

The comedy knocked up media essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The comedy knocked up was written, directed and produced by Judd Apatow, and was one of the highest grossing films in 2007. Released at the end of May in 2007, it succeeded as a summer blockbuster and won the people and teen choice awards for favorite movie comedy. Distributed by Universal, the film grossed over \$148 million. Knocked up follows the unplanned conception of successful single woman Allison, with unlikely partner loser, pothead Ben. After a night of drinking and dancing with Ben at a bar, Allison invites Ben over to her place and, both drunk, they have sex and conceive a baby. When Allison finds out, she decides to keep the baby and tries to force a real relationship with Ben. Despite a rollercoaster of fights, emotions, and immature baby jokes, Allison and Ben ride off together in the last scene to the apartment Ben has prepared for Allison and her new born baby.

This film is important because it reveals the disparity between social realities of pregnancy and the historical trajectory of pregnancy and how it relates to the current naturalization of pregnancy as a commodity. Allison is seen as deviant because she is unwed and was drunk during the conception of the child. As well as having a one night stand. But she is seen as normal cause she tries to fix the situation a form a relationship with the father, and in the end she does. This movie reflects a particular cultural, political and social situation that informs our understanding of the discourse of pregnancy. Commodity pregnancy is working through the culture industry to portray pregnancy as glamorous and even trendy, while in popular film pregnancy is plotted as unintended and framed as a grave problem. The bump is not a blessing.

Abortion has since been included in various television shows, and movies, has been a major topic of debate in politics, and is a known medical procedure- whether one is pro- choice or pro-life, people are conscious of the abortion. Yet, the word abortion was never mentioned in the movie and was instead referred to as a „smushmortion.“ Or the mother told Allison to have it taken care of , insinuating an abortion, like her step sister did. While the word abortion was never in the movie for reasons unknown, the fact that female body parts, assumed duties of females, biological functions, and physical appearances are the punch lines of so many jokes proves the film makers were not afraid of offending anyone, they just had a view on what was to controversial. In the movie Allison and Ben intend to use a condom in their night of drunken sex, but due to a miscommunication, Ben does not put the condom on. The depiction of contraception either not being used by accident or by choice in this movie shows the characters as just accepting that pregnancy as an outcome of sex is just a risk women take- despite the fact that women fought for decades for the precautions that make this statement sound ridiculous.

This movie revolves around Allison's determination to force a relationship with her complete opposite, Ben, after she finds out he „knocked her up“, seemingly for the sole purpose of maintaining the semblance of a traditional family. In the end this is exactly what happens; a drunken night of sex between a beautiful, successful career woman turns results in a baby, and an unattractive fool getting the woman of his dreams. Allison embraces motherhood wholeheartedly with Ben. Being single is the obvious second

option and motherhood in the context of a man and woman together is still framed as the norm.

Pregnancy complaints have been one of the fastest growing types of employment discrimination charges filed with the equal employment opportunity commission. In this movie Allison's pregnancy is celebrated by her employer, even though she is an on-air celebrity host knee-deep in the entertainment industry, where looks and everything and bodies only come in one size-slender. Throughout most of Allison's pregnancy there is rarely any talk of her job, except that she decided not to tell her boss until she had to, so she wouldn't lose her job. When her boss actually brings her into the office to discuss the fact she is pregnant, Allison apologizes "I wasn't expecting it, I didn't know how to handle it and I didn't want to lose my job. I'm really sorry," stating all the fears of working women and becoming pregnant. Instead of being fired, she is praised for being pregnant, because as her boss puts it, "it turns out people like pregnant; the bigger you are, the bigger ratings." The celebrity interview show even created special programming so Allison could talk to pregnant celebrities and "being pregnant" all month. These sets pregnancy up as something that only pregnant women can engage with and understand and even implies that there is a certain language that only pregnant women can communicate. Allison, because of her biological state, is considered to have an extra advantage when talking to pregnant celebrities just because she is pregnant as well. Also, the idea that "people love pregnant" helps build the ideology that people are generally happy when they see a pregnant woman, that there is something inherently good about pregnancy, especially when all

the realities of the pregnancy are off screen. They only see her and her expanding belly, and nothing else, no father figure, no morning sickness, no swelling feet, nothing.

In the context of post feminism they are telling cultural moments, especially when we women are still fighting for equality in the workplace and the home. There is still a gross pay gap. There is still an assumption that women are the default caretakers, homemakers, and emotional nutcases. Women are still the minority in corporate executive positions, political leadership roles, and in above-the-line positions in film and television. Storylines featuring women in the mass media are still rare; when women do get main roles, they are often hyper-sexualized, or limited to romantic comedies and plots with $\frac{1}{2}$ women $\frac{1}{2}$ s issues. $\frac{1}{2}$ When something tied to womanhood, something men cannot attain, is taken in by the culture industry and churned out as a fad, a problem or a commodity to be glorified, we women need to pay attention. Pregnancy does not define womanhood and it is not even something all women can achieve, but it is certainly an important part of many women $\frac{1}{2}$ s lives and it is the reason all of us, men and women, are here today. Whether portrayals of pregnancy in media are good, bad, or silly, whether celebrities actually look like that post- baby or not, whether the term abortion is offensive or not, the commodification of pregnancy in the current postfeminist context is happening and will continue until the culture industry ceases to find a market for it. By becoming more conscious of this phenomenon and other phenomena like it. We can change the way we understand ourselves and others, pregnant or not.