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Subject: Re: Hillbilly Elegy

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 25 Feb 2021 14:49:11 GMT

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I watched it and really liked it. The name put me off at first - not sure why the word "hillbilly" had that effect on me - but when I understood the premise of the story as the movie got underway, I loved it.

It expresses two separate but sometimes combined family problems - poverty and drug addiction. One might say they are actually the afflictions of sloth and of gluttony. Both problems are solvable but difficult and both affect the whole family and sometimes become generational, passed from parents to children.

"Elegy" is an American success story, one where an underdog makes good. It shows how to live in spite of the disadvantage of growing up without much money. It also describes a man's choice to set higher social standards than those he was raised with.

The story's main character doesn't become a "snob" - learning social etiquette just to look superior - but rather his personal evolution is quite the opposite. He is exposed to the culture of families of Ivy-league law school students and struggles to fit in even though he was raised "in the holler" and doesn't have any notion of "higher class culture." He eventually manages to fit in and even impress his peers.

And in the end he demonstrates how living conditions are a choice. The author's implication is that many people living in generational poverty are choosing to stay that way. They aren't doomed by fate beyond their control. They are simply not willing to work their way out of it.

I really like like this author. He is hard-working and driven to achieve, but isn't snobby or motivated by social success. People like that tend to be passionate about the things that interest them, and that's what makes them successful. They tend to be very approachable people, willing and interested in talking with anyone of any position. I got that impression about the author of this autobiographical story, and I really enjoyed it.

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