

Monsieur Lazhar



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DIRECTED BY: Philippe Falardeau

RELEASE DATE: 28th October 2011 (Canada), 4th May 2012 (UK)

CERTIFICATE: 12A

COUNTRY: Canada

RUNNING TIME: 94 mins

LANGUAGE: French (subtitled in English)

SUITABLE FOR: 14-19 French, media/film studies

KEY WORDS: education, mourning, suicide, relations, integration

SYNOPSIS

In Montréal, Bachir Lazhar, a refugee from Algeria, is hired to replace a schoolteacher who has suddenly died. Despite the initial cultural differences, he gradually gets to know his pupils, developing a close relationship with his class. As the children begin a slow healing process, nobody is aware of Lazhar's own personal dramatic circumstances including the risk of deportation.

BEFORE SEEING THE FILM

THE TRAILER

Trailers have to achieve a fine balance: they should offer as much as possible to appeal to audiences, within just a couple of minutes, without giving away too much.

- Watch the trailer. In what ways does it seek to engage an audience?
- Watch the trailer again. Rate and comment on the following aspects:
 - length
 - selection of scenes
 - focus on characters
 - colours
 - music
- When watching a foreign film, how do you respond to the subtitles, at the beginning and then during the course of the film?
- In small groups discuss the advantages and disadvantages of subtitling and dubbing.

THE POSTER

Study the poster carefully on the next page of this guide.

- What information do you glean at first glance?
- Having a closer look at the people on the poster, what can you guess about:
 - the title of the film
 - the main character
 - the setting
 - the genre

In small groups, prepare a short scenario on what you think the film is about.

ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE
BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM

BEST CANADIAN FEATURE
WINNER
TORONTO FILM FESTIVAL

OFFICIAL SELECTION
SUNDANCE
FILM FESTIVAL

AUDIENCE AWARD
WINNER
LOCARNO FILM FESTIVAL



A FILM BY
PHILIPPE FALARDEAU
**MONSIEUR
LAZHAR**

MUSIC BOX FILMS PRESENTS A MICRO SCOPE PRODUCTION "MONSIEUR LAZHAR" A FILM BY PHILIPPE FALARDEAU STARRING FELLAÏ, SOPHIE NÉLISSE, ÉMILIE NÉRON, DANIELLE PROULX, BRIGITTE POUPART, LOUIS CHAMPAGNE, JULES PHILIP
CASTING: NATHALIE BOUTRIE, EMANUELLE BEAUGRAND-CHAMPAGNE, CONSTANCE DEMONTON. PHOTOGRAPHY BY RONALD PLANTE, CSC. PRODUCTION DESIGNER: EMMANUEL FÉCHETTE. COSTUME DESIGNER: FRANCESCA CHAMBERLAND. EDITOR: STÉPHANE LAFLÈUR. SOUND: PIERRE BERTRAND

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ADAPTATION

C'est pas moi, je le jure! (2008) was the first novel that director Falardeau adapted for the big screen. *Monsieur Lazhar* is his second adaptation. As in every film adaptation from a play, a book or a tale, the director makes certain changes to the original story.

- Why do you think some filmmakers are keen to adapt known literary works? What advantages, or possible disadvantages, do you think the company distributing the film might see in an adaptation?
- Can you think of things that are possible to achieve on screen that could not be conveyed in the same way in a stage play?
- Do some online research and comment on the differences between *Monsieur Lazhar*, the play and the film:

	PLAY	FILM
main character		
other characters		
settings		

THEMES

Many themes are covered at different levels in *Monsieur Lazhar*.

- Choose an extract from the film to illustrate each theme below. Explain how significant each one is to the film's plot:
 - suicide
 - healing process
 - teacher-pupil relations
 - deportation
 - precocious child
 - absent mother
 - literature
 - integration
 - education
 - prejudice
 - guilt

AUTHENTICITY

Before writing the script, Falardeau went to Algeria, where Bachir Lazhar is said to be from, to ensure realism and authenticity to the film and its main character. The director is no stranger to the Arab world and culture as he had also visited other North African and Middle Eastern countries. Mohamed Fellag, who plays Bachir Lazhar, is a famous Algerian actor born in 1950.

- Do you find Lazhar a convincing character? How was his nationality presented?
- Do you think Fellag is a good fit for the part?
- Which elements or events in the film show aspects of a foreign culture?
- Conduct online research and find out how Fellag's personal life is mirrored by Lazhar's.

The director is a strong devotee to naturalistic cinema.

- Give a definition of naturalism in cinema
- Is *Monsieur Lazhar* a naturalistic film? Justify your answers.
- Do you think that authenticity supports realism in the film?

