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[MOMMY TRACK

[Assignment: Write an essay contrasting two specific entities. In your thesis statement indicate not merely that the two entities are "different," but incorporate the essential nature of that difference. Develop the contrast with appropriate specific and concrete details.]

(1) In the movie Baby Boom, J.C. Wyatt is a high-level management consultant for a prestigious firm. Her career is the primary motivation in her life, as she works sixteen hours a day. At the start of the film, she is handling the account of a well-known food chain, and she has been nominated by her advisor to become a partner in the New York firm she works for. However, when J.C. inherits a baby girl from a deceased cousin, she must divide her time between her career and her baby. As a consequence, her duties at work change. She is taken off the food chain account and is assigned to a dog food account. Also, the partners of the firm do not extend an invitation to her to become a partner.

(2) What happened to J.C. Wyatt in this movie? She was placed on the Mommy Track, which is a less demanding career path that employers impose upon women who have children. Working women on the Mommy Track find themselves in part-time and middle-management jobs with little or no opportunity for advancement. Employers and women employees define the Mommy Track in differing ways. What employers regard as a rational adjustment to the family commitments of working women, women themselves regard as a discriminatory attempt to perpetuate their inferior status in the working world. Employers see Mommy Track as a practice benefiting both employers and women employees. Women see Mommy Track as a practice to get cheap labor from women without rewarding them fully.

(3) In the past, when employers hired women to fill the top-level executive positions, many of the women executives quit these high-pressure jobs to attend to the pressing needs of their families. This practice proved costly for companies who now had to spend extra time and money hiring and training new executives. In contrast, filling vacancies in part-time and middle-management positions takes less time and is much less costly. Since these jobs are less demanding, they also provide women with more time and energy to spend on their families. Therefore, employers define the Mommy Track as an efficient method which keeps company costs down while allowing working mothers to balance their time and energy between careers and families.

(4) Working mothers define the term Mommy Track in a much different way. These women claim that once a working mother is placed on the less productive Mommy Track her entire career suffers. A working woman who is beyond the child-bearing years is still doomed to be
employed in the part-time or middle-management positions, even though she may be capable of handling the more demanding high-level positions. Secondly, working women see the Mommy Track as a sexist system. By promoting the Mommy Track system, employers are assuming that women, not men, are the ones who must make the sacrifice in their career in order to raise a family. Therefore, working mothers define the Mommy Track as a discriminatory system which limits or prevents the further advancement of women in the work force.

(5) To employers, the Mommy Track is a way of helping mothers to enter the work force while allowing them to maintain an active family life. To working mothers, though, the Mommy Track is a way of hurting their career plans and narrowing their employment opportunities. Employers see the Mommy Track as a fair way to handle the influx of working mothers, while working mothers view the Mommy Track as an unfair system which places mothers in a separate and unequal class below their male counterparts. These conflicting ideas about the Mommy Track have caused heated arguments within the business organization and the work force. If a resolution is to be reached, employers and working mothers must achieve a better understanding of each others' needs.