



Movie Club

Little Miss Sunshine (2006)

1. How are we first introduced to the characters? Think about the setting and the tone. What dynamic does this set up for the rest of the film?
2. When the family approach their destination, they can see the hotel from the freeway they are on, but they cannot find the exit to get them there. How does this reflect the themes in the film? What does this action say?
3. Each character in the film is struggling with an issue, and at some point we see them in pain, yet the film maintains a comedic value. When do we see comedy and pain simultaneously in the film, and what effect does it have?

‘These actors (and their directors, Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris) grasp how unspoken reactions can be funnier than dialogue or punchlines, and how pain can be the source of the most satisfying comedy.’ (Roger Ebert: <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/little-miss-sunshine-2006>)

4. What do you make of Olive’s mum, would you say she is the most normal character in the film?

‘Olive’s family all have issues: or the menfolk do, anyway - the mom is a paradigm of harassed common sense and little Olive herself, if we put aside her enthusiasm for the unwholesome beauty-parade, is sweet-natured and entirely ingenuous. But Dwayne and Dad and Grandpa are royally screwed up, and this especially goes for poor Uncle Frank...’ (Peter Bradshaw: <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/sep/08/comedy>)

5. What do you think this film is making a comment on? You might want to consider the film’s representation of family, of American culture, beauty pageants etc. Further to this, what genre would you classify the film into? A comedy, a road film, a satire, or something else?