**Clueless-Blend of Racial & Ideological Perspectives**

There is not one fixed image of the typical American teenager, but in the year 1995, the movie Clueless exposed a new breed of teenagers that transformed the way they were seen in society. Revolving around the lives of relatively naïve and troubled high school students growing up in the 1990s is the premise of the “coming-of-age” movie Clueless. Its introduction of a new vernacular, fashion trends, and Hollywood “it” girl was enough to conjure images of what it meant to be a teenager in the 1990s. With its succinct plot line and no extreme conflicts, other than Cher potentially losing her popularity title, Clueless is successful in relating to anyone that experienced the relationships and hardships of being in high school. At surface level, Clueless is a glimpse in a day in the life of a popular teenager, but with a critical eye, it is hard to ignore the underlying feminist dialogue and metaphors that speak to the generation. This article aims at understanding the 1995 film, Clueless, in its social context through themes of Racial, and Ideological Perspectives.

In the zeitgeist of the 1990s, the Generation X movement serves as inspiration for the “coming-of-age” movie that Clueless embodies, but uniquely through comedic and satirical elements. “Clueless” is an embodiment of how popular culture served updated agendas, and also demonstrates the proof of racial generalizations (Horkhiemer, et al, 2002) concerning its POC characters.

What interests me about Clueless as a topic of rhetorical criticism is its way of using extraordinary characters to tell a story about the entire generation (Smythe, 1981). The audience does not have to go to Beverly Hills high school to know what a house party is or what the inside of a mall looks like; the only helpful knowledge to have before analyzing this film is a familiarity with 1990s culture within its context of creating the trends for that generation. For instance, its references to Luke Perry or Noxzema commercials, though not necessarily essential to know, its relevance to the context adds humor. The vernacular comprised of original and made-up words from the 1990s became popular catch phrases and expressions; for example, the term, “whatever,” is still used today. Beyond the comedy, jargon and outrageous costuming lie a more significant meaning for audiences that watch Clueless.

In the film, Emma creates a space between the opposite ideological boundaries of the late eighteenth century. In the midst of this period, the conventional “aristocratic ideology “in the light of a chain of command of the social legacy, began to conflict with a "progressive ideology" born of flourishing ideas of independence and private enterprise (Gramsci, 1985). Emma exists as a mixed content of this discussion and presents a delicate harmony preserving social solidity. As a result, Clueless establishes a rule for appropriate sex in a general audience, both obsessed with sex and frightened by the consequences of diseases such as AIDS, transmitted explicitly.

As a character, Emma summarizes her disturbed social condition. While strongly affirming her independence and pursuing her choice, she is also the most qualified lady in Highbury. It may act as the result of a "progressive ideology," but its social position inserts it into a "traditional ideology" that accepts marriage as a social benefit. Although Emma seems to reject the natural desires of this position, announcing never to marry and in the long run a marriage of worship, it is both advantageous and invented that Knightley is not only his decision but his social equivalent. The message is clear: “follow your heart as long as it is appropriate.”

Likewise, Cher's activities distort his appearance. It sums up a sexual generalization that an advanced gathering of people will quickly perceive. A light young girl dressed reliably in short skirts, tight tops and leg warmers in mid-thighs seems shameless. However, Cher pushes the desires and remains a virgin until she finds the perfect match. Confused shifts the message held in Emma into a message that says: “follow your heart as long as it is appropriate”. Cher's virginity is similar to Emma's heart. Both characters control the desires of gathering and do not act according to their particular social condition.

Clueless upholds the didactic impulse inlaid in Emma. Also, as social contexts evolve and new driving forces develop, the original directives mutate (Smythe, 1981). The sexual upheaval of the 1960s opened the doors to sexuality. What was once intended to calm the whispers, out of public view, resulted in an open exchange in the hands of the media? Sex before marriage is accepted in most groups of friends and familiar in current movies. Thus, although the discovery of individual fulfillment in marriage may have been abnormal at the end of the eighteenth century, marriage to satisfy personal satisfaction is an interesting idea today. Cher and Josh did not get married by the end of Clueless ("as if I'm only sixteen, you know"), yet Cher takes over Mrs. Guist's marriage and hands the flowers over to Josh. This scene ends the warrant and adjusts Cher to a marriage deemed unnecessary by current beliefs.

