
Subject: Hillbilly Elegy
Posted by [PinkHair](#) on Thu, 25 Feb 2021 04:32:13 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Has anyone else seen this movie on Netflix? I watched it with my mother and we're currently listening to J.D. Vance's memoir, on which the film was based. It's a heartbreaking look at poverty in Appalachia and in the United States. It also explores the impact that poverty and generational trauma has on a young person.

Subject: Re: Hillbilly Elegy
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 25 Feb 2021 14:49:11 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

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.

Subject: Re: Hillbilly Elegy

Posted by [Rusty](#) on Fri, 26 Feb 2021 15:32:39 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I can relate this author to a real remembrance I have. Where I used to work we would get students trying to better themselves. Though doing so through the high cost privatized trade school route. One student was a mix of Caucasian hillbilly extraction and American Indian. She was intelligent, a good hands on learner, was dependable and willing to take on responsibility. We wanted to have her to come work with us. Her tragic flaw we came to find was a total lack of educational discipline. We learned from her talking about her two cultural heritage's, a home life and extended families prone to stubborn poverty and complacency. She was like a family matriarch next inline to her hillbilly mother that had worked at a McDonalds for decades. Her American Indian father had died in his 50's. She continually fielded cell phone calls from family members beset with petty problems needing her guidance.

Students in the Radiologic trade are required to pass a comprehensive national registry. We tried to impress upon her the preparation needed to be successful, bought educational study guides in that regard to help her, and finally arranged for a tutor to help her cram for the test. She was overwhelmed too late, too unprepared. She fawned disrespect our interventions with misplaced personal pride. We soon lost contact with her and always lamented and wondered what plight faced her. Paying off high cost student loans without the ability of an income to do so. She wouldn't be able to work in the field without that sheepskin. Truly, a microcosm study of the disfunction the author depicts in his book.

A tale of two polar opposites in these two articles. Coming together in unison with the broad introspection Vance bridges in our class system, culture, economy and nation.

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/the-lives-of-poor-white-people>

<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/trump-us-politics-poor-whites/>

Subject: Re: Hillbilly Elegy

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 26 Feb 2021 17:22:12 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Interesting. I've seen stuff like that too. Some of 'em make it, but some don't. It's all about taking action and being willing. If a person is willing to take action to improve themselves - especially if they reach out to the right support organizations - they'll always be successful.

The ones that aren't successful fall into one of many traps. I can spot 'em. The self-sufficient one that has all the answers, the one that blames everyone else for their problems, the one that thinks they don't have a problem, the one that always has an excuse or reason why they "can't," the one that procrastinates, the one that starts strong but then trickles off. There are others, but those are the most common ones I see.

Funny that these misstep traps can happen to a professional as easily as they can to a skid-row bum. It's not just the welfare cases that suffer from generational alcoholism and drug addiction.

And sometimes those that have been very successful in life have a harder time getting sober than those that haven't because of their ego.

Then again, I've seen guys that have no home, no car, no job, no skills and no family that are just as arrogant as a guy with a PhD, so narcissism isn't limited to those that are beautiful, popular, intelligent or skilled. An addict on skid-row can be just as arrogant as one that is an executive for a big corporation.

While I know that some of these kinds of things happen to people that aren't addicts, it usually - almost always - happens to people in families where there is alcoholism or drug addiction. Most chemical dependency treatment professionals would say the drugs aren't the cause but rather the symptom, so when we see individuals or families acting this way, there is probably some drug addiction or alcoholism in the family. If not, it is likely to start, because these kinds of behaviors are a root cause.

Subject: Re: Hillbilly Elegy

Posted by [Rusty](#) on Fri, 26 Feb 2021 18:07:17 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

A side note to this tale of woe. Another student we had, an older Caucasian gal trying to restructure her working status potential. She was a total F-up in practicality and performance getting the hang of it. She consistently messed something up, requiring re exposing patients. And she bickered with us concerning her ineptitude. But her one trait to success though was being good at book learnin. She aced the registry easily. And, to her just due she became competent. She was just a nervous type and physically hampered with her short stature.

Short shot. Her home life was stable, she was married and had support and her kids were grown and out of the house.

Our mixed lineage gal had a fatal flaw she pushed aside until it was too late. She would have to take the course work all over again having failed the registry. We'd bring her up in conversation as just a real sad statistic. She had real potential to break the cycle in her screwed up family. It still bothers me a decade and more past.

Subject: Re: Hillbilly Elegy

Posted by [Mica](#) on Sat, 06 Mar 2021 19:04:33 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I did watch it and I thought it was amazing! I loved how it touched on two very important topics, drugs and poverty. I wasn't sure i would like it, but I did. I'm thankful that my life has never been that way, but it was a real eye opener to me that some are.