A FILM ABOUT EDUCATION

Many filmmakers have found inspiration for their films in stories about schools and teachers. *Être et avoir* and *Entre les murs* for example are two other French language films that focus on schools – you can find out more about both through the following guides on the Film Education website:

Être et avoir

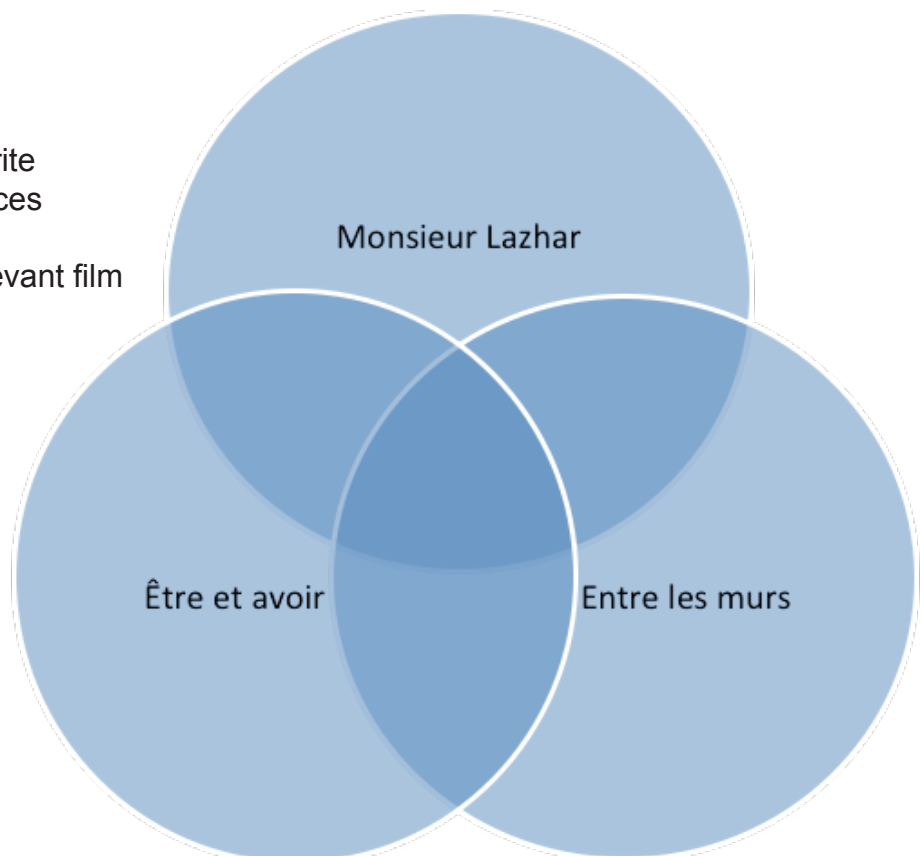
www.filmeducation.org/resources/film_library/getfilm.php?film=1484

Entre les murs (The Class)

www.filmeducation.org/theclass

■ Compare the three films and write down the similarities and differences in the diagram on the right. Feel free to include any other relevant film of your choice.

■ How would you explain the following quote from the film? Parents to Lazhar:
 “On préfère que vous vous contentiez d’enseigner, non pas d’éduquer notre fille.”
 (“We prefer that you teach our daughter not try to raise her.”)



LANGUAGE

The language is a central element in the film. Falardeau said that speaking accurate French goes beyond its academic or intellectual value. In the film, teachers are the guardians of the language but more importantly for Lazhar, it defines cultural identity and is the key to freedom.

- What do you think it means to be educated? Give a definition of education.
- Does speaking a language, or more than one language, accurately indicate a good education? Justify your answer.
- What differences did you notice between Lazhar's use of French and the other teacher's use of the language?
- Explain the following quote from the film:
(A teacher and Lazhar:)
"Vous voulez un lift?" ("Do you want a lift?")
"Un quoi?" ("A what?")
- One could argue that Bachir Lazhar is the perfect immigrant. How is this shown and justified in relation to education?



ACTIVITES EN FRANCAIS

ECOUTER

Écoutez la bande annonce du film sur www.monsieurlazhar.com et cochez (✓) le vocabulaire de l'école que vous entendez. Puis traduisez en anglais la liste de mots.

école		collège		lycée
instituteur		professeur		remplaçant
maternelle		primaire		secondaire
enseigner		apprendre		corriger
les tables		les bureaux		les pupitres
exercice		calcul		dictée
le gymnase		la classe		la cantine
les enfants		les élèves		les étudiants

PARLER

Choisissez un personnage dans la liste et faites une présentation orale. Il faut inclure : description physique, personnalité, famille, ville, origine et autres détails supplémentaires.



