

"Why 'Crazy Rich Asians' Deserves Its Popularity" by Gracie Boyce: The Cavalier Volume 38 Issue 1
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I don't see movies in theaters very often, but on one of those rare occasions a few months ago, I saw a preview for "Crazy Rich Asians," a new movie based on the novel of the same title by Kevin Kwan. Instantly, it seemed like a great story and looked really funny. What I didn't know when I first saw that preview was how impactful the movie would be.

Becoming the most successful Hollywood studio romantic comedy since 2009 over the Labor Day weekend (according to The Hollywood Reporter), "Crazy Rich Asians" began receiving a lot of buzz as soon as it was released. I also learned from The Washington Post that it was the first major Hollywood non-period production in 25 years to have a cast of only Asian actors. Previously, I hadn't considered the fact that I hardly ever see Asian actors in films, but looking back, there is not a large prevalence of actors with Asian heritage in Hollywood.

This is something many people of Asian descent struggle with since they don't often see themselves in the characters they watch. In a recent YouTube video, Amanda Lee, also known as AmandaRachLee, drew "Crazy Rich Asians" characters and discussed what the movie meant to her.

"As a second-generation Chinese-Canadian, I could relate to so much in this movie, whether it was about feeling in-between two worlds, or the pressures of family traditions and culture," she said. "I got emotional because it was just so refreshing to see people who look like you onscreen. I never actually realized how much I needed that."

After hearing so much about "Crazy Rich

Asians" on social media and in the news, I was very excited to see it. I might have enjoyed it more if I had fewer expectations going in, but, while it didn't quite meet the lofty expectations I had created in my head, I did enjoy every moment of the film.

The sets were gorgeous; the movie was actually filmed in Malaysia and Singapore, the latter of which was the main story setting. The Youngs and their friends threw extravagant party after extravagant party, and each one was eye-catching and completely insane. When the characters all attended a wedding, it was one of the most beautiful scenes I have ever watched in a movie; the movie team created an outdoor setting with grasses growing everywhere and a flooded aisle inside of a massive church. As the bride walked down the aisle, the guests all held firefly lights on either side of her, creating a beautiful effect. It was awe-inspiring.

As for the cast, I enjoyed watching all of them. Constance Wu (who played Rachel Chu) and Henry Golding (Nick Young) were wonderful, and they worked really well together. Awkwafina, an actress and rapper who was also in "Ocean's 8," was particularly funny as Peik Lin; she was hilarious but was also the caring friend Rachel needed at times. Gemma Chan (Astrid Leong-Teo) and Michelle Yeoh (Eleanor Sung-Young) were also perfect for their roles; they were both strong and independent in their own ways. The other cast members also added a lot to the film, so the overall ensemble had a great effect.

The best thing about "Crazy Rich Asians," however, was how relatable it was for any audience member. Not only did it allow for people with Asian heritage to see themselves reflected in the cast, but the characters were accessible and human. There were elements of Asian culture, and there were also elements of popular culture shared by people all over the world.

"Crazy Rich Asians" used its all-Asian cast and sets to create a movie that never felt like it was trying too hard to fit in any kind of box. Its storyline was somewhat predictable, but the characters felt very real. I think there are a lot of people who could relate to Rachel, the main protagonist, whether it is because of anything from recently immigrating or having trouble pleasing their families. I personally related to her because she pursued what she enjoyed and became a successful Economics professor at NYU, which would be a dream job for me.

The beauty of "Crazy Rich Asians" was in its effortless ability to express a culture underrepresented in Hollywood while simultaneously creating characters and a story that everyone could enjoy watching.