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The Book Club Film Analysis

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Introduction

Not so many films focus on the delight of getting old. The movie "Book Club" takes us on a tour of four elderly women as they encounter a new phase of life after reading a book, displaying that becoming elderly can be exciting. Jane Fonda, Diane Keaton, and Candice Bergen, Mary Steenburgen are the iconic star actresses in Book Club. It covers the existence of four long-time allies who meet regularly for a book club. All of the principal women are above 60 years old, which is unusual in Hollywood films. However, as they move on to the sensual book “Fifty Shades of Grey," several unusual and bizarre occurrences happen due to the decisions these women make once they read the book (Bill, 2018). On the other contrary, this film entreats to differ, as it takes the viewer on a wild cycle through the existence of these ladies, demonstrating that one can live a content and complete life regardless of age.

Synopsis

Diane, Vivian, Carol, and Sharon met once a month for a book club, bonding over the selections and becoming close friends. Vivian, who owns and builds hotels, bumps across Arthur, a man she turned down for marriage 40 years ago. They start dating, but Vivian has always been adamant about not settling down since she valued her independence. Diane has recently been widowed, and her children want her to go to Arizona to be closer to them. Sharon is a federal judge who has been single for almost 18 years after divorcing her son's father. Carol enjoys a happy marriage with Bruce, who recently retired, but their relationship has recently suffered from a lack of intimacy. One day, they read Fifty Shades of Grey and are turned by the material and decide to broaden their horizons and pursue joys previously eluded. Diane meets

Mitchell while flying to visit her daughters in Arizona, and the two begin dating. Vivian spends more time with Arthur, but she keeps a safe distance (Bill, 2018).

Aging-related Concepts

Chronological Aging

The first aging-related concept that could be applied to shed light on this film is chronological aging, which implies the number of years an individual has lived so far (Ferraro, 2018). This concept is portrayed in the movie by the initial ageist impression, not just in many of its specific situations but throughout the film. The belief that older women need to remain as sexually active as they were when they were younger stems from a lack of understanding of, or a refusal to accept, the changes in both men and women as they age. Another instance that justifies this concept is that Diane recently lost her spouse, though she has two children who are parenting her in specific ways, and she thinks they are attempting to change her. She is a little befuddled, unsure of what to do or how to handle the situation. Her companions are behind her.

In a way, she is giving in. Meeting Garcia is the event that completely transforms her life. She immediately falls in love with him. He is fantastic, but their relationship is becoming strained. They have known each other for roughly 15 years. Diane, who is 72, is acting her age by implying that losing a loved one is tricky, only to have her children interrupt her and remark that she is a child. Because of her age, she finds this unpleasant. The dissatisfaction portrayed by Diane in her children's conduct is due to their age difference, thus elaborating on the chronological aging concept. Likewise, there is also the concern of the age difference between some of the older ladies and the men they met. Some of these men were younger than the ladies.

Retaining Youth Characteristics

The movie also promotes the idea that to age successfully, one must retain as many of the characteristics of youth as possible, including a predilection for frequent and rough sexual intercourse, depicting the biological change impressions, which is the second concept in this analysis. This impression is apparent particularly at the scene where Susan suggests that if women of their age were meant to engage in sexual intercourse, then God would not have done what he does to their bodies; Vivian holds onto her breasts, meaning they should not have aged and acknowledging the changes occurring on their bodies. Therefore, the more youthful one may appear, the more successful one is at "aging"; this is the same as age-denial, an under-appreciated kind of ageism. In addition, viewers can see the biological changes apparent with elderly individuals, like aging faces and slow movement due to changes in the musculoskeletal system. On the other hand, this idea underpins some of the less realistic aspects of the plots and language, but it also shows maturity in action.

Activity Theory of Aging

One theory that can be useful in shedding more light on the movie is the activity theory of aging. The activity hypothesis of aging maintains that older people are more contented when they stay busy and participate in social relationships. Such activities, especially when expressive, help the aging in satisfying lost life responsibilities after giving up work and, consequently, fight the societal forces that limit an older person's world (Westerhof et al., 2020). The hypothesis assumes that activity and existence please possess an affirmative relationship.

