Coms 142 – Film as Communication

Spring 2022

Election **(PART Three**)

Cast and questions

Released: 1999

Rated: R

Running Time: 1:43

Directed by: Alexander Payne

Screenplay by: Alexander Payne & Jim Taylor

From the Novel by: Tom Perrotta

Music by: Rolfe Kent

Cinematography by: James Glennon

Edited by: Kevin Tent

Production Design: Jane Ann Stewart

Cast (partial):

Matthew Broderick…………….Jim McAllister (Mr. M)

Reese Witherspoon……………Tracy Flick

Chris Klein…………………………..Paul Metzler

Jessica Campbell…………………Tammy Metzler

Mark Harelik……………………….Dave Novotny

Phil Reeves………………………….Walt Hendricks

Molly Hagan………………………..Diane McAllister

Delaney Driscoll…………………..Linda Novotny

Frankie Ingrassia………………….Lisa Flanagan

 Questions – **Part 3**

1. “The teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life. I believe that every teacher should recognize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of the social order and the securing of the right social growth.” -John Dewey- (from the preface of the novel)

Please relate the above quote to the film.

1. “The world is the School gone mad.” -William Trevor- (also from the preface of the novel)

What do you think this means and relate it to the film.

1. You often hear a person being described as possessing *character* or lacking in *character (world views lived or not lived)*. What does this mean and apply it to each of the following characters as shown in the film and give examples:
2. Jim McAllister
3. Tracy Flick
4. Tammy Metzler (Paul’s sister)
5. Dave Novotny
6. Linda Novotny
7. Lisa Flanagan (Paul’s girlfriend and Tammy’s former lover)
8. What is the difference between ethics and morals?
9. Reese Witherspoon and Matthew Broderick are excellent casting for these roles. Why?
10. In the film, the 1st time we see Jim and Diane make love, the camera is “on its side” (a very difficult thing to do), so that the image of them is strangely vertical vs. normally being horizontal. There are two reasons for this. What do you think are they?
11. In both the film and the novel Linda accuses Jim of “taking advantage of her.” What do you think and why?
12. In the novel Jim does not get stung by a bee. Why do you think this happens in the film?
13. There is no direct evidence that Jim threw the two votes for Tracy away. If he had just denied it, went to his Teacher’s Union, and asked them to represent him, in all likelihood he could have kept his job. Why don’t you think Jim does this? (In the novel he does think about this).
14. In the novel, Jim’s wife, Diane not only takes him back, but also stands by him during the “fallout” of his actions during the school’s election, the loss of his job, and the national media storm about what happened. Also, Diane becomes pregnant and they have a boy. Contrast and compare this with what happen in the film. Why do you think the changes were made to the film?
15. In the novel, Tammy makes fun of other girls who are “in to” Madonna, in the film she wants to be friends with her. In what way does this change her character?
16. The novel shows more sympathy to Tracy Flick and presents her point of view in a manner that we care about what happens to her.

There are a number of things in the novel that “fleshes out” her character, makes her a much more interesting character, and makes her much more likable. Below are some examples. Please comment on each and compare them with what happens in the film. Why you think those changes were made? How do the changes effect our intellectual and emotion view of her character.

1. When Mr. M is about to announce the winner of the election to the school, Tracy stands up just before the winner is called, which is not her. The same scene takes place in both the film and the novel, with the major difference is that in the novel there is a larger time gap between Tracy standing (thinking she’s won based on the information she was given) and Paul’s name being announced. This leads to the entire school laughing at Tracy when she doesn’t win and standing there. This hurts her deeply.
2. Near the end of the novel, students are passing their yearbooks around to be signed by each other. Tracy realizes that not only do the student never write anything personal to her, she is not able to write anything personal to them. She realizes that they really don’t know her and she doesn’t know them. She questions if all that time she was trying too hard to be a success and not spending more energy in have personal relationships with her classmates. She sees this as a major mistake and loss in her life. Why do you think this scene was not shot or if it was why isn’t it included in the film?
3. In the novel Jim does not leave the town, but gets a job as a car salesman. Tracy decides to go see him, not really knowing what how she or Jim will react and not really knowing what to say to him. She goes to the car lot and they talk about the cars for sale. Then they both go for a demo ride in a sports convertible that Tracy likes the look of. During the ride Tracy asks him if they can drop by the school as she has something to get from her locker. They drive there, Tracy goes inside, while Jim sits in the car hoping nobody will see him there. Tracy comes out with her yearbook. She asks Jim to sign it. Jim takes a pen, open to one of many blank signing pages, and begins to write something that we can’t see. The novel ends. Compare and contrast the film’s ending verses the novel’s ending. Which do you prefer and why?
4. Both the novel and the film have the same overall (but slightly different) moral to the story. What would you say it is for each and why in each case?