

How does the following review match your analysis of the film? Is this review consistent with your metaphor? If not, what is your response?

User Reviews

Really great film

25 March 2003 | by ethylester (Michigan) – See all my reviews

I love this film. It really makes you think about how high schoolers are oppressed. I love the style of this film because it has no narrative, just shots from a high school. There is no one telling you what to think or what is going on. Therefore you are forced to think for yourself about what is going on.

It is very interesting to hear the reactions of teachers and students after viewing this film, as they have different interpretations. There are a few scenes that really stand out to me. The main one being the last scene. The woman who reads the letter from the ex-student who is now in Vietnam stressed how "successful" this school has been in creating such a great student. The former student had written her a letter that basically stated that he no longer thinks of himself as a person, but as a body. He is humbled by his country and he will blindly obey his orders in the service. He wants his insurance money to go to the school if he gets killed in combat. It is the least he do for a school that taught him such strict discipline - so much discipline that he no longer thinks of himself as a human being with feelings!! That is what I got out of it, at least. It's a great punchline.

I would also like to comment on the closeups of the girls' butts in the gym. I did not interpret this as some sexist filmmakers getting their kicks by watching the girls jump around in short shorts. I thought it was more of an ironic connection between the girl that was reprimanded at the prom for having such a short skirt. It was also a connection between the fashion show and the teacher who was trying to teach girls how to be ladylike in a very blunt and insulting manner. The school is forcing the girls to wear these ridiculous gym outfits that have very short shorts. Then they force the girls to play ridiculous games and do stupid excersizes. I think it shows how sexist the high school was, rather than the filmmakers. It made the girls all look like objects, which is exactly what the high school was practicing.

I thought it was really great how Wiseman included the entire reading of Casey at The Bat. The viewer most likely does not want to hear the teacher read this whole thing, yet we are forced to hear the whole poem read, quite dully. This shows how DULL and dehumanizing high school can be. The viewers are feeling exactly the same feelings the students must have been feeling at the time. We don't want to hear the poem, neither do the students. Yet this is the beauty and absurdity of these high school rituals.

I also liked the Spanish class in which the students are repeating the Spanish word for existentialism, and other philosophies. It is very ironic that the students are in this oppressive institution and brainlessly being forced to repeat these philosophies that preach the exact opposite.

The girl who gets defensive about being too individualistic is also ironic. She swears her short skirt was not trying to make her "an individual", as if that was a bad thing.

It is so interesting to see how different the generational views are. One student is claiming he is "being a man" by standing up for what he believes in when being wrongly accused of acting up in class, while the vice principal says in order for him to "be a man" he must follow orders and swallow his pride. Such different views about manliness!

I could go on and on, but I will not. This is a great film. High schoolers today should watch this film, as well as "No Reason to Stay", another anti-high school film from the 60's. It will re-enforce their gut feelings that high school really does suck.