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2021SP/ENG

May 4, 2021

**The Sure Thing (1998): Connection to 1980s American Culture**

President Jimmy Carter once stated, “America has become not a melting point, but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different yearning, different beliefs, different dreams and different hopes.” Generally, the play “*Sure Thing”* by David Ives (1998) has critically used several dramatic elements that connect to 1980s American diverse culture, thus glorifying the beautiful mosaic glorification. Dramatic elements such as setting, dialogue, symbols, character and relationships, mood and atmosphere, voice, dramatic tension, etc have been employed in the play. In this case, the author use of the setting has played a great role in illustrating the 1980s American culture. The play is generally set in a café, where the two characters, Betty and Bill, awkwardly meet and fell in love (1). This lifestyle characterized by regular social visits to cafés is typically connected to the American culture. The café culture in American has long been the lifestyle of most Americans, which also acted as a place of social gatherings. Also, dramatic tension has been used in the play to act as a link to the 1980s American culture. The start sets up the tension of the character’s original objectives, as well as the value of personality and the value associated with being in love. *When drawing Sure Thing connection to American culture, the play in numerous ways echoed America’s Social and political conservatism (1), A care-free liberating culture (2), and approach on social relationships (3)*

In the 1980s, the American culture was defined by a proud social and political conservatism. The “Yuppies” often wanted more and we're in a hurry to get it, which became the rule to live by. American family values in the 1980s were perceived to be in moral decline. This particular theme of morality was captured in the context of family values in the 1980s American population culture through the demonstration of dysfunctional families in movies such as “*Back to the future”* (1985). The American culture was in a period of nostalgia in the 1980s that encompassed a sense of loss connected to the past. In the given period, there was a dramatic decline in commitment to long-term love relationships in the American culture. The self-sacrifice and lifelong commitment are eroding in the 1980s American culture giving away instead to an emergent idea of love founded centrally on personal growth. Parallel to this, the play’s dramatic elements critically connect to the 1980s American culture.

In the 1980s, people often went to dinners, watched movies, went out for drinks, or gather for parties, all in a bid to embrace a care-free liberating culture. Case in point, Bill expressed to Betty his fascination and indigence to the party lifestyle (3). Additionally, Betty having concluded her section was heading to the movies and deemed it fit to invite Bill so they could watch the Woody Allen Movie together (11). Nevertheless, due to the current sentiments against marriage in the American culture in the 1980s, most people didn’t believe in marriage and sort to live single. But in the case of Betty, she believes in true love and marriage, as well as getting children, specifically three children (12), an aspect that was idolized as the perfect family number at the given period. In the case of the American culture and the play was based on how connected were the two people in terms of likes or dislikes and their readiness to date. Two people meeting for the first time, it is often unpredictable to fall in love with them or enter into a relationship, with 49 to 51% of individuals believing in love at first sight. As such, the play employ also signs that depict love at first sight, where although Betty was coming from another relationship it did not stop her from falling in love again with Bill (8). Furthermore, the aspect of being reluctant to enter into a relationship, especially with a stranger depicts the 1980s American culture and approach to social relationships.

Basically, the play employs social exchange theory, where individuals normally weigh the risks and potential benefits of social relationships. In this case, Betty conflicts with herself on whether to enter into a relationship with Bill or not (11). With the current decline in the moral values of the 1980s American family culture, Betty is unsure of whether Bill and she could have a long-term relationship and lifelong commitment. The variations in the conversation between the two characters critically affect their opinions and attitudes towards each other leaving out the possibility of having a relationship. The deception of Betty and Bill’s relationship helps to convince readers that finding love is forever dependant on balance and genuinity, as at the time a significant portion of Americans who did not embrace promiscuity more driven by family values. Furthermore, relationships in the 1980s were based on many factors that are most critical in building long-term relationships. Additionally, the American culture of the 1980s was too judgmental based on the individuality of a person. For instance, Bill and Betty changed many of their answers in order to be accepted thus becoming difficult to distinguish the lies from the truth (3).

In conclusion, from the above paper, it is evident that the play provides a fundamental analysis of the concept of relationship, love, and romance. The author has tried to build a solid reflection of how the American culture was in the 1980s in terms of relationships, love, and romance. Basically, this play has contributed to the overall understanding of what “proper” romantic love is all about. Both Betty and Bill seem to speak what he/she believes is acceptable to the other person, thus becomes difficult to differentiate the lies from the truth. Truly the 1980s were a time for great promiscuity in America, with only few people risking it to engage in fruitful relationships, wouldn’t you agree?

**Works Cited**

Ives, David. The Sure Thing. 1988. “English 101: Critical Reasoning, Reading, and Writing.” Marilyn Kennedy’s Course Web Site. 2 Nov. 2007. McGraw-Hill’s Page Out.