

2 films

Education



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Film *Blackboard Jungle*, Film 1955 Director: Richard Brooks (Screenplay by Dudley Nichols) Actors/Actresses playing teachers: Richard Dadier the teacher is played by Glenn Ford, Mr. Warneke, played by John Hoyt. Richard Kiley is Joshua Edwards, another new teacher in the school,

Context: This movie takes is set in an all male high school and revolves around a new idealistic teacher Mr. Richard Dadier, whose character is played by Glenn Ford. The schools other staff members come across as being rather apathetic. The schools principle Mr. Warneke seems to have a problem admitting that his school is plagued by discipline issues. Artie West played by Vic Morrow is a gang leader with a deep hatred for Mr. Dadier especially since he was prevented from assaulting a new female staff member with his gang. Gregory Miller played by Sidney Poitier who seems to be rather intelligent and less embittered student is also a class leader with a dislike for Mr. Dadier but the two gradually get to respect each other.

View of Teaching: Richard Dadiers view of education is rather idealistic to start with and out of touch with the schools realities but this turns as he gets to interact with his new reality more and more through out the movie. The principle has a rather hard time admitting the schools disciplinary issues. He struggles to assert his authority on the unruly students and since he has a disciplined approach to running the school though its ineffective at best.

View of Students: Despite the principles attempts to instill discipline, the students end up more unruly and undisciplined. The students actually develop gangs and are led by leaders that hate the principal. The students are seen by Mr. Dadier as being able to change and be more disciplined thus harboring potential to perform well in school. However the new teacher Joshua Edwards is so Naïve in his impression of the students that they end

up picking on him and destroying his music records. The decisions made by the principal are for the good running of the school and for the students some are just there to pass the time till they can attain legal age to go do their own things away from school without the risk of being taken to reform school.

Describe the Actors/Actresses:

Richard Dadiar: he plays a teacher who is so gilded about his job to start with that he somehow performs his teaching role a bit too reflexively. He comes to the new school

For his first teaching job and faces a multitude of problems in his new role. He does his job well and plays his role well throughout the movie interacting with both the teachers and students adequately to achieve his goals and principles.

Gregory Miller: he is the rather intelligent and slightly less bitter student class leader as compared to Artie West. Initially he also has a dislike for Mr. Dadiar which diminishes with time as respect for each other grows gradually all through the film. He initially tried hard to maximize his benefits from his education but soon realizes no one cares. This makes him fall to frustration eventually deciding to wait patiently till he attains legal age to drop out from the school. He however knows that getting expelled would probably land him in reform school which he cannot afford

Richard Kiley: He is a new teacher in the school, but rather naïve which makes him get targeted by the juvenile delinquents. He is finally done in by the hoodlums when he brings his precious music records collection to school and they get destroyed by the students.

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Artie West: He is a depressing, pessimistic gang leader with a lot of control over the other classmates who are either afraid of him or adore him. He immediately develops a loathing for Mr. Dadier and he hates him intensely since an incident where Mr. Dadier prevents the gang sexually assaulting a new female member of staff. He portrays the glum brooding vicious image through out the film

Three quotes from the film:

- 1) " Well, are you big enough to take me down to the principals office cause thats just what youre going to have to do. Youre going to have to take me."
- 2) " Two. Dont be a hero and never turn your back on the class."
- 3) " Take a ruler to one of these delinquents; hell beat you to death with it."

Themes:

- 1) Rebellion can exist without just cause
- 2) Discipline can be earned through respect
- 3) Education cannot be forced onto someone.
- 4) being rebellious and nasty does not accomplish any goals
- 5) Teachers also need to learn skills on handling individuals

Critical Thinking Skills:

S-1 Thinking independently; S-4 Exploring thoughts, underlying feelings, and feelings underlying thoughts; S-11 comparing analogous situations; transferring insights into new contexts; S-18 analyzing or evaluating arguments, interpretations or beliefs; S-20 analyzing or evaluating actions or policies; S-27 comparing and contrasting ideals with actual practice; S-29 noting significant similarities and differences

My personal reaction:

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The movie is rather violent and a bit disturbing on the sensibilities we have come to expect from schools it's a moderately paced movie with a very strong themed message. From my point of view, the movie was rather strongly suggestive and vicious even according to today's standards. The movie dwells on the issue of the relationships between the teachers and other staff and the students of the school. The theme of challenge to authority is overwhelmingly utilized and from it there also arises the theme of respect developing from conflict. I can compare the movie to a lot of the classic high school movies like American graffiti 1973 where the theme of the students rebelling against authority but eventually coming to develop respect for each other is pronounced.