Activity theory characterizes the functionalist view that a person's equilibrium developed in medium age should be conserved later. The hypothesis envisages that when the elderly lose their spots, they will substitute them with others. For instance, in the movie, we see that Diane is passionate about her relationship with her girls and is establishing a life for herself without her

spouse (including admitting that the marriage had ended a few years before he died). Likewise, Sharon is seen in her official capacity as a judge, whereas Vivian is seen in her hotel business. In addition, the formation of the book club shows these ladies happiness whenever they engage socially in book selections and bonding practices hence becoming good friends.

Human Needs Theory

Another theory that could be useful in shedding more light on the film is the human needs theory, which falls under the psychological theories of aging. This theory summarizes that a hierarchy of five requirements motivates people's behaviors. They are security and safety, sense of belonging and love, self-actualization, self-esteem, and physiologic needs. Retirement and accompanying emotions of relevance deprivation, concern over body image and sexuality, and the marginalization and infantilization of older people are addressed in the film. Contrastingly, after the four ladies read Fifty Shades of Grey, they felt the longing for love and a sense of belonging, thus explaining why they decided to engage the men.

Additionally, the age difference is apparent mainly because some of the men are younger than the ladies. This issue is addressed under the conceptual context of gerontology, stating that the variance in occupational exposures and genetics make establishing broad indices of aging extremely challenging, and a satisfactory description of aging processes will have to address the complexities of gene expression-environment connections. Genetic heterogeneity and contextual heterogeneity are so prevalent in humans that no two people will ever age in the same way hence the age difference between the two individuals in the scene (Isaacowitz & Lind, 2019).

Exemplary Scene

One scene that stood out for me is where Carol was frustrated that Bruce does not want to engage in sexual intercourse with her and tries all manner of ways to seduce him, but he is oblivious. Ultimately, Carol spikes his drink with an erectile dysfunction drug. On their way home, they get pulled over by the police, and Bruce is adamant when he is told to step out of the vehicle by an officer. The gerontology principle that I believe is relevant in this scene is biological aging and, more specifically, changes to do with body organs and other bodily systems. The loss of cells that occurs as a result of biological aging occurs throughout time. Tissues and organs are less likely to work efficiently as we age, the body's ability to repair itself diminishes, and immunological systems deteriorate, making us more susceptible to illness. Physical aging is another term for biological aging. A person who stays in shape and has regular check-ups may appear physiologically younger than someone of the same age who does not.

Therefore, this scene conforms to the principle of biological aging because I believe Carol spiked Bruce's drink with an erectile dysfunction pill since she assumed that he did not want to engage in intercourse with her. After all, he possibly had erectile dysfunction issues, which is a condition that is sometimes experienced as a result of aging.

Activity Theory

One relevant theory in this scene is the activity theory, which explains the psychosocial aging progression. The theory emphasizes the significance of ongoing social activities. Further, it suggests that an individual's self-concept is associated with the roles held by the person, such as recreational roles depicted in this scene (Steptoe, 2019). Similarly, to preserve a good intellect of self, an individual must assume new responsibilities to substitute the ones lost because of aging. Moreover, much like with youthful individuals, research suggests that the sort of action matters. However, I am not sure that this scene conforms to this principle because the recreational activity

Carol and Bruce are engaged in does not highlight the kind of activities that sustains positive senses of themselves. Although going out and partying could be a recreational activity, it does not necessarily imply that this role is a new responsibility that would substitute other roles previously held by aging individuals. Therefore, it is not clear whether or not this scene conforms to the activity theory and that Carol and Bruce were only trying to enjoy some free time together.

Conclusion

Book Club is a romantic drama about senior citizens. However, just because it stars performers from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s does not imply that newer audiences will not appreciate its charm. It has the same appeal as romantic comedies aimed at teenagers. On the contrary, the film depicts gerontological principles, with biological and chronological aging dominating the fundamental principles. This phenomenon is so because the star actresses and actors are aged. In addition, the movie promotes the idea that to age effectively, one must maintain as many of the characteristics of adolescence as possible, including a preference for recurrent and rough sexual intercourse, depicting the biological change of impressions. It shows that the cast acknowledges the physical and cellular transformations that occur in their bodies. Similarly, the film depicts some scenes of human needs and desires, which is an important aspect that determines an individual's behavior. The fact that the four women felt the need to be appreciated and falling in love again after reading Fifty Shades of Grey conforms to the human requirement.

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