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Chemical Cut

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Chemical Cut

Abstract

This is a film review of *Chemical Cut* (2016), directed by Marjorie Conrad.

Author Notes

William Blizek is the Founding Editor of the Journal of Religion and Film, and is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is also the editor of the Continuum Companion to Religion and Film (2009).



Chemical Cut

(2016)

Written and Directed by Marjorie Conrad

This film is called a black comedy. And black it is. But it's also hilarious. Sometimes the laughter just doesn't stop. And, yes, you feel guilty laughing at the suffering of others. But you do laugh.

This is the story of Irene, who wants to become a fashion model. But no one is cooperating with her wishes. Her parents do not want her to become a model. Her bosses at the clothing store treat her terribly. Her boyfriend is abusive. The people she poses for are cruel. Even her agent is an a**hole. Nevertheless, Irene perseveres and this keeps the story moving.

But, in amongst the blackness and the humor, there's a serious purpose for Irene. She is trying to give her life meaning. At one point Irene says that she isn't interested in a modeling career per se, she just wants "one picture that defines me--tells me who I am." We all want to

know who we are and why we are here. And this is the stuff of religion. We may try in many ways to find "the one picture, that defines us." But accumulating wealth, becoming famous, gaining power over other people, and so on never seem to bring us the satisfaction that we want. So, Irene's quest is a fool's errand. And although we laugh at Irene's efforts, her efforts are at the heart of what makes us human.