

Film report

Psychology



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Movie Review: White Oleander The movie, White Oleander, describes a young woman's-Astrid Magnussen- struggle for development and coming of age in spite of the many anguish and hardships she encounters. The literary equivalent of a chick flick, White Oleander details the girl's attempts to come to terms with her mother's imprisonment while also surviving the cold, hostile and largely indifferent world of foster care. Throughout the movie, Astrid exhibits dynamics in characters as she struggles to come to self-realizations. Of importance to note is that she portrays a large extent of individualism particularly in behaviors, cognitive and emotional development.

Emotional Autonomy

This aspect of Astrid is first seen when her mother starts dating Barry.

According to the movie, Astrid develops a disgustful attitude towards her mother's lover. In this case, Astrid watches in disbelief as her mother breaks her self-imposed principles as she indulges in the love affair.

However, the mother ends up being humiliated after the man cheats on her with other young women. This explains how Astrid, a very young girl is able to distinguish between a healthy love affair and the one that does not stand the test of time.

Emotional autonomy is also seen when Astrid lives with the first foster family belonging to a former stripper. At the age of fourteen years, Astrid engages in a love affair with Ray, a man of her father's age. Furthermore, she engages in sexual relationship with Sergei, Rena's boyfriend. According to the movie, Sergei is twice the age of Astrid. Such decisions can only be made by a person who fails to consult their senior. In this case, she exhibits independence when making decisions that have huge impacts in her

emotional and private life.

Behavioral Autonomy

This involves behavioral decisions made by a person, especially a minor, which bring about behavior dynamics in disregard of norm. In most cases, the decision involves indulging in negative behaviors or those that have adverse effects on the life of a minor. In the movie, *White Oleander*, Astrid makes some critical decisions that have adversely affected her life. Most importantly, she indulges in drug abuse where she uses various illicit substances. In the first foster home, Astrid becomes sexually immoral—a risky behavior that would have serious consequences such as early sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. In addition, she performs oral sex on a boy so that she can obtain marijuana in the foster home for Turlock. Due to her behavioral anatomy that culminates to being a criminal, Astrid is expelled from Turlock home after getting drunk and spending the night at Olivias house one night. This makes her to be placed in a foster home of last resort.

Cognitive Autonomy

In this case, Astrid begins developing her own values and beliefs. Here, she becomes independent and free from pressure from any sources. According to the movie, this character is exhibited when Astrid get married to Paul and they relocate to Berlin, Germany. In this case, the decision to get married reflects an independent and well grounded decision as Astrid was already a drug addict and sexually immoral woman. In addition, Astrid agrees to testify in her mother's case so long as the mother fulfils some conditions. Normally, it would be expected of a child to do anything that the parent asks of them. In this case, Astrid shows cognitive anatomy when she demands some

declarations from the mother. Lastly, Astrid makes a decision to continue staying with Paul even after her mother is released from prison.

Reference

Bryant, T. (2009). *The White Oleander: characterization*, Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press