



LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE

Inspiration for the film:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsEkf_TYV6s

Roger Ebert review -

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/little-miss-sunshine-2006>

- 'Just a few seconds into "Little Miss Sunshine" we know it's a movie about dreams -- and illusions.'

- 'They approach the Ramada Inn where the pageant is being held, they can see the building from the freeway -- it looks close enough to touch, but they can't find the exit that will actually get them there. That moment has a lot to say, not only about the illusive, ever-shifting concrete landscape of Southern California, where you always seem to be moving down some predefined course but never quite arriving -- and about the elusive nature of those American Dreams we all chase, the detours we follow -- and the roads we don't.'

- 'A gentle family satire and a classic American road movie, "Little Miss Sunshine" harks back to the anti-establishment, countercultural comedies of the 1970s'

- 'satirical fairy tales that preached the virtues of nonconformity over the superficiality of conventional American values.'

Tony Watkins Be Thinking - <https://www.bethinking.org/culture/little-miss-sunshine>

The Hoover family might not be dysfunctional if it wasn't for the men in the house.

- 'It's a very rare thing to find a film that really makes you laugh and then can turn around and make you cry like this one'

- 'We felt that *Little Miss Sunshine* was a story that shifts much in the same way that life shifts, moving from drama to farce to reflection and back to farce again....'

- 'we wanted to make a film not about family values, but about the value of family.'

- 'A quietly antic dysfunctional family road trip comedy that shoots down the all-American culture of the winner and offers sweet redemption for losers - at least the ordinary folks often branded as such.'

- 'It comes closer to the truth about the way people really live - on the edge of fantasy-driven desperation - than our sanctimonies permit us to think.'

- '*an American family road comedy that shatters the mould.*'

- '*There are two kinds of people in this world, winners and losers.*' (Richard)

- '*A real loser isn't someone who doesn't win. A real loser is someone so afraid of not winning they don't even try.*' (Grandpa)

- '*Every character in this story undergoes a major transformation - even the family's VW bus.*' (Producer Ron Yerxa)

Themes in the film:

- Winning and losing
- Identity
- Family (love)
- Acceptance
- Death/suicide

Contextual issues and messages:

- Gender
- Age
- American Dream
- Family
- Identity
- Superficial society



Little Miss America: An Ideological Analysis of "Little Miss Sunshine" Nikki Martin

<https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1018&context=cine>

- 'the film criticizes American dominant ideology in regards to the "ideal" family, success and gender roles.'

- 'The films we are talking about throw up obstacles in the way of the ideology, causing it to swerve off course.'

- 'as the story continues, American dominant ideology is criticized.'

- 'Olive chooses happiness over conventional beauty.'

- 'Her unorthodox performance creates a gap between her family and the audience, once more reflecting the choices of individuals versus the choice of society'

- 'Olive Hoover is their beacon of hope—she is the one that makes the family take this journey, and together they overcome challenges and experience renewed optimism and commitment to family.'

- 'The only concept that remains true is that America can be a land of happiness, if one ignores the ever-judging eye of society.'

Question type and structure

Explore how one example of specialist writing on the film you have studied has deepened your understanding of the film. Refer to at least one sequence from your chosen film to illustrate your answer.

In your answer, you should: i) identify the example of specialist writing you are using in the box provided in your answer book. (ii) briefly describe one key idea from the specialist writing you have studied outline what this key idea suggests about your chosen film (iii) show how this idea compares with your own views on the film (use one sequence to demonstrate this).

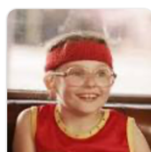
POINT: What is an issue raised in 'Little Miss Sunshine', what is a view (from a source) that deepens this idea, what source is it? What are your ideas on this issue and how did the source take it deeper (try to reference 3 ways it did) Which scene emphasise the issue and why is it important to the film?

Micro elements What is a micro feature that is done in this scene that links to the idea in the writing + HOW does it explore this + WHY is this significant to the issue/ idea in the source?

What is a 2nd micro feature that is done in this scene that links to the idea in the writing + HOW does it explore this + WHY is this significant to the issue idea? HOW does this further build on the previous micros feature?

What is a 3rd micro feature that is done in this scene that links to the idea in the writing + HOW does it explore this + WHY is this significant to the issue idea? HOW does this further build on the previous micros feature?

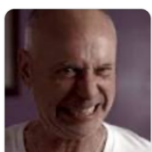
EXPLAIN: WHY is the view from the source significant and how has it deepened your understanding of the issue in the film?



Olive Hoover
Abigail Breslin



Dwayne Hoover
Paul Dano



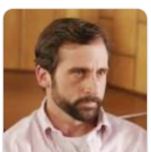
Grandpa Hoover
Alan Arkin



Richard Hoover
Greg Kinnear



Sheryl Hoover
Toni Collette



Frank Ginsburg
Steve Carell



Stan Grossman



In the exam you must be able to use:

Specialist writing on film, including film criticism in order to develop and extend their knowledge of film, learners will be required to study three main sources of specialist writing on film, including film criticism, in relation to this topic:

- one source on cinematography
- one source on US independent film
- one film review (one review will be set on each of the five independent films set by WJEC).