

Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986, Hughes)

Context:

- Set in Chicago. Reflects contemporary society and its issues. (It is set at the time the film was made / released (mid 1980s).)
- America was the most powerful nation in the world. This made the country (and its people) feel invincible.
- As a result, children would have had an idealistic and innocent upbringing. The affluent life of the characters reflects the wealth at the time.
- The film mocks (makes fun of) people's obsession for wealth and material possessions.
- MTV was launched in 1981 and became the voice of the teenage generation. Many media products targeted teenagers.
- Adolescents had a lack of respect for authority and rules and wanted to experience freedom.
- Adolescents questioned their futures (and that their futures were mapped out for them), how they fit in with society and how to meet their parents' expectations.
- Depicts 'latchkey kids' – children who were allowed to be at home without adult supervision.
- Authority figures (teachers and parents) are presented as ignorant and ineffective.
- Adolescents questioned the education system and what they learned at school. School is shown as useless and boring.
- The film demonstrates a sympathetic viewpoint of adolescence: they are misunderstood by parents and other authority figures.

Key characters and their roles:

<p>Ferris Bueller The narrator. Fits the genre role of the rebel. Has no respect for authority. Sees school as unnecessary. Manipulates his parents, and pressures Cameron into skipping school and stealing the car. - Reflects affluent adolescents who felt the need to rebel against society's expectations. - Reflects teen views on school and authority.</p>	
<p>Cameron Frye The protagonist. Fits the genre role of the outsider. Contrasts with Ferris' uncaring attitude. Suffers from anxiety and is scared to rebel. His father is absent and is shown to care more about his prized car than him. Allows Ferris to control him. He struggles to stand up for himself until the end of the film - Represents teens that were worried about their future and how to live up to society's expectations. - Reflects teen struggles with materialistic parents.</p>	

<p>Sloane Peterson Ferris' girlfriend. She doesn't concern herself with the future. - Represents a more modern approach to dating and marriage. She wants to enjoy life before settling down.</p>	
<p>Katie Bueller Seems more effective as a parent than Ferris' father, but is shown to care more about work than her children's wellbeing. - Reflects the shift in female roles of the time. They were no longer stereotypical housewives; they went to work, were successful with high-powered jobs.</p>	
<p>Tom Bueller Is ineffective in his role as a parent. He puts his business before his son – he does not notice Ferris on multiple occasions throughout the film. - Represents how adolescents were able to get away with rebellion due to their obsession with work and business.</p>	
<p>Ed Rooney Acts as more of a typical male authority figure than Ferris' father. He goes to great lengths to bring him back from school and catch him truanting. - Is a personification of how teenagers saw school and authority figures as a joke. - Reflects how authority figures did not trust parents. They felt that parents were too obsessed with their own careers and personal happiness to look after their children.</p>	

<p>Key Sequence 1: Opening sequence</p>	
<p>Narrative - The film's exposition: We are introduced to the characters of Ferris and his parents. - Ferris breaks the fourth wall and directly addresses the audience. This establishes a connection between Ferris and the audience and we take this journey with him. - The monologues mostly focus on Cameron. It helps the audience to understand how Cameron is struggling and Ferris feels the need to save him. - We learn of Ferris' lack of respect for authority and his questioning how useful education is.</p>	
<p>- Establishing shot demonstrates Ferris' affluent and privileged upbringing. The busy neighbourhood reflects Ferris' social popularity. - A point of view shot of Ferris' parents looking at him in bed. They seem to have the control here as parents but Ferris' is manipulating them. - The central placement of Katie Bueller demonstrates her dominance over her husband, and that she is more effective as a parent than Tom, who is placed behind her and to the side.</p>	
<p>- Long shot of Ferris' room shows posters of culture, history and art. Emphasises</p>	

<p>that Ferris is interested in other cultures, it is just school he doesn't agree with.</p>
<p>Editing - Separate cross cutting between Ferris, his sister and his parents demonstrates their different attitude and perspectives. It also allows the audience to see (through close ups) that Ferris is manipulating his parents – the audience are a part of the joke. The opening monologue is edited as an MTV music video montage, showing the effects of music television on teenagers and the power it has in contemporary society.</p>

<p>Key Sequence 2: Cameron's introduction</p>	
<p>Narrative - The exposition continues. We meet Cameron – we are already aware of how he feels from Ferris' narration. We see how convincing Ferris is, and how Cameron feels he can't stand up to him.</p>	<p>- Establishing shot of Cameron's house. It is remote and isolated – contrasts with Ferris' neighbourhood home. Reflects Cameron as the Outsider. The purpose-built house highlights his family's affluence.</p>
<p>Cameron's vulnerability. The clutter of medication and tissues reflects Cameron's mental state.</p>	<p>Cameron's all grey minimalist room contrasts Ferris' full, colourful space. High angle positioning of the Camera in bed highlights</p>

<p>Sound Electronic sombre music reflects Cameron's agonising mental state. Contrast of music, during the cross cutting between Ferris and Cameron, of the electronic music compared with Hawaiian music while Ferris is in the shot. Juxtaposes Cameron's anguish and Ferris' carefree nature.</p>
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<p>Key Sequence 3: Parade sequence</p>	
<p>Narrative - Forms part of the inciting incident. Cameron's frustration with Ferris is shown here and that their perspectives on life are contrasting. - Cameron and Sloane are shot at eye level in mid-shots / Ferris is shown using low angle from a distance. The characters and audience look up to and admire him. Ferris moves with the crowd where Cameron and Sloane walk against the crowd, reflecting how they are questioning society's expectation of them. The red structure around them looks like a cage, and reflects how they feel trapped by society.</p>	
<p>Lighting High-key, the scene is colourful, busy and full of extras, props and bright clothing. The mood is joyous and united, mirroring the political feeling of the time.</p>	

<p>Key Sequence 4: 'I'm gonna take a stand'</p>	
<p>Narrative - The film's climax. Cameron realises he needs to stand up to his father and takes his frustrations out on his father's Ferrari. - Close up jump cuts of Cameron taking his frustration out on the Ferrari – emphasise his anger towards his father and the audience can see up close the damage it is doing to the car. - Cameron has removed his red jersey and now wears a beige t-shirt more like the colour of Sloane and Ferris' costume. He now fits in with them and shares their attitudes about freedom. - The placement of the Ferrari between Cameron and Ferris / Sloane demonstrates how Cameron is still letting the expectations and worries about his father come between them.</p>	
<p>The high angle shot of the car, with the camera positioned behind Cameron demonstrates how he has finally taken control of the relationship with his father, he finally feels he is now more important than the car below him.</p>	
<p>Sound - Ferris remains silent when Cameron is talking, which contrasts with the rest of the film. This allows Cameron to finally speak his mind and for the audience to fully understand Cameron's fears.</p>	

Motifs and symbols

<p>The red Ferrari</p>	
<p>- The Ferrari is a reminder to Cameron of his father's lack of interest in him. The colour red is a symbol of how angry the car makes Cameron. - It is a reminder that Cameron is unable to stand up to his father. He takes his frustration out on it as he is unable to confront him. - When the car crashes into the woods, Cameron's fear disappears with it. He has developed into a more confident person.</p>	
<p>Cameron's red jersey - Until the final sequence, Cameron wears a red jersey. This symbolises his fears and anxieties that he finally removes at the end of the film. By having the costume the same colour as the car, it shows how unimportant Cameron feels to his father.</p>	