

Compare the
representation of the
family in the parent
trap and are we there
yet ...



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This essay will thoroughly discuss the representation of both families and then how it changes throughout the film. It will then compare the two films to see if the representation is the same. Both these films have very similar themes but are set in very different settings/contexts. The storylines are different yet at the end of both films the representations of both families is almost identical. The Parent Trap is a film where upper class Bostonian Sharon McKendrick meets her unknown tomboyish twin Susan Evers from California on a summer camp for girls.

After continuous quarrelling due to their identical looks they are placed in a cabin together for punishment. Instead of finding more arguments they discover the biggest secret that they are actually twin sisters. The rest of the film is an insight in to how the twin sisters swap places in a ploy to try and reengage their parents love and bring the family back together. The main problem of the family at the start of the film is that there is a huge split because of Maggie and Mitch divorcing and having one child each.

The first twin we see is Sharon who is from Boston which is a very wealthy, upper class part of America. She pulls up in a Rolls Royce which is a very expensive make of car; only the wealthiest of people would have been able to afford one. Sharon is polite, very well dressed, well groomed and because of the possessions she has suggests she is intelligent. She wears a very formal dress to a summer camp which would have been unsuitable for the activities they would do at ' Camp Inch'. We then meet the other twin Susan; she is the complete opposite of Sharon. She is rude, undisciplined and acts like a tom-boy.

This is explicitly shown to us by the way that she reacts to Sharon when she sees how similar she looks ' how dare she take my face'. Her hair is very short and looks like a boys hair cut showing her masculine up-bringing. She also can't let things go, she seeks revenge on Sharon and her friends for tipping their boat over. The directors of this film have made the twins like this (complete opposites) so they can convey the split in the family. They have very different backgrounds and upbringings and because of their parents splitting up they are complete opposites. Throughout the film the representations change.

As the film progresses we start to see changes in the family and the relationships. Maggie and Mitch see each other for the first time and there is a moment of joy as they ask how they are and they've been. This turns into an argument when Mitch asks Maggie why she has suddenly turned up at his house, but they stop when Mitch sees both his girls for the first time. Sharon and Susan cause Vicky to leave when the three of them and Mitch go on a camping holiday. Sharon and Susan try to make it as hard as it could be for Vicky that she hits Susan and Mitch sees her true colours.

Vicky leaves and Maggie is very pleased about it. Towards the end of the film Mitch and Maggie sit down together for a meal. There is a long shot of Maggie from behind and then a reverse angle close up of Mitch's face lighting up as he realises how beautiful she is. They start flirting just like they did when they met. The scene is exactly like it would have been on their first date. The music that they play is the music from their first date. There are several really close up shots of both of them so you can literally see the love in their eyes.

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We can observe that they are trying to recreate the scene from their first date with the music, food and overall atmosphere. They both realise they still love each other and re-kindle the love they once had. During this scene the main change was the realisation that they did still love each other deep down but just didn't realise it because they hadn't seen one another for so long. This is the change that brings the family back together. In the last parts of the film we see the family come together like a family should. The last scene is the remarriage of Mitch and Maggie.

It's a joyous scene in which Sharon and Susan are the bridesmaids and there is happiness on everyone's face. This is showing us that by the end of the film the whole family is just like a family should be: having fun, being together, no arguments. This representation of the family is much better than the one at the start because there is no longer a split in the family and they are back together. *Are We There Yet?* is a family film where American rapper Ice Cube begins an epic journey to get the woman of his dreams kids to her.

At first Ice Cube (Nick) thinks it will be easy and thinks he can just send them off on the plane over to her. Following mishap after mishap Nick realises that this is a bigger and more costly job than he had ever imagined. More and more the kids cause trouble and almost push Nick to the edge causing countless damage to his car and stress to Nick. Although this is a journey from hell, Nick and the kids all gain something from the journey that means more than any car, family. Just like *The Parent Trap* the representation of this family at the start of the film is not they very positive.

Suzanne has divorced her husband and is a single mum looking after her two kids on her own. There is no father-figure in the house-hold which may suggest a reason for the kids to be so rude to new people. Lyndsey and Kevin do not want a new dad they just want their own dad back so they can have a family. Because they are young and naive they don't understand that this will never happen. We can tell that Lyndsey and Kevin don't want a new dad because every time Suzanne has a date they try to sabotage it and usually it works.

We see this at the start of the film with the reality-stretching pranks they play on the man Suzanne was going to see. As this is the starting scene of the film the directors want you to see that this is a key theme to the film. A positive representation about the family is that Suzanne, Kevin and Lyndsey are very strong together and can cope without a man in the family although a man in the family would increase the strong bonds. This representation starts to change as the road trip begins. Kevin and Lyndsey want to make the journey as unbearable and costly for Nick as they can.

They run away from him, damage his car, try to be as annoying as they possibly could be and even try and trick a lorry driver into thinking Nick has kidnapped them and get him to save them. Although there are many setbacks there is one pivotal moment when Nick opens up to the kids and they really start to act like a family. Kevin and Lyndsey run away from Nick to try and find their dads house and when they do they are not happy. They find that he has another woman and a new baby. Nick then comforts kids and also reveals that he was in the same position when he was their age.

The kids begin to realise that they can really relate to Nick. At the end of the film the representation of the family has changed from being split with no father figure to being a family unit with a mother father and kids. They are a whole lot happier than at the start, because you can see the joy that they have and the newly found love between Nick and Suzanne. The last scene is a typical family ending with a castle-shaped hotel and fireworks representing a well know theme park such a DisneyWorld, which relate to happiness and as it's a family film the kids will love the element of having a hotel shaped as castle.

The kids are jumping from bed to bed with smiles on their faces as they now know that Nick is staying for good and they finally have a dad. There are a lot of similarities between both films at the start and the end. At the end of both films there is a family unit that is very happy together and you can see and feel the love involved. You can see from the acting, lighting, music and atmosphere that they family in now very happy which is a big difference to the start of both films. Both families are structured in the same way: there is a Dad, a Mum and two kids.

I think that maybe both these films could be trying to say that the perfect family is portrayed in these two films, but in all honesty who is to decide the real definition of ' perfect'. There are also many differences between the two families. Probably the main difference is that the family from The Parent Trap are white whereas in Are We There Yet? the family is black. Are We There Yet? is a perfect example of how stereotypes are subverted in films. Usually it's not the black people who are main characters, it's usually white

Americans.

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In the 1960's black people would never have been used for main characters. Another difference is that in *The Parent Trap* even though Maggie and Mitch got divorced they still got back together whereas in *Are We There Yet?* the storyline is about Suzanne getting divorced with one man and then getting into a relationship with another. I think that nowadays it is more acceptable to be in more than one relationship (obviously at different times) than it was back in the 1960's because as times have gone on so have views on divorce.

I think that society doesn't frown upon divorce as it is now such a common thing whereas back in the 1960's it was very rare so when divorce did occur it was looked down upon. I think that family is a very important thing because it is the foundation for a good life and people with a full family can perhaps gain an advantage on those who don't have a father/mother figure in the house. I am in two minds as to whether I believe that the family representation has changed because there are some similarities and some differences.

I think that because of the way society looks upon divorce and family life in modern times there is a difference of representation, being that divorce is more common and less frowned upon. But ultimately I believe that the representation of a family will always be the same. It has love, joy and a bit more love. We see this at the end of both films, with the remarriage of Maggie and Mitch and the joy of Nick, Suzanne, Kevin and Lyndsey. At the centre of a family is love and I think we see this at the end of both of these family films.

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