

Clueless – representation of teenagers essay



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In the film *Clueless*, we see a variety of teenagers represented in different ways. Firstly, there is Cher who is selfish and a snob. Secondly, there is Dionne who only cares about boys and fashion. Thirdly Tai is the new girl in school, she is naive and “Clueless” with her social and fashion life as well as being interested in drugs. In addition, Travis is also a dope head and he is in love with Tai. Finally, Josh is Chers ex stepbrother. However, he is nothing like her, he is dedicated to his studies and concerned for the environment. On top of that, he is politically aware and gives respect to his ex step dad. The film is about teenager’s relationships and their constant battle against authority. The film is set in a rich part of Beverley hills in California.

The opening credits are set to draw the viewer into the film. The colours are bold whilst teenagers are shown doing reckless things such as when their in the car driving as if it is a game. In addition, the content that is shown makes the viewer anticipate an exciting and funny film. The silliness and thoughtless actions in the credits leads us to expect a fun but narrow-minded film of what the media believes of teenagers. In addition the use of camera angles draws the viewer into the film for example the close ups shows us tension.

At the start of the story, the main character, Cher, seems to be arrogant and does not believe any one is good enough for her. We see this when a boy tries to put his arm around her but she pushes him away as if she is saying you’re not up to my standards. In addition, she seems to feel superior to everybody else. This is seen when she takes up the role of Tai’s mentor even though Tai does not ask for her help. Moreover, she is critical of other students, this is shown when Travis asks if he could sit next to her but she

brushes him away and tells him to go where all the other supposed freaks sit. This suggests her unwillingness to mix with different students. This seems to be an unfair representation of teenagers because most teenagers believe themselves to be equal with one another and enjoy mixing with all types of teenagers. Cher's character is based on a stereotype, and is not a portrayal of teenager.

At the beginning of the film, we also see a range of other teenagers in the classroom of her school. They are not taking their education seriously at all. We can see Amber putting on make up whilst Cher is cursing her because Amber copies her style. This suggests that they care about how other people see them more than their education. Secondly, Elton, one of the cool kids is trying to make up excuses so he can leave the lesson. This also emphasises the fact that the teenagers are not taking their education seriously. In addition, the students are extremely inattentive. We see this where they are talking on phones and throwing paper balls about. This is implying that teenagers think of school as a chore rather than a privilege. This seems to be an unfair representation of teenagers because most do take education seriously. However, some teenagers do not take education critically but the film has exaggerated that. The majority of teenagers accept education is a privilege and try to make the most of it.

Another important character in the story is Tai. At first, she is represented as naive and clueless about fashion. This is shown through the way she is dressed like a tramp. Additionally when they offered her coke, she thought it was drugs not a drink. Other teenagers' reactions to her were judgemental and a bit cruel, but Cher and Dionne adopt her as if she is a pet. Cher and

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Dionne develop her into a more confident and approachable character. However due to her new style and dress sense she becomes arrogant and mean. This is shown when Cher speaks to her about her behaviour and asks Tai to stop but Tai accuses Cher of being jealous now that she is more popular than she is. By the end of her development, she has become more confident whilst also becoming mean to people. This is a vast change from her naive and sweet character. This seems an unfair representation of teenagers because teenagers do not go through that level of change. Tai's character at the start is not realistic. Most teenagers do not need to go through that level of change seen in her.

One of the most important scenes in the film is the party in Sun Valley, which is at Travis's house. At the party, the teenagers are indulging in wrong doings. Firstly, they are drinking and taking drugs. This shows us that they want to be like adults (because that is what adult's do.) even though they cannot handle it. This is shown when we see a boy being sick into the swimming pool because he has had too much to drink. Another thing they are doing is dancing and listening to music. This shows that teenagers love to party and socialise with other people even if it is in the presence of misbehaving. This reason shows us teenager's lack of respect for authority. It also shows teenagers want to be independent because they are having the party without any supervision.

At the end of the film, our impression of Cher has changed because she has become more mature and less judgemental of others. She has become kinder and aware of important matters. We see this when she volunteers to

help the beach disaster. This is an example of change because at the start she was not interested in helping other people.

Overall, teenagers in this film are shown to be dim and arrogant. However, this film is an unfair representation of teenagers because the majority of teenagers are serious about their education and are not that rebellious to authority figures shown in Clueless. Furthermore teenagers are much more accepting of all kinds of people and do not go through the level of change shown in Clueless.