



Black Panther (2018)

Just another instalment to Marvel's superhero franchise or something much more meaningful?

★★★★

By Ed Males

Black Panther is Ryan Coogler's third feature film, but also a big step forward for filmmaking. Given the success of his past two films, it was no surprise that Black Panther would achieve massively at the Box Office. Although largely due to its hype of being another Marvel superhero film, Black Panther is much more than that.

The film isn't just another typical big budget blockbuster, it's a step forward for Hollywood filmmaking.

A business which is dominated by white American and European actors, actresses and directors.

As much as Black Panther should be praised for broadening Marvels Cinematic Universe, it is still very much a superhero film. From the moment you see T'Challa in his Black Panther suit and the city of Wakanda to the car chase in South Korea, you know this is a Marvel film. It has explosions, firefights and just about enough all-round anarchy to keep audiences of previous Marvel films happy. Its scenes are indubitable in their variation, spanning from red carpeted casinos, lush green forestry and technologically advanced warships. The setting is always changing.

However, what really makes the film connect with its audiences is the diverse cast. The lead roles are taken by Chadwick Boseman who plays T'Challa

and Michael B Jordan who takes the role of Erik Killmonger. Both actors show unforgettable presence and intensity in every scene, as each of their motives support compelling acting. It is difficult to understand if you agree with the rule abiding T'Challa or the rebellious Killmonger. They're supported by Lupita Nyong'o (Nakia), Danai Gurira (Okoye), Letitia Wright (Shuri) and Martin Freeman (Everett).

Together the cast create a great sense of community within the film and push forward a compelling narrative.

Black Panther differs from other superhero films in the way that its characters' morals and motives are continuously questioned. This is especially apparent with the lead roles, as when T'Challa meets his father T'Chaka on the Ancestral plane, T'Chaka tells him "You are a good man, with a good heart. And it's hard for a good man to be king." This line resonates with the premise of the whole film, which is centred on the hardships of being a king and the responsibilities that it demands.

It seems likely that Black Panther will be talked about for years to come for its contributions to modern day film industry. A film produced in Hollywood by black writers and with a black cast would have left many in the industry sceptical about its success, as it goes against the norms of popular filmmaking, but Black Panther smashed the box office, earning \$631.3 million in North America alone making it the fifth biggest grossing movie ever made. Its great success should propel Hollywood to a more diverse and open frame of mind when it comes to filmmaking. Black Panther will please many different audiences for different

reasons, but there will be a mutual appreciation felt for the films core themes and what it represents.