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I am definitely going to do more with this paper. This excerpt analyzes how characterization emphasizes stereotypes in comedy in one of my films. I will also address typical stereotypes of women and men in the work force in more detail.

WORKING WOMEN

One of the many uses of comedy in film is to address social issues. While modern-day women have become more aware of their rights and opportunities in the workforce, business primarily remains a male-dominated field. Comedy exploits the fallacies of sexist men and underachieving women, while emphasizing power plays between the sexes. Some comedies, in order to shed light on the possible success of female integration, focus on the triumphs of the movies' heroines. In the 1996 film, *The Associate*, an African-American woman begins her own stock broker firm when a Caucasian male coworker is promoted above her after stealing the credit for her research and making business deals without her knowing. Her fledgling firm is an immediate failure. That is, until she creates an imaginary Caucasian male partner named Mr. Cutty. Her business, driven by her ideas, becomes a huge success behind the symbol of business success, a middle-class man of the majority race. In the 1980 film, *9 to 5*, three businesswomen revolt against mistreatment from their sexist male boss. While providing entertainment, comedy has the potential to advocate change through its portrayals of the genders in a business environment.

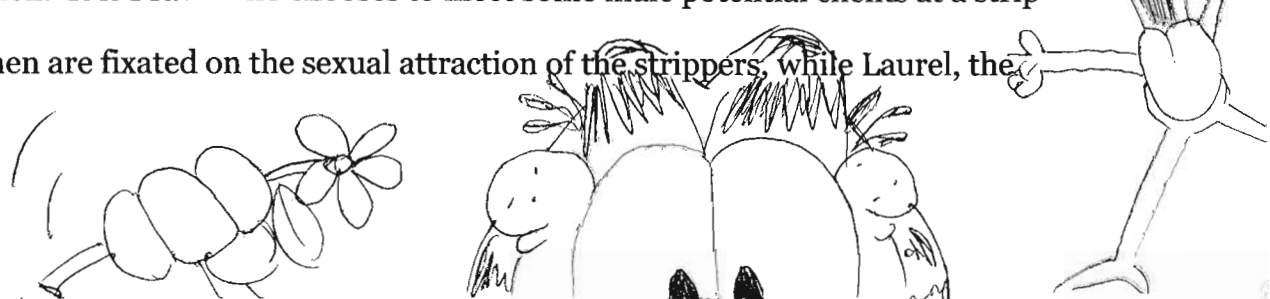
The Associate possesses characters that each represent a stereotypical quality.

Laurel is the woman who breaks the mold that women are inferior and unintelligent when it comes to business. Her cocky male co-worker represents the male sexist view toward women. It is Frank who chooses to meet some male potential clients at a strip club. The men are fixated on the sexual attraction of the strippers, while Laurel, the

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only woman representing the firm, tries to discuss her research to no avail. He sends her and her secretary to go shopping for wedding gifts for clients, regarding shopping as women's work. When Laurel begins to realize that her credit is being stolen, she confronts Frank, who asks if she is experiencing PMS. Laurel responds to the insult by explaining how he "would be dead" if that were the case. In this instance, the woman is agreeing with the effects of hormonal instability on her mood while showing her strength by use of threats.

Laurel's secretary, Sally, is soft-spoken and passive. Male employees refer to her as "Sweetie" in a derogatory sense. She sympathizes with Laurel and helps her, through the kindness of a fellow secretary, get an appointment with a client. She is consequentially demoted and eventually quits her job. Sally turns out to have more intelligence than she lets on by creating computer programs for Laurel's new company.

good background

Another businesswoman thrown into the mix is Camille, a financial advisor for an enthusiastic client. Her business tactics dramatically differ from Laurel's. Instead of relying on her intelligence to get promoted, she uses her sexuality to her advantage. She flirts with powerful men and wears sensual lingerie underneath her work attire. When Laurel disguises herself as her partner Mr. Cutty to alleviate some pressure from the press, Camille is the first to get to his, or her, hotel room to make advances. Mr. Cutty tells her to "use [her] brain" to get ahead, and Camille is shocked to hear such comments from a man and is further intrigued by his sensitivity. Camille grows to resent Cutty's rejection and goes onto a reality TV show claiming to be pregnant with his child. Camille's ludicrous actions make the audience laugh, but they also represent the women who use sex to manipulate men and gain power.

Laurel represents the ambitious few wanting their work to give them more influence. Her creation helps her achieve her goals, but even an imaginary man prevents her from gaining respect. The country becomes obsessed with the mysterious Mr. Cutty; he becomes a sensation. Although Laurel conducts meetings with his clients, they all commend and ask for Mr. Cutty. Surprisingly enough, an influential female reporter is the one who pressures him to make an appearance in public. Laurel's co-worker discovers the truth behind the partner and seizes control after she tries to get rid of Cutty by killing him off. When Cutty is inducted into an all-male club and achieves the businessman of the year award, Laurel crashes the celebration in Cutty costume and reveals her true self to her fellow businesspeople. The men are completely shocked, while the women onlookers (who can't cross into the club's domain) all cheer, except for Camille, who appropriately faints.

The hilarity lies in the fact that businessmen would rather entrust thousands of dollars in stock to a man they have never met than a qualified woman conducting the meetings. People laugh because people feel they are superior to the foolishness, but they also know that instances like this occur. The audience is made aware of society's ignorance toward gender and workplace relationships. This film causes people to reflect on their own personal circumstances and to reevaluate their assumptions regarding women. It encourages women to be less like the stereotypical woman Camille and value the hard work, intelligence, and other qualities that make Laurel successful.

good point

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