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Current Issues

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Final Paper

The film Charlie's Angels shows a unique take on being a feminist film. It is focused on the 2nd feminist wave movement and empowers the women in the show. But at the same time, they still keep some of the traditional feminine traits in the characters, which I think is interesting. So, I think this film is a feminist film, but there are some things in the film that do not represent feminism. So, I will talk about the different characters in the film. First, I will talk about Alex, Dylan, Natalie, and the women in the film. Then I will also talk about Bosley, Charlie, and some of the other males in the film. Lastly, I will talk about what I think did not help contribute to making this a feminist film.

I think this film is about the second wave feminism movement. The second wave feminism movement was about job equality, which this film shows. From David Gauntlett's Media, Gender and Identity he states that the 3 main female characters are "amazingly multi-skilled: they are forensic scientists and electronic engineers, espionage and surveillance

specialists, racing-car drivers and superhuman fighting machines. (Gauntlett, 2002, p.76). These are some of the different jobs that the females do throughout the film, all of these are traditionally jobs that males would do, so this is the main point that helps push this film as a feminist movie.

First, I am going to talk about Alex. Each of the women had many different things they were good at. For example, Alex was good at fencing, horseback riding, and worked with NASA. These 3 occupations or hobbies are usually correlated with males and things that males would do. So, this helps push the second wave feminist movement of how females can do anything males can do and help show that females deserve workplace equality. Another thing I found interesting about Alex was one of her hobbies was cooking, but she seemed to be very bad at it. This is a different perspective way to push feminism, because cooking is usually a female trait, but in this film, she is terrible at it, so it is kind of saying how she can do all of these normally male focused jobs but not one that is traditionally female. So, I think this is saying how a male should do the cooking for once while she can do the male focused things.

Next, I will talk about Dylan. I think the main thing Dylan had that contributed to the film being feminist, was her combat abilities. All the females participated in combat and fought different people, but Dylan was shown punching a police officer when it was talking about how

they grew up, and she also fought a group of men with her hand tied behind her back. These two things especially are not normally a feminine act, so this helps show how women can do many different things.

Then for Natalie I think she was the least contributing to making this a feminist film.

The only main thing that helped contribute to the film being feminist is that she did was the fighting like the others and sneaking into the place to get access to Red Star's computer. I would say something like sneaking into a place and stealing something is usually correlated with a male and not a feminine activity.

Lastly for the females I want to talk about Vivian Wood. Although she wasn't apart of the main 3 females, she had a very big importance to contributing to this film. She also has a fight scene with Alex that helps, but the main thing I want to talk about is when she said, "Never send a man to do a woman's job". This quote I think had such a big importance because she sends some men to go take care of Natalie, and then when they fail to do so she says this quote. So, this is saying fighting someone or capturing someone is a woman's job and not a man's job. When you would traditionally correlate that to a man's job. So, I believe this quote really helped push this film as a feminist film.

Now I will talk about Bosley as I think he helps paint the picture of how the woman are

the strongest in this film. Throughout the whole film Bosley is almost useless, he is just like a maid, transferring messages between Charlie to the angels. Then also giving random speeches to the Angels that basically have no meaning. Then when he got seduced and eventually captured and the Angels had to go save him. Bosley is just useless, so this helps paint the picture that men are useless, and the women are the ones that have to do everything.

I think Charlie himself only contributes to making the film feminist by not ever showing himself. By him never showing himself, this just puts more emphasis on the Angels and powering them up as they do everything. I think this is the only thing he does to help contribute. But David Gauntlett in his book states “He redistributes his wealth to three women in whom he has absolute trust. In other words, he’s a Marxist and a feminist.” (Gauntlett, 2002, p.78). I do not agree with this at all. First of all, he is simply just paying the three women for all the work they do. So, I do not understand how this makes him Marxist. But for the main point how does that ever make him a feminist. Just because he hired 3 women to do all these crazy jobs, I do not think makes him a feminist, I think he just simply hired them because they are best suited in this film because they can do all these achievements. The women themselves help make this film feminist. Charlie himself does not really do anything.

Lastly, I want to talk about all the different things that do not help push this film as a

feminist film. Just as we talked about in *Vertigo* with the male gaze, this film also has plenty of male gaze. In Laura Mulvey's book he states "Women are simultaneously look at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 809), and this happens all throughout the film. Throughout the film the 3 angels are constantly dressing showing off their features, and then therefore being looked at by the men in the film. For example, all of the angels have a relationship with a man at some point. Alex has her boyfriend which shows him kissing her neck early in the film. Natalie goes on some dates with Pete throughout the film. And then the biggest one is Dylan, who has which seems to be only a sexual relationship with the Chad guy, and then also seems to have done sexual actions with Eric Knox. Throughout the film the females also seduced men multiple time to achieve what they needed to do; this is another thing that does not help push this feminist perspective. All of these helps contribute to Mulvey's theory of male gaze and definitely does not help push this film as a feminist film.

In all I think *Charlie's Angels* is a feminist film. While it does have some features that may not help push this perspective, there is far more that helps contribute to making this a feminist film. That is why I think this film is a feminist film, and why many other people might think that this film is a feminist film.

WORKS CITED

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