Jurassic Park- The Film Or The Novel Essay, Research Paper

Jurassic Park

The Novel vs.The Film

The novel or film Jurassic Park. Which is better? Both versions of the story are exceptionally well written, but there are major differences. The first and most significant difference is the two different themes used in the novel and the film. The novel uses a special sort of technological, mystery theme. However, the film uses the adventure theme that so many recent films these days do. Another major difference is the role and personality of the characters. Many characters in the film for example have been altered from the novel to suit the film’s adventure theme. The final difference is the outcome of the story. The novel shows the raptors escaping from their pens and venturing to the mainland on board a supply ship. It is because of this the raptors can travel ‘home’. My personal opinion of the various differences in the two versions of Jurassic Park is that they have been well adjusted to suit their roles. Deeper analysis of the novel proves this.

The first difference is how the novel starts. The opening scene is that of a frightfully mutilated workman being brought into a medical clinic by military officers. The author continually gives clues, such as obvious lies by the officers about how the man’s injuries occurred, that this is not a typical attack. Soon after this incident another mysterious attack occurs. This time a young girl is bitten by an ‘unknown’ lizard on a Costa Rican beach along with many other infant deaths in the surrounding area. The evidence Crichton gives here is the fact that the lizard was of an unknown species and, according to witnesses, carnivorous. It also had the now impossible task of standing on its tail. Foamy, ‘prehistoric’ saliva was also found on the victims’ bite marks. The only event in the film that resembles the novel’s beginning is the grisly death of the workman. There is no mention of the ‘mystery lizard’ or the infant deaths. Instead, the opening scene of the movie shows the workman being dragged into a cage by a set of intensely sharp reptilian claws.

I think that the author goes into more detail with the commencement of the novel because it makes the reader think more. Instead of showing the workman being dragged to his death by the raptor and leaving nothing to contemplate, Crichton drops clues. The most important of these clues is the way the soldiers cover up the way the workman was injured and upon the death of the workman, the word ‘raptor’ is whispered. When the unsuspecting reader combines the two attacks, the plot of the novel begins to take form. The novel seems to take on the theme of mystery and suspense whilst the film takes on the adventure theme. This may be because a scientific-thriller sells better than an adventure novel. Obviously, this is the major difference in terms of the plot of the two different stories.

The next difference is the personality, attitude and fate of the characters in the two versions of the story. The first major character change is that of John Hammond, proprietor and creator of the park. In the film he is portrayed as an elderly, but loving grandfather, trying to “make every child’s dream come true”. He invites his two grandchildren to visit his park to treat them to an enchanting weekend. After the park’s dinosaurs escape he admits defeat and escapes with the rest of the characters. However, in the novel Hammond is shown to be a greedy, hardheaded man. His grandchildren were invited to the park too, although their sole purpose was to convince the lawyers to approve his park Instead of escaping as he did in the film, his own creations were what caused his demise. This is Crichton’s way of stating, I believe, that his greed was a sin. The film clearly misses this point. The reason for this is that the film doesn’t want to go into to the depth that the novel does, it just wants to entertain.

There are also numerous other character differences. One such example being that of Hammond’s grandchildren. Tim is about twelve years old in the novel and Lex is about nine. In the film though, the children are opposite ages as are their skills and interests. In the film Lex is twelve years old and has computer skills, in the novel she is nine and greatly immature. This rearrangement occurs I believe because in the novel, Tim is the older sibling. In the film, Lex is shown as the older, computer literate sister. This, I believe is to signify a woman’s role in modern times. Another example is the death of mathematician Ian Malcolm. In the film, Malcolm escapes in much the same manner as Hammond. In the novel, a broken ankle inflicted by the escaped T-Rex was his downfall. This difference occurs I believe because of the impact that the novel is attempting to deliver. In the film, Malcolm survives due to the fact that entertainment is the theme. Families watching the film want to be entertained and happy at the end, this is clearly not the way the novel concludes.

The biggest difference between the novel and the film is in the novel the raptors escape from their pens when the power is shut down, and even worse, the island. At the end of the novel the author gives evidence that the escaped raptors had discovered a way to survive without their daily iodine dosage supplied within the park, and that a pack was travelling north to the badlands where they lived about 250 million before. The raptors manage to survive without their daily requirements by eating foods rich in iodine such as vegetables. In the film the escaped raptors simply escape, run wild and wreak havoc on the island. I think the author’s message is crystal clear, “man can’t control nature”. This is easily discovered when the text is analysed.

From the commencement of the Crichton makes this obviously clear with the killings by the ‘compy’, the escape of the dinosaurs, and the death of Malcolm, Hammond and various other park employees.

The novel and film are both excellent in their own way. The film is unconditionally one of the finest films of the decade, and a breakthrough in special affect work. The actors are remarkable and the altered plot still entertains and retains audiences of all ages. The novel is also a great book. The manner in which Crichton writes is exceptional and the mystery of the book keeps readers reading. Overall, both versions are superb in their own way, it just depends what the viewer and/or reader is looking for.