Baby Boom Vs. Three Men And A Baby Essay, Research Paper

The two movies I have selected to review are Baby Boom starring Diane Keaton, and Three Men and a Baby starring Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg and Ted Danson. They both came out in 1987 and although they are similar in topic, they were received very differently by critics and audiences. The basic plot of both films is as follows: Career or party-minded person ?inherits? or is left by a former lover a baby girl. At first they don?t want her and don?t know what to do with her, but soon they fall in love with her and adjust/adapt their lifestyles to fit their new daughter. This generalization may be the basic plot of the films, but when the details come out, they take very opposing paths.

The first major difference is the sex of the main character(s). In Baby Boom, Diane Keaton stars as management consultant JC Wyatt who lives in New York City with her ?partner? and works constantly. She does not go out, unless it is with a client and she rarely has sex. In one of the first scenes of the movie he asks her if she wants to make love, they show the clock and when they are done only two minutes have passed. When she inherits this child from distant cousins, she does not know what to do because she does not fit, and never has, the role of mother. It is not part of her life. Here is where her social problem comes in ? role conflict. Her role is single woman with job, that is her sole identity. Role conflict occurs when incompatible role demands are placed on a person by two or more statuses held at the same time. JC is a working professional, and when she attempts to be a mother, it does not come easily or without stress. This is a very realistic situation; in fact it is the situation of millions of working mothers and single working mothers across the country. They need to work to provide for themselves and their child, but the stress of playing working woman and mother can be too much for them.

Three Men and a Baby gives its entertaining quirk away in its title, and they?re the originality ends. There are three men living in an apartment in New York and all three are partying bachelors. Of course they have their different personalities ? the sensitive guy, the partier, the gigolo as is necessary in any film. It is the gigolo, Ted Danson, who brings this trying situation upon the three of them. The morning after Selleck?s birthday bash, Steve Guttenberg and Tom Selleck awaken to a baby on their doorstep ? Danson is in Istanbul filming a movie. So they are forced to care for the child the best they know how until he returns and they can do something about it. The rest of the movie is filled with cheesy humor about situations and as Howe says, ??a predictable chain of events,? they face while caring for the child before and after Danson returns. This is a completely unrealistic situation for so many reasons, first of which is the careers of these men. Guttenberg is a cartoonist, Selleck an architect and Danson an actor. They live in a huge apartment in the city and can take time off from working to take care of this child. There is no mention of plans for a nanny and they don?t even think about cost of living. How many single fathers have this much extra dough to throw around? Hal Erickson of the ?All Movie Guide? is in accordance with my opinion and says, ?The balance of the film is devoted to milking as much humor as possible out of the situation of three urbane young men trying to play nursemaid with nary a clue at what they?re doing.? Three Men and a Baby is a typical comedy, and much of it is potty humor associated with caring for a child. Baby Boom takes the situation a step further and made it more of a self-realization of the need for a lifestyle and role change. Diane Keaton leaves her ?partner?, her hectic job and moves to Vermont with her ?inheritance? and starts fresh. She starts a business, makes friends and meets a country man. According to Hal Erickson, ?Baby Boom avoids phony sentiment and obvious humor.?

What builds the humor of both films is the fact that neither set of parents have the slightest clue of how to take care of a child. Diaper changing, feeding and other common childcare activities produce many laughs because of the many mishaps that occur. Role strain is occurring; at this time in society men were not helping around the house and JC (Keaton) tells her partner she was an only child, her mother never taught her basic childcare tools.

What transpires in the male household could be categorized as deviance ? traditionally the woman should keep her child and the father usually wouldn?t live with two other males. This kind of situation is not really accepted in society. JC however conforms to the now traditional role of single mother, and then single mother working at home. She was a deviant; a woman with no love life, no family, no life except for her high profile, 24hour career. Now, and after she gets together with her sheriff boyfriend, she will almost fit the cookie cutter mold of a nuclear family. What this child has created for JC is a commitment, one to a person instead of a position as before. She was experiencing anomie, she did not have a strong social bond to anyone and could be considered a social wanderer. JC creates a life that sociologists would approve of ? she has a dependent child, a business, a home, a boyfriend and she lives in such a small town that she is forced to befriend them. She has commitments to her child and her company, she has attachments to the town and she is involved in the workings of her town and business. This follows the pattern of Hirsch?s Social Bond Theory. In this he states that deviant behavior decreases when they have strong ties to society through attachment, commitment, involvement and belief.

Three Men and a Baby are just that, three men thrown in with a baby so they really don?t learn any life lessons. They have less sex and don?t party quite as much, but it?s not like they realize how shallow a life they were living and are desperate to change it. They simply adjust to having a kid around and go about life as it was. Women no longer sleepover every night, but some hanky panky still occurs. What is odd in this movie is the way all three of them act as father instead of Danson assuming the role, as he normally would.

Role conflict may be a common situation, but as these two films show, there are numerous different ways that people choose to deal with it. JC seems to crack, and she realizes her stressful and egocentric lifestyle is not enough for her, she needs more out of life. Conveniently she has enough money to provide for her and her new daughter. She does re-enter the business world, but on her own terms and on her own will. The gift of a child changes her life positively; she makes a new fulfilling life for herself.

The men in three men and a baby do change for the better as well, but in a different way. They do not leave the city life, they don?t change their careers and they don?t leave their girlfriends. But they do find a new meaning to their lives. It is almost like they are secret agents and raising her is their mission. They work together to make her life as good as they possibly can.

In summation, these two movies, Baby Boom and Three men and a Baby can actually teach us something. Baby Boom is more realistic and hits home with many women today who are working and raising children on their own. They feel this strain, being torn between their children and their career and income. One is necessary to support the other, but at times, it is too much to handle. Unfortunately, the moment JC moves to Vermont with no job and no income, it passes reality and goes straight to fantasyland. Because she has only had to pay or herself, she has enough spare income to purchase a house, fix it up and provide for herself. It shows women that you can be successful as a mother and businesswoman, and that everyone has a soft side.

Three Men and a Baby drifts away from reality at the very beginning. How could a cartoonist and a part time actor afford the rent their apartment must demand? At the end, when the mother wants the child back, they don?t ask why she abandoned her. The only part that is remotely realistic is the love they show for this precious baby girl. They don?t struggle between their career and fatherhood; they do struggle with diapers. It is a comedically written script, not fashioned for us to extract a lesson. In the end though we do learn this ? if you have money and looks, according to Hollywood you can do anything.

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