Name

Professor's Name

Course Number

Date

Film and Theater Studies

This essay examines character portrayals, social issues, and themes in "The Untouchables" and "The Class," utilizing insights from assigned readings. Through specific examples, we gain an understanding of teacher-student dynamics in "The Class" and the exploration of immigration, disability, class, and race relations in "The Intouchables."

Assigned Reading Summary

From the assigned reading titled ‘Is the Intouchables Racist?’ we learn that "The Intouchables" explores the friendship between Philippe, a wealthy white quadriplegic, and Driss, a black ex-convict from the projects. The film addresses social issues such as the collision of different worlds and the potential for unity in France. It sheds light on privilege, disability, and social class dynamics. Specific examples from the reading include the clash of backgrounds between Philippe and Driss, the historical challenges faced by black actors in servile roles, and the symbolic portrayal of a French aristocrat in a wheelchair being assisted by someone from a socially disadvantaged immigrant community.

The assigned reading by Alberge explores "Untouchable," a heart-warming comedy depicting the friendship between Philippe, a wealthy quadriplegic, and Driss, his ex-convict caregiver. The film addresses themes of disability, socioeconomic disparities, and the emotional and physical implications of paralysis. It challenges society's perception of disabled individuals as "untouchable" or invisible. The reading highlights the filmmakers' struggle to secure investors due to concerns about disability, the real-life inspiration drawn from Philippe Pozzo di Borgo and his caregiver Abdel Sellou, and the positive responses from disabled individuals and organizations like The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation (Alberge). Overall, "Untouchable" fosters empathy and understanding for the challenges faced by disabled individuals.

In the assigned reading titled 'The Color of Unworthiness,' "The Class" by Laurent Cantet is examined as a portrayal of society within a school setting. The film explores themes of hierarchy, competition, and compartmentalization in diverse educational contexts, addressing education level, socioeconomic class, language differences, and race or ethnicity (Gueye 162). The reading emphasizes the prevalence of white teachers and racial diversity among students. Specific examples, such as the language code argument and the marginalization of non-white staff members, illustrate the complex social dynamics and power structures depicted in the film.

The Class Film

In "The Class," François Marin is depicted as a dedicated and passionate teacher who genuinely cares for his students' education and well-being. He strives to create an inclusive and engaging classroom environment but faces challenges in addressing the struggles of disadvantaged students. The students' school experiences shape their sense of identity as they navigate language, social class, and racial diversity. One student, Souleymane, an immigrant from Mali, grapples with dilemmas of cultural integration and discrimination, reflecting broader social issues in contemporary French society. Souleymane's experiences shed light on the complex and unequal realities within French society, highlighting the barriers faced by marginalized individuals.

The Intouchables Film

"The Intouchables" presents a strong portrayal of the complex relationship between Philippe and Driss, challenging stereotypes surrounding disability and class relations. The film highlights friendship, empathy, and the breaking of societal barriers. However, it falls short in its exploration of race and immigration, providing only superficial treatment of these issues. A deeper examination of Driss' experiences as an immigrant from Senegal could have offered a more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by immigrants in France. While the film provides some insights, it does not fully advance our understanding of these social issues.

Conclusion

"The Intouchables" and "The Class" offer insights into social issues in French society through character portrayals and exploration of themes like disability, class, race, and immigration. Despite some limitations, they contribute to understanding challenges and fostering unity and empathy.

Works Cited

Alberge, D. "Untouchable: How did a French comedy about disability become a global hit?" *the Guardian*, 6 Sept. 2012, www.theguardian.com/film/2012/sep/06/untouchable-french-comedy-disability.

Gueye. "The Color of Unworthiness." *Transition*, no. 102, 2010, pp. 158-171.