

The Interpretation of Women's Discourse in the Movie "Flipped" via the Lens of Eco-Feminism

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Abstract: The novel by Wendelin Van Draanen with the same name serves as the inspiration for the film "Flipped". The film portrays the nostalgic emotions between young boys and girls as it narrates a young and lovely love story in America in the early 1960s. At the same time, the film also features the writer's thoughts and consideration of societal contents underlying the development of the natural environment and the image of women. Feminism embodies both the resistance of the underprivileged and the symbol of good nature. As the foundation, this paper explored how well the natural world shaped women's social consciousness and discoursed from the perspective of eco-feminism. Additionally, the paper also discusses the impact of environmental factors that contributed to the film's vivid environmental episodes, pays close attention to the struggles of the female supporting characters in the context of the times, and emphasizes how the environment and even the discourse of women are oppressive. Its statement of the notion that nature and women are linked and mutually reinforcing also provides a fresh viewpoint on the investigation of how women are portrayed in culture. The patriarchal environment's ideas of duality and hierarchical division have been turned on its head.

Keywords: eco-feminism, female discourse, Flipped, natural environment

1. Introduction

Women's self-awareness and thinking are continuously evolving due to the rise in the educational attainment of women in recent years. Women are more eager to express an opinion that is equivalent to men in such circumstances. Eco-feminism is a subfield of feminist theory that looks at how people and the environment interact. It draws practical conclusions to challenge male-centeredness and dichotomy theory as models of inequality. It is also important to note that the natural world frequently serves as a metaphor for the author's reflection on societal themes in cinema.

The film exhibits the writer Wendelin Van Draanen's eco-feminism consciousness. The author situates the story in small-town America in the 1950s and hides her opinions on the subject of the discourse of the female group by crafting the bright line of Julie and Bryce's first love story and the dark line of the family life between two families.

Women's discourse refers to discourses that focus on the existence and development of women from a female standpoint and is described by many as a rebellious force against the hegemony of male discourse. In the real world, especially in the mass media, women's discourse is faced with a double dilemma in the struggle for power in the mass media: on the one hand, it must express

individual differences in a way that is different from men's. On the other hand, it is subject to accusations and criticism from the ideological context.

In such an inter-historical and inter-cultural social structure, women are on an unequal footing with men in all areas of political, economic, cultural, intellectual, cognitive, conceptual, ethical and family life and are naturally on an unequal footing in terms of discourse.

The majority of the academic research findings to date on the feminist analysis of the movie *Flipped* have focused on the analysis of the female image, love enlightenment education, female growth, and other factors. For quite a while, there has been a shortage of research on how to evaluate women's speech from an ecological female perspective. Consequently, through using an ecofeminist perspective as a preliminary step, the paper utilized a combination of theoretical analysis and cinematic text analysis to examine how the natural environment affects the growth or decline of women's discourse.

2. Eco-Feminism

In the 1970s, eco-feminism came to the fore. The French writer Franois Daubert first mentioned the term “eco-feminism” in her book “Feminism or Death”. Eco-feminism means combining ecology and feminism. Eco-feminism is referred to in two ways: feminist ecology and ecological feminism.

Eco-feminism is a product of the combination of the women's liberation movement and the ecological movement. It opposes anthropocentrism and male-centrism and advocates a change in the idea that man rules over nature [1]. With the aim of creating a utopia that adheres to the principles of ecologism and feminism, truly realizing the maintenance of a good natural ecological environment and the harmonious development of man and nature, eco-feminism, on the other hand, criticizes patriarchal cultural values and praises the feminine essence [2].

More and more women are asking to transition from the private to the public arena as the feminist trend rages on in America. In addition to receiving the corresponding social status and rights, they acquire the ability to speak with the same authority as men in order to represent the true sentiments of the general public, particularly the female public [3].