Nom: *Bachir Lazhar*



Nom:



Nom:



Nom:



Nom:



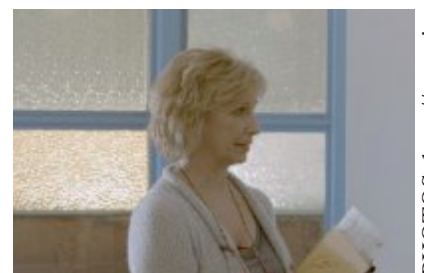
Nom:



Nom:



Nom:



Nom:

PHOTOS: <http://monsieurlazhar.com/photos.php>

LIRE

Lisez ces 4 critiques de spectateurs. Identifiez les commentaires positifs / négatifs et résumez l'idée principale pour chaque commentaire.

1. J'ai été très émue par ce beau film, Mr Lazhar est tout seul avec son histoire parmi les enfants avec lesquels il arrive à communiquer tout simplement avec son bon sens et son éducation. Fellag est sublime dans ce rôle, je l'adorais comme comique, il est génial ici. Seul petit souci : les enfants sont difficiles à comprendre avec leur accent canadien, il faut vraiment bien écouter et s'imprégner de leur façon de parler dès le départ et après ça va tout seul. J'aurais aimé que ce film soit plus long..
2. Trop de sujets pour un seul scénario (Suicide, relations élèves-prof, terrorisme, réfugié, tolérance etc..) manque de subtilité
3. Contrairement à tout le vent de dynamisme qui a entouré ce film, j'ai été pour ma part déçue, je m'attendais à beaucoup plus grand. Pourquoi une nomination aux Oscars? Ça ne le méritait pas... Je n'ai toujours pas compris le motif du drame initial pour en faire un sujet sur l'immigration et les réfugiés politiques. J'ai senti tout au long une discordance, un tiraillement intérieur entre le contenu et les motifs. Le sujet de l'immigration et des «faux papiers» est mal exploité, c'est du déjà-vu mal adapté. Le système scolaire aurait vraiment embauché un professeur dans ces conditions? Ce n'est pas crédible. Le film se termine en «queue de poisson». Par contre, Mohamed Fellag et Sophie Nélisse sont excellents, mais grand coup de cœur au comédien Émilien Néron, notamment dans la scène dramatique de la classe.
4. L'excellent travail de Philippe Falardeau nous récompense avec ce drame doublement politique (le problème des réfugiés et une virulente critique du système d'éducation). Bien que la situation de la citoyenneté de monsieur Lazhar soit confuse, on apprend à connaître son histoire au fur et à mesure que le film progresse. Toutefois et par dessus tout, ce que j'ai retenu c'est le milieu dans lequel se déroule le film, l'école, les enfants et le milieu "féminocrate" dans l'école, cela m'a amené autant de réflexion que la situation des réfugiés dans le monde.

(www.cinemamontreal.com/critiques/46568/Monsieur_Lazhar.html)

ECRIRE

Exercice écrit au choix:

- Imaginez que vous êtes un enfant de la classe. Écrivez un journal intime et racontez vos sentiments après la mort de votre institutrice.
- Imaginez que vous êtes Bachir Lazhar. Expliquez à la commission d'immigration pourquoi vous devez rester au collège pour enseigner.

INTERESTING LINKS

ENGLISH

<http://hour.ca/2011/10/27/philippe-falardeau-monsieur-lazhar/> <http://www.montrealgazette.com/entertainment/movie-guide/Review+Monsieur+Lazhar/5617267/story.html>
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2011971/>

FRENCH

<http://monsieurlazhar.com/>
<http://www.allocine.fr/film/fichefilm-183502/secrets-tournage/>
http://www.ugcdistribution.fr/film/monsieur-lazhar_212
<http://www.lapresse.ca/cinema/201207/23/49-2695-monsieur-lazhar.php>
<http://fr.canoe.ca/divertissement/cinema/critiques/2011/10/27/18886231-jdm.html>
<http://voir.ca/cinema/2011/10/27/monsieur-lazhar-au-revoir-les-enfants/>
<http://www.cinoche.com/films/monsieur-lazhar/critiques/une-bien-bonne-lecon.html>
<http://www.lapresse.ca/debats/chroniques/marc-cassivi/201207/17/01-4548637-bachir-lazhar-philippe-falardeau-et-le-deuil.php>
<http://www.lapresse.ca/cinema/nouvelles/201207/17/01-4545740-bachir-lazhar-et-mohammed-fellag-destins-croises.php>
<http://www.commeaucinema.com/notes-de-prod/monsieur-lazhar,235354-note-100500>

Written by S. Renaudie