time in high school, in a screen version of a Stephen King novel that’s become a horror classic” (Morgenstern). “An exercise in high style that even the most unredeemably rational among moviegoers should find enormously enjoyable” (Schickel).

Both Stephen King’s 1974 novel and De Palma’s 1976 film are celebrated horror classics in their own right. King’s third-person story telling of a teenage girl is darker and includes a deeper look at Carrie’s inner struggles between wanting to fit in and needing to appease her controlling mother because of the deep fear she has of her. De Palma leaves out retrospective accounts and testimonies that are included in the original novel. He does, however, focus more on the events taking place from Carrie’s perspective and does not spend as much time on all her trauma at home and in school that leads her to her breaking point and ultimately the destruction of herself, her mother and the school community. In essence, even though the iterations have some differences, the stories hold true to the end.

Works Cited

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