

Pleasantville

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Pleasantville is a great movie with many hidden messages. The not so obvious but informative messages are one of best aspects of this nineties flick. The special effects are impressive considering this movie is indeed from the nineties. Pleasantville touches base on many actual conflicts in America and throughout history in the most subtle but blunt way. My favorite thing about this movie is how it takes this blind community and shows them what they never knew existed: passion and real emotion.

I have heard many people talk about their love for earlier decades such as the fifties and how they wish they could go back and live in the " Simple Times" but in reality I do not believe that it was a much simpler time. Though we have very large issues now, such as world hunger, the overgrowing population, and pollution, the simpler times had issues as well. Pleasantville shines light on things like censorship, close mindedness, and life is like outside of their Pleasantville bubble.

The fifties throw-back town appears to be a utopian society with its lack of crime or conflict, but in reality many viewers would see this as a dystopian world because it lacks real emotion and individuality. To me, this movie is an awakening experience to the close-minded people who are still stuck believing that teenagers do not have sex and are not mature enough to comprehend the realities of the world, as well as those who still believe that segregation would be beneficial. The kids in this movie express their wants to obtain more knowledge; they long for it.

The scene in the diner where they continuously ask Bud questions about Huckleberry Finn shows their new desire and longing to learn. The signs that

pop up in the windows around town that say " No Coloreds Allowed", show the desire for blocking out and not accepting the change. From the beginning of the movie, when the Toby McGuire is talking to himself but imagining he was actually talking to the girl I found myself kind of giggling and interested what this movie would bring to the table as far as entertainment went. In relation to this class, I would consider Pleasantville to be a dystopia.

While searching for other's opinions on this matter, I found a review made by Walter Frith. He states, Folks who lived through the 1950's certainly remember much of the purity that decade had. Mom vacuumed in pearls and baked cookies with her good dress and kitchen apron attached. Dad wore the same suit to work every day and left the house each morning and returned each evening with the same greeting to his family. The kids were raised wholesome with good breakfasts made by mom. Girls wore skirts and dresses down to their ankles and boys were clean cut as everything was squeaky clean.

Utopia to some but secret repression to others. The open minded and diverse approach to life is the difference between colour and black and white in 'Pleasantville'" (Frith). The mention of ' Pleasantville' being a Utopia to some made me question who in the world would consider that world to be a Utopia. The citizens of ' Pleasantville' show no real emotion or notion of anything. Religion and many other subjects are not mentioned or talked about in this perfect society. Many of the symbols in this nineties hit involve religion and bring attention to the book of Genesis.

The Scene in Lover's lane where Margaret gives Bud the apple to try is a parallel to that of Eve giving Adam the " forbidden fruit" to try. This scene is where emotions flood the colorless teenagers, filling them with the knowledge of rain, love, and natural earthly tastes, such as the apple and other fruits found. I found a website that brings a spiritual point of view to pop culture and on it I found a nice outline of ' Pleasantville' filled with commentary and ideas of symbolism in relation to the Bible. I liked this website because it called attention to many things I noticed throughout the movie.

Here is a statement from the site that lists some of the symbols, " There are a ton of Bible connections in this film. There is a burning bush. The God-like moon behind the garden's apple. And even a rainbow of color and promise over Pleasantville" (Bruce). He goes on to talk about how at first glance he extremely disliked this movie, as do many other viewers, but he then discusses the realization he had about ' Pleasantville' a week or so after watching, that is a good movie with a powerful message and ability so shed light on certain hushed topics. This film is about honesty and real-life topics. As viewers watch Pleasantville, they may find themselves feeling sad and uneasy at the interruption and corruption of this seemingly perfect world. To me this movie can be seen as having similarities to the novel Brave New World. In Brave New World books are banned because they create knowledge and individuality begins to arise through one's thoughts and imagination. In ' Pleasantville' the uncolored citizens burn all the books because they do not understand.

In both novel and movie the people are afraid of change. In Brave New World they simply numb the fear by taking the drug soma, but in the movie, which is not based on control but rather pleasantness, the characters are forced to face the change and accept it. On Roger Ebert's website he states, "'Pleasantville' is the kind of parable that encourages us to re-evaluate the good old days and take a fresh look at the new world we so easily dismiss as decadent. Yes, we have more problems. But also more solutions, more opportunities and more freedom" (Ebert).

This state made me really take a look at the world, my world in particular, and consider what this meant. As I watched 'Pleasantville', I started to get that feeling of "I wish I could go back and live in the 50's for a minute just to see if life really was that wonderful," but the more I thought about it, the more I decided it would be an uninteresting experience for someone like myself and many other viewers. A world with way less technology, no cell phones, computers, or iPods would be excruciating for someone from our time period.

When I start to really break down the concept of 'Pleasantville' and intellectually get a grip on how it worked as a town/world, I think about the end where they hold the court session and the mayor is so against the colors. He is trying to push them out and all of the exciting and seemingly dangerous ideas and feelings that are connected to becoming a colored person. Before the big court scene the new laws are introduced and every law is a form of unfair repression. This whole movie is a wonderful recap and glimpse into the past - the real past.

I found a great article with many opinions on the movie and the idea of Pleasantville as an actual town. This, in my opinion, is a correct view and analysis' I found on Pleasantville and many of the things said throughout the report are equally high in quality, On the surface, Pleasantville is a harmonious community where life is good. Yet, when we look closer we realize that the tranquility of Pleasantville is purchased at a terrible price. Life is "pleasant" because the residents do not think or grow.

They are locked into a stifling routine in which homogeneity is exulted and difference rigidly suppressed. And the first sign of change, rebellion, or growth results in both a violent and a legal response by the power structure attempting to maintain the status quo. (Joseph). I feel that that statement sums up the exact definition of Pleasantville and everything that happens throughout the movie. This 1950's throw-back gives great insight into what real life was like back then and what the true issues were- Repression and Sexism.

Women were expected always to have dinner on the table at a quarter to six and to have the house spotless while the men worked. With Betty's discovery of sex, sex with herself, that is, she realizes that there is more to life with this explosion of emotion and pleasure. At that time in the world those types of experiences were not welcomed and looked down on. I have to say that this dystopian yet seemingly utopian world of 'Pleasantville' is an eye-opening experience for many or just highly enjoyed for others. I highly recommend this movie and only wish for it to grow in popularity.