American graffiti is similar in that the characters also undergo similar rivalries amongst themselves and also undermine the authority figures whenever they can. The two movies are made from different eras but are similar in their outlook. The ideas of a school where the students are so ruthless and lawless as to even sexually harass a teacher seemed to me to be a bit far fetched but the idea helps to propel the movie to its logical conclusion.

Film Title: Chalk Film Date: 2006

Director: Mike Akel

Actors/Actresses playing teachers: Troy Schremmer as Mr. Lowrey, Janelle Schremmer as Coach Webb, Shannon Haragan as Mrs Reddell and Chris Mass as Mr. Stroope.

Context: Chalk portrays the unseen frustrating and yet honorable profession as a teacher set at Harrison High, it presents Mr. Stroope convincing everybody about how his time for recognition has arrived and how it will end

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with him being awarded the prestigious title of "Teacher of the Year". His only obstacle to this achievement is smarter students in his history class who often use words that he does not understand which leaves him in a never ending state of self defense against his mocking students. This ultimately leaves him with no point of interaction with the students except when his chalk is stolen. Coach Webb is portrayed as a sort of hopeless romantic coach who goes against the cultural stereotypes that tend to label coaches as gay while trying to make her students take her class seriously. she also tries to seek companionship with newly appointed Mrs. Reddell as assistant principal who always seems too busy to notice her as her position leaves her in constant battles with teachers and their egos while also trying to control stubborn students which leaves her with regret as to why she left the teaching profession.

View of Teaching: Different styles of teaching are presented for instance Mr Stroope is shown as being more concerned with gaining the liking of the students than being interested in their actual learning, in other situations teachers battle with insecurities and remain with a sense of difference from others like Mr Lowrey who believes in using discipline to define his character but also showing his deep concern in gaining the respect of his students a common trait among most teachers.

View of Students: No matter what the view of teaching, everyone in the movie is passionate about children and has a desire for them to succeed. Children are seen as wonderful gifts from God and the nuns absolutely cherish getting to work with them every day. All decisions, celebrations, or disagreements all revolve around what is best for the children.

Describe the Actors/Actresses:

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Mr. Lowrey: Mr. Lowrey is male divorced former computer engineer with the most vulnerable and touching personality who goes searching for information on effective classroom management after his class turned against him and stole his chalk.

Mr Stroope: Mr. Stroope , is an immature and submissive male history teacher engrossed with being voted as teacher of the year. He is not particularly knowledgeable and at some point shamelessly pleads with a certain student to try to not to be as knowledgeable as him.

Coach Webb: Coach Webb is male teacher who is inquisitive and unkempt gym instructor who sort of falls in love with Mr. Lowrey, she constantly fears that people will assume that she is a lesbian because she works in physical education and has the stereotype looks. Always a faithful follower of rules she harasses Mrs. Reddell to enforce the rules more strictly.

Mrs Reddell: Mrs. Reddell is a female assistant principal who suffers from a breaking marriage brought upon by her long working hours, because of working for a long time under bureaucratic systems; she gives up on her marriage without any effort to save it. She now reminisces on her happiest days and confesses that she misses her days as a teacher.

Two salient quotes from the film:

- 1) " Where is my chalk ?.."
- 2) " Do you remember how hard it is to be a teacher ?.."

Themes:

- 1) Challenges faced by teachers under public education.
- 4) Personal attitudes in the work place don't achieve anything.

Critical Thinking Skills I used:

S-1: I tried to think independently; S-3: explored the underlying thoughts and  
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emotions in the work place, compared situations and transferred insights into the context; S-18 analyzed and evaluated arguments with interpretations and beliefs;

My personal reaction as a teacher:

Chalk attempts to follow the internal working mechanisms of Harrison High over the period of a single school year. We are presented with a number of new school teachers with different insecurities and challenges. Others in the school view entry into the new school year as a chance to face new exciting changes. In the beginning the movies characters address the camera with scenes of embarrassing awkward interactions. Despite being a mockumentary it lacks foolish characters which may disappoint those interested in yet another mockumentary film, but this movie is presented with a mind of its own and not just another comedy. The movie allows its viewers to follow its characters during the year, making several points about how unfulfilling a job teaching can be, it also tries to develop some protagonists as they experience believable personal transformations brought about by their experiences with disinterested and unmotivated students.

References

Paietta, A. C. (2007). Teachers in the movies: A filmography. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company.