

# School ties

Sociology



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School Ties, Dir. Director: Christopher Nolan; Christian Bale, Tom Hardy, Anne Hathaway, and Joseph Gordon-Levitt, 1992, Film Review This is movie deals with the anti-Semitism prevalent among the upper classes of American society, as seen in the exclusive learning institutions. This anti-Semitism is displayed through the story of a young Jewish man who is awarded a scholarship to a prestigious school that is essentially WASP dominated. This scholarship is awarded to him not because he would have otherwise been allowed into the school, but because of the fact that he is extremely good at football. His being allowed into the school is for him to be used as a quarterback to ensure that the school wins the competition. The administration of the school, despite the fact that it is as anti-Semitic as most of the students who attend it decide to allow the young man, David, into the football team on condition that he does not reveal his religion to anyone. This movie is the story of how David struggles with his conscience in order to attain recognition from his colleagues as well as acceptance. By hiding his religion, he manages to attain everything he wishes for because his fellow teammates not only accept him, but his prowess in the field enables him to attain stardom. His popularity is enables him to mingle freely with those students who come from more privileged backgrounds from his, and despite the initial jealousy towards him, Charlie Dillon, who had been put aside in favor of David, comes to become his friend. At this moment, David has reached the apex of his popularity and acceptance within this institution. However, things begin to go wrong for David when he comes to discover that the school's administration is just as bigoted as the rest of the students in the institution. When he misses an important Jewish festival for the sake of a match, the principal praying privately finds him and the remarks the latter

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makes are certainly not flattering. In addition, David becomes attracted to and starts seeing Charlie's girlfriend behind his back, and the jealousy that the latter feels leads him to seek David's destruction. When he finds out, by chance, from a member of staff that David is Jewish; all hell breaks loose as Charlie spreads the word among the other students. David suddenly falls from grace, as he comes from being one of the most popular people in the school to being the most discriminated against. Even his own roommate ends up avoiding him. His girlfriend, who had only been a part of his life just because he was popular, also, leaves him and in the end, he is left in a lonely place, with no one around to support him. All the discrimination that he faces is not because he is any different from his fellow students, but because of his religious beliefs, because he is a Jew. This discrimination sends a powerful message to the American society, that anti-Semitism is not the way of the American society. The prevalent anti-Semitism should be avoided because Jews are not beasts but human beings who have feelings and emotions. Their religious beliefs should not be a reason for the harsh treatment that they receive. Charlie, always the underachiever who tries to uphold his family's reputation in the school, decides to cheat in an exam and drops the piece of paper he was using on the floor. The teacher notices this paper and asks whoever dropped it to confess otherwise, the entire class would be failed. David and Rip are the only ones who know that Charlie is the culprit but they choose to keep quiet. Charlie takes advantage of this, and probably because of his hostility towards David, denounces him. Despite the fact that he is obviously innocent, his being a Jew condemns him because everyone prefers to believe that one of them would never cheat in an exam. Rip, however, takes the initiative and tells the principal the truth, therefore saving David

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from expulsion. It is at the principal's office that David comes to the realization that no matter what he does in the school, he will never get the acceptance and recognition of any of the people within it. He realizes that since he is being used to advance the school's football team, he should also use the school to advance himself in life. The final part of the movie is based on the empowerment that David attains when he stops to care what other people think about him, and instead, he comes to put his own personal interests first.