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Reel Reading
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Reviewing the Two: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid

I will be reviewing two reviews of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. The first review was written by Roger Ebert, released October 16th, 1969. The second review is a 'The Hollywood Reporter' review, published by John Mahoney, this review was released October 26th, 2014. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid is a western movie filled with multiple western tokens that make people fall in love with the genre. The unintentionally funny film has had good ratings. 89% Rotten Tomatoes, 5/5 according to Common Sense Media, and 8/10 on IMDb. Even though the ratings are good, people have had strong opinions on the production value of this movie.

Roger Ebert gave this movie a 2.5/5. His criticism of the movie was mainly about the production value vs the budget spent, and also the qualifications of calling this movie a Western. He starts off the review by saying, "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" must have looked like a natural on paper, but, alas, the completed film is slow and disappointing." I believe as someone who hasn't had much knowledge of what identifies a true Western film, I cannot say what's a good or bad Western, but I can say what I believe to be a good or bad movie in general. With that being said, I do think this movie started off a bit slow but I don't believe it was disappointing. It took me a bit while to understand what was going on within this movie but once I understood, I was hooked and ended up enjoying it. "But unfortunately, this good movie is buried beneath

millions of dollars that were spent on "production values" that wreck the show." Ebert writes. This happens to so many movies, for example the movie Dune that came out in 2021, made me so upset and disappointed me because of the concept but it had little to no true plot or explanations. I truly believe that this works with this movie because in this time it makes it seem as funny, more like a comedy with Western undertones. This movie is good because it's bad and I love it so much. This is definitely a Friday night movie to watch and laugh at. The only issue is that I'm unaware if this was the director's intent, or an accidental mistake that just so happened to work. I will say this movie could have been better for sure, but I don't believe it was necessarily a bad movie.

In the second review I read, written by John Mahoney, breaks down this movie into three categories: Romantic Legend, Fine Drama, and Most Inventive. I want to focus more on the romance within this film. While reading this review I wish he talked more about the actual romance within the movie and "Western" that makes this movie. I feel like this section doesn't really discuss what he's referring to as "Romantic Legend". I believe there's at least a bit you can say about the romance incorporated into this film. First, the romance is subtle and minimal but when it's present in the scenes it's very loud. When I think of this movie and romance my first thought is to turn to the lust in this movie, that never is truly discussed! Often times when both, Butch and Sundance are causally talking there's a woman tangled within their arms, or even kissing on them, yet they're talking like they're eating at the breakfast table. The director throws these little pieces in there so quickly but doesn't fully make it into this big "thing", it feels similar to how movies incorporate little easter eggs. This adds a funny comical vibe to the movie which I appreciate. My biggest wonder at the end of this movie surrounds Etta, which is

something that I wished was mentioned in the review. Prior to Butch and Sundance taking those horses and getting caught, Etta declared that she wanted to go home. I wish there was more conversation about this which the film sadly lacked. The ending leaves the suspense of “How will Etta find out?” “How will she react?” “What will happen next?” I’m actually glad that the movie ended without that closure because I believe a good movie ending will leave you developing endless theories until your head explodes.

Sources Used:

Ebert, Roger. “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid Movie Review (1969): Roger Ebert.” *Movie Review (1969)* | *Roger Ebert*, John Foreman, 13 Oct. 1969, <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/butch-cassidy-and-the-sundance-kid-1969>.

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