Hecklering uses two systems in the film that reveal a renewed agenda. In the first place, tiny irregularities in the narrative show how the twentieth century refreshed the eighteenth century for its plan. The relationship between Frank Weston and Jane Churchill is absent in Clueless, and Harriet’s inability to find an attachment qualifies differently though Tai. “These details help pinpoint where Austen’s perspective does not relate to a modern perspective and reveal why this perspective still continues to re-appropriate her form and structure”.

At the moment when the term race is referenced, the natural reaction connects it to the term ethnic foundation. Even though race and ethnicity may have a similar belief system in terms of global parentage, competition in the dominant culture is more complicated than the only physical trait (Marx, et al, 1976), for example, shade of the skin. A race is a forced society, and its hierarchical thinking is the way people have seen you. It's a choice to characterize someone's personality. There are many different factors, but the idea of race and the ethnic definition are starting to get darker. It seems that "dark" and "white" marks are the best way to see someone. "The media can be considered as the key to organizing personal character" (Marx, et al, 1976). Pop culture has a significant impact on the valuations and beliefs of society. Social norms are established, in this sense, in the case where one chooses to blend, is considered immoral (Gramsci, 1971).

The film takes place in the United States, where the dominant race is the Caucasus, which means that the general population, which are not, is usually below the primary social channel of importance (Marx, et al, 1976). The film deals with class similarities as opposed to race, but it is the race that finally undermines a POC character. Even though it is a national inquiry, race cannot exist without different factors, such as sexual orientation and social class, for example. Dionne, Cher's closest companion, is a massive case of how a race can repress its social position. As the closest companion of the heroine, we can accept that she too has her own story. In any case, it is more described as another adaptation of Cher. For example, she is not understated because she is a piece of the faction, but she is merely a companion of Cher. Even though Cher reflects on the position of society, wealth, style, and even expression, she is still considered under the hero because of her race (Lenos, 2014). Stuart Hall's hypothesis on encoding[[1]](#footnote-1) and disentangling can be expressed through Murray's character (Hall, 1981). Murray is Dionne's darling and, when the gathering was acquainted with his role, he has shown many cliché names to African Americans. He was told to wear jeans, a regressive cap, and gold jewelry. Likewise, he is shown tuning with rap music. These are factors that imply that he is a black criminal, a grand generalization of the 1990s about African-American teenagers prone to embarrassment and disappointment. Also, the relationship between Dionne and Murray is described as confused and awful while that of Cher and Josh, a white couple, is soft and not angry. In their first scene, Dionne and Murray understood Dionne's call, while Dionne was standing up for a hair growth she had found in her car. Shortly after, the couple engaged in a battle, describing African-American relations as fierce and powerful.

Far from the African-American generalizations, there is an increasingly national gathering that makes a false impression because of the way it is portrayed in the film. The South Americans or Latin Americans are another family gathering that the Clueless film neglects to talk about completely. A few minutes in the movie, Lucy, cleaning specialist of Cher's family units. The scene unfolds as Cher asks where her shirt is, and Lucy answers in an unknown dialect. At present, it is unclear what his race was until Cher did an investigation into a Mexican language. It was discovered later in the film that she was from El Salvador. “Another Latin American character, José appeared as Cher's planter. Defining two Latin American characters as domestic helpers reinforce the generalization against illegal migrants (Lenos, 2014).” This may suggest that, since Latin American Americans are known to have erroneously crossed the United States, their only wage source is a practical occupation that does not need to be bored with extensive training.

Clueless created trends not only in fashion and slang but for eliminating the need to stereotype and categorize people based on ideologies. The film exists because the director sensed something going on in the society that needed to be addressed. As a satire, the film began with an exact look at several cliques in high school yet at the very end, the characters from every realm of society be-friend each other. There is a human chain of hierarchy present in this film, anyway since the main characters that are colored are not persecuted by the dominant race, it is probably under investigation (Lenos, 2014). We see a famous couple, Dionne and Murray, the once outsiders, Travis and Tai, and Cher and Josh, who seemed to be the opposite of one another, join together at a table during Miss Geist and Mr. Hall’s wedding. From that point on, everyone could sleep comfortably knowing that the dilemmas of fitting in or being famous were not as important as they once were.

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1. “Encoding and decoding hypothesis postulates that the meaning of a product of media is not fixed by the sender, the message is never transparent and the audience is not a passive recipient of the message.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)