

Example of the movie the "doubt" critical thinking

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



The film "Doubt" which was released in 2008 is based on a Pulitzer Prize winning stage play written by John Patrick Shanley. The story is set at a Catholic church in the Bronx, New York, in the year of 1964. At the beginning of the film Father Flynn (portrayed by Philip Seymour Hoffman) gives a sermon, announcing that the topic of it will be "What do you do when you not sure?" ("Doubt", 2008) This sermon is a perfect introduction to the events that are soon to follow, for all the main characters of the story will have to deal with their doubts as the plot develops itself.

Sister Aloysius, the character of Meryl Streep, who is a principal of the school attached to the church, is the only person who feels a kind of apprehension after Father Flynn finished his sermon. She is strict, conservative and feared by all the school's children as well as (though to much less extent) by some of her fellow nuns.

Sister Aloysius is perfectly aware of the impression which she produces and satisfied with it, as she thinks that only in such way a teacher may receive obedience from the children. She herself states that she "knows people" well and instructs her fellow nuns to report to her if they notice any kind of unusual behavior from Father Flynn's side. She believes that sermons do not come from nowhere and something must have inspired Father Flynn to talk about doubt.

Soon something unusual is really noticed by a young and naïve nun Sister James (portrayed by Amy Adams). She reports to Sister Aloysius that one of the boys, Donald Miller behaved strangely after returning from Father Flynn who had previously called him to the rectory. Moreover the nun noticed the

smell of alcohol in the boy's breath. Sister Aloysius suspects that the boy was molested by Flynn.

Sister James is the character who is most obviously tormented by doubts after the incident with Donald Miller. She does not know what to believe and due to her young age, naiveté and lack of life experience is perplexed and dispirited. She cannot believe that a clergyman can be a bad man. Moreover, Father Flynn later talks to her really kindly about the incident providing convincing explanation of his innocence and her having mistaken the situation. However, Sister Aloysius seems so firmly convinced in Flynn's guilt, that young Sister James cannot decide who is right from the two of them.

On the contrary, Sister Aloysius seems never to have doubted during the whole story that the improper behavior from Flynn's part took place. Her claim to have good knowledge of people proves itself. Finally it appears to be obvious that Father Flynn molested the boy, though he does not confess it openly to Sister Aloysius. However, he resigns, and as Sister Aloysius later tells Sister James: " His resignation was his confession" (" Doubt", 2008).

Although Sister Aloysius may have never doubted in Flynn's nature, a clever woman like she certainly could not cease to doubt, if she did the right thing. She wanted to protect David Miller and to punish the man who possibly caused psychological trauma to the 12-year old boy. However, as it turned out, David Miller was much unhappier without Father Flynn. As his mother alluded, the boy was homosexual and suffered constant abuses from his father because of that. Father Flynn was the first man who was kind to him.

What is more Flynn was appointed pastor of Saint Jerome Church and school, and actually more children were in his power then.

This film is about the difficulty of choice and the moral sufferings a man has to go through sometimes when what seemed clear and right at first appears to be much more complicated and perplexing. The world is not in black and white and sometimes it is really hard to decide if one has made the right choice.

Works Cited

Doubt. Dir. John Patrick Shanley. Perf. Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Amy Adams, Viola Davis, Joseph Foster. Miramax Films, 2008. DVD