The Pacifier

Nowadays, most of the films have a certain and distinguished idea of ​​how men and women should act and what kind of roles they should take in society. The women are regarded as the child's caretaker and rely on the men in their lives, while men are considered as the dominant figures who control everything and are the protector of women. I decided to do a rhetorical analysis of the movie "The Pacifier" using Ethos, Logos and pathos from a feminist perspective. This movie is Walt Disney Picture's production and is therefore aimed for the younger audiences between 10 and 16 years. The messages that are presented in this film summons the status of society as in what kind of activities and attitudes are supposed to be done by men, and what kind of role and duties women are assigned as compared to men.

The film starts with the actor Vin Diesel as Lieutenant Shane Wolfe who is on the mission to rescue a man named Howard Plummer from a small group of Serbian rebels who are pursuing Plummer's secret documents for the government. The after-effects of Wolfe's mission lead to his injury and he ends up lying in the hospital. He therefore, does not fulfill his mission of saving Mr. Plummer. Hence, he dies in a deadly encounter. After spending two long months in the hospital, Wolfe than is assigned as a protector of the Plummer's family while Mrs. Plummer leaves to get the safety deposit box, a safe left by her husband. When Wolfe comes to the Plummer house, he is welcomed by the five kids, Seth, Peter, Lulu, Zoe, and little Tyler, as well as a nanny named Helga. Over days, Wolfe had to babysit the kids as the nanny Helga was not home for a couple of days. It was Wolfe's duty to not only protect these children from bad people who were trying to get their father's project but also to clean, to cook food and make sure the children go to school. When Mrs. Plummer comes back home, two North Korean persons who were supposed to be her neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Chun, take the children in order to search Mr. Plummer's government project which was somewhere in the house.

The project was kept in the fault and after finding it, a fight ensues in which Ms. Plummer drives Ms. Chun out of the office and Claire Fletcher, headmistress of the children's school, forces Ms. Chun out of office. The end of this scene is central and essential because it shows irony when these women save the day before Mr. Wolfe does and the logos appeal here is almost every man is considered stronger than woman, generally because of their physical strength.Wolfe, who is a strong, powerful and controlling man, is in many ways consistent with male hegemony. He is a lieutenant in the US Navy Seal whose job is to deliver services and protect under every circumstance and is supposed to be a role model which is a role most of the men are assigned within this society. This is obvious and is shown in the film that how he tries to save Mr. Plummer from the Serbian rebels which automatically presents Wolfe as the hero or the good guy of the movie, but one should be clear about the fact that it is not always necessary to be strong for saving someone. But in the film, he carries out the mission without fear and is determined to fulfill his duty of bringing Mr. Plummer back home safely to his family. Although Wolfe was not able to complete his duty, he takes a bullet from Mr. Plummer to fire during the encounter which indicates that he is the "ultimate protector" inclined to risk his life in attempt to perform his duty (Ebert, n.d.). Many men in the society can look up to Wolfe and try to look like him because of the strong, masculine and fearless traits he shows. In simple words, Wolfe can be considered the perfect ideal man who is charming, powerful and not afraid of anything at all and is a role model for all the men. But On the other hand, Wolfe can also be perceived as turning hegemony when he gets the role of babysitter of the Plummer’s family. The way the movie is depicting masculinity of men Wolfe's babysitting kids is very strange and unexpected. His manliness in the US Navy does not allow him to be the caregiver and a "mom" for the family.
In a scene from the movie, Wolfe is insisted to take the kids out. Initially, he refuses but later on he takes Lulu and her scouts to Costco to sell their cookie guide saying “this is how it's going to be, tonight I'm your" dead mother "that means you want to live to see tomorrow you do exactly what I say" (Shankman, 2005).

The reasons that Wolfe presents himself as a "deceased mother" shows that he not only has accepted his role as protector of the family but also thinks himself as a mother figure of the family in the absence of their actual mother. When Wolfe says, " this is how it goes if you want to live to see tomorrow, you do exactly what I say" (Shankman, 2005)", he still assumes the role of male leader which has become a permanent part of his nature. Although he plays a female role, he repeats that he is still a man and that he is the one who has the authority to control and must be obeyed. After such clichéd scene, we see Wolfe takes the two children who are the youngest, Peter and baby Tyler, to a place that appears to be a children's playroom (2017). When Wolfe comes back home from the playground, he looks back and realizes that he has forgotten Peter at the playground. He goes back there and finds Peter playing in the arcade. This incident confirms the hegemony of why women find it difficult to leave their children with men and reinforce the ideology that men are irresponsible. It's a bit surprising and bizarre for Wolfe to give the role of a woman and be put in the position of a "mom". For other men, it may be difficult to identify with, as it is a female role. This aspect of Wolf's character is not the ideal idea for a man, but Wolfe is still maintaining his masculinity even in this position.
Seth Plummer, the second oldest child of Plummer, also prevents and rejects the rules of male hegemony and can be considered an anti-model for men. He is a twelve-year-old boy of a normal height and described as an outcast student of his school. At the beginning of the film, Seth is part of the school wrestling team, but not very successful and skips the training. Seth finally leaves the wrestling team and plays music for his community "The Sound of Music". This action presents Seth a weak person in the eyes of all the men who can never think of leaving such a masculine and strong activity for something so common. This is the dilemma of the society that never accepts the soft side of a man and if they do see the soft side, they put him under the category of the loser and characterize him as a woman (Planned Parenthood, 2019). He does not let anyone know about his participation in the musical play but one day Lt. Wolfe tries to follow him and finds him rehearsing the music he was supposed to play in the show.
The pathos appeal in this movie is that of the character of Seth, who leaves the wrestling team and joins a musical group, disapproves the culture of male authority. When male adolescents in society see this, they regard Seth as unwanted and are not willing to be like him. They consider it as "gay" that Seth has given up male wrestling to be part of a piece of music and do not support or think Seth as an absolute male figure. Also, the movie "The Pacifier" confronts hegemony and can be regarded as challenging for most of the people. Although characters like Shane Wolfe and Seth Plummer break the all the rules and roles attached to men and challenge this hegemony, they still manage to keep a bit of manhood. Wolfe can be an ideal man in terms of posture, looks, and commitment to his career as a US Navy Seal. Seth is not portrayed as the best male model for teenagers in society, nor is he the most desirable male character in the movie. This film has excellently shown that while there are social gender norms practiced in our society, individuals do not have to limit themselves to such mainstream behaviors and actions.

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