

The Great Debaters



NB: This is a mind-blowing film, especially because it is based on truth. It has some rough episodes that you may need to close your eyes to (but not your minds or hearts). These people in the Jim Crow era may have trumped the sour old Puritans in their cruelty, and I recall how *Three Sovereigns for Sarah* and *The Crucible* upset some of you. This story begins in the mid 1930s, when the economy and politics were somewhat similar to now. What must we carefully watch out for when it comes to our own minds to keep ourselves and our society from regression? What can we build on now?

As you watch note the following:

- Insidious, sneaky cruelty and intimidation
- Overt cruelty and intimidation
- Responses to each of these
- Examples of words at work for good or evil
- Individual vs group actions (positive and negative)
- Leadership
- Education
- Courage

Mentally review *Three Sovereigns for Sarah and The Crucible* (lack of logic, fear)

Mentally review *Huck Finn* (society, mobs, ultimate morality)

Mentally review *A Class Divided* (blue/brown eyes)

Mentally review *Skin of Our Teeth* (refugees, Cain, change)

Review *Antigone* (what is the ultimate morality, pride)

Recall what Shakespeare knows about human nature and builds his plays on (basest nature, pride, deception)

Mentally review logic fallacies such as ad hominem, straw man, misleading simplistic either-or black/white statements, abusing tradition, false assumptions, double standard, considering the source (or not)

Read Millay's "Conscientious Objector" and Sonnet CLXX (Read history, so learn your place...)

Read Blake's "The Sick Rose"

What is the poisonous bud and root that we must constantly weed out?

Think about other movies dealing with social issues, especially ones based on true stories.

What might they have in common? What are some overarching messages?