As stated in the founding statement of the National Organization for Women of the United States in 1966: “The National Organization for Women is dedicated to the cause that women are first and foremost human beings like all others in our society and that they must have the opportunity to develop their full potential as human beings”[4]. Thus, the aspiration to fight for women's right to voice has become the inevitable development of feminism. The three types of characters in the film *Flipped* are typical representatives of the struggle for women's right to speak with their distinctive personalities in the special background of the times.

3. The Lack of Voice of Housewives in the "Male Submissive" Family Model

Eco-feminist theory argues that under anthropocentrism, nature is often seen as rightfully serving human desires and expected to remain silent. The status of men and women can be compared to that of humans and nature in patriarchal cultures. Women are typically in a dominant position in society and are subject to the oppression of male authority [5].

In the 1940s and 1950s, a bifurcation of American housewives' life had occurred during this period. On the one hand, American women seek their own distinct values while being heavily influenced by their participation in wartime labor and the formation of the female character known as the “Riveter” [6]. On the other hand, because of the wide-ranging post-war anti-feminist agitation, female laborers were compelled to revert to their conventional gender roles and families in a bid to conform to the popular preconception that women should be “housewives”. Bryce's mother in the film, Patsy, epitomizes the image of the “American housewife” in 1950s America.

The film depicts the Bryce family's "male submissive" relationship straight away. After arriving at the new apartment, Bryce's father, Stephen, immediately assigns the family-specific tasks: the men are to carry the luggage outside, and the women are to clean the kitchen. Although this division of labor may seem rational, it reflects a patriarchal societal concern with confining women's roles to the confines of the home. Being faced with this circumstance, the mother, Patsy, no longer objects in the slightest. This internal supportive factor for the loss of female speech was the impression of the gendered hierarchical status of family members [6].

The film takes a lot of backward glances at Bryce's father in order to establish a composition in which the father is always at the center of the shot. At the same time, the oppressive language of the camera shows the father as a powerful figure [7]. However, the mother, Patsy, is mostly on the periphery of the camera and has no presence. Moreover, she is deeply imprisoned by the Western hierarchical relationship of "male domination over female and human domination over nature" [8].

Even though she is in a hysterical state, Patsy has no way to escape the family's belief that men are essentially superior to women. Therefore, she cannot stop her husband from berating her and her daughter at will. She gives in to the social and economic policy that civilization is superior to nature, which causes her to be rendered speechless in the face of her husband's strong values associated with the wealthy class, including his distaste for Julie's lifestyle and garden, his refusal to consume "salmonella" eggs, among other rude and insulting comments. In the subsequent daily life of the mother Patsy, she is often presented as a "voiceless" person in a patriarchal culture. Even if she wins a brief victory after an argument on rare occasions, this does not mean that women's voices are treated equally but rather as a compromise of male-centrism for a harmonious family life.

4. The Awakening of Female Consciousness in the Budding Beat Culture

The goal of democratic and equitable discourse is emphasized by contemporary feminist theory, which criticizes the hierarchical division of existence. Every creature that inhabits this planet has a combination of likelihood and consequence and is deserving of equal treatment and privileges. Individuals ought to acknowledge the diversity of all things in the world in a diverse social setting, and all individuals have the same right to speak without regard to distinctions in gender or ethnicity.

The "Beat Generation", predominantly poets and writers, arose in the United States in the 1950s after the end of World War II, giving rise to a wave of youth literature and cultural thought that became known as the Beat culture. Extreme dissatisfaction with reality, reactionary political suppression, cultural dominance by conservatives, and the alienation of American society following the end of World War II all contributed to this [9]. The younger generation of girls was starting to actively fight for a female voice and try to express their wishes in social life, in contrast to the older women, portrayed by Bryce's mother Patsy, who still adhere to the conventional view of housewifery.

The "Lunch Boys" event, a yearly campus fundraiser, is depicted in the film in a very interesting and distinctive episode. The school chose 20 excellent young men, and each one makes a meal that is included in a basket and auctioned off. The girl who places the highest bid will meet that guy for lunch. This campaign shifts the voice from males to women, breaking the awkward stereotype that women are the ones chosen. Even though this is a modest charity event, it still marks a significant advancement for young females in the fight for women's rights.

Lynetta, Bryce's sibling, is a portrayal of youth who embody the Beat Generation's archetypal images. They are the decadent subverters of the dominant social order, refusing the middle-class American idea of hierarchy, dressing provocatively, adopting a hip perspective, and attempting to discover novel relationships and values [9]. When her father Lenski disparages the musical aspirations of Julie's brothers, Lynetta prefers to dress in more fashionable attire, creates bands with the brothers, and takes a stand. Lynetta also exhibits the distinctive speech pattern of the young group to which she originally belonged. When the Bryce family is debating whether Julie's family-owned

roosters during the “egg episode”, Lynetta cracks, “Maybe they got it de-yodeled”, which is to say, “they probably made the chickens sound dumb”. Stephen, Lynetta's father, is horrified and unaware of the fantastic term she created herself, “de-yodeled”. The creation of these words represents Lynetta's representation of the emergence of a female discourse in America. In order to question the dominant narrative and ultimately win the approval of traditional discourse, Beat Generation made use of their existing vocabulary to create new, energizing phrases. This expands the possibilities for women's discourse.

5. The Struggle for Young Girls' Voices under the Metaphorical Symbol of the Sycamore Tree

According to eco-feminism, “women are closer to nature” [10]. All creatures on the earth are nurtured by nature, whereas women pass down their genes from generation to generation. Natural principles of nature are intrinsically tied to women. As a result, women are better capable of appreciating nature's beauty, hearing its sounds, and drawing strength from it to speak publicly for both nature and women.

The sycamore tree in the film, from Julie's viewpoint, is a gift from God. The sycamore tree appears throughout the film, leaving viewers to speculate what it means. This symbolic sycamore tree draws the audience's attention and plays a significant role in the story.

As an important narrative thread in the film, the sycamore tree symbolizes pure love and the philosophical concept that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” [7]. As the storyline progresses, the sycamore tree takes different forms in the film: a gnarled tree, a sycamore tree stump, a sycamore tree portrait and a sycamore tree sapling. These four forms mirror the struggle of young American girls, represented by Julie, for the right to speak.

Julie views the sycamore tree as a gift from God to earth when it is a massive tree. She is perched high in the trees' branches when she first notices the splendor of the surrounding landscape. The sycamore tree provides Julie with a window into the breathtaking natural world and turns into a place where her spirit can flourish. Little Julie's spiritual world blossoms thanks to the natural world's sustenance in this rather lonely, independent, and free environment. Bryce, however, is baffled as to why she needed to climb the sycamore tree in order to enjoy its magnificent sunrise view. Julie observes the picturesque surroundings of the town while perched on a sycamore tree. She forms an intense emotional bond with the tree and realizes the profound significance of the adage, “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”. Nevertheless, common folks like Bryce just ignore the sycamore tree and treat it like any other tree. This is also why, when the tree is being cut down, Julie is the only one who resists human destruction of nature and strives to “hug” the lovely tree to save it.

Julie becomes depressed after the sycamore tree is removed from the site and only the barren stump is left. She is no longer the merry girl, just riding her bike around to avoid seeing the stump of a downed sycamore tree as she waits in the trees for the bus. Julie finds solace in the painting of a sycamore tree that her father sent to her. After the “sycamore tree” and “egg” incidents, Julie reconsiders her love for Bryce after finally recognizing the hypocritical and cowardly essence of his personality beneath his good-looking exterior.

When Julie leaves her narrow world, her perspective on life subtly changes. She starts to look at the globe and her surroundings from a different vantage point, which can be considered a sign of development. Everyone has experienced excessively concentrating on a moment or a time until they start to let go of the past and move forward deliberately.

At the end of the film, Julie and Bryce work together to plant a seedling sycamore tree in the yard. The fact that their hands are clasped together also indicates that Bryce has willingly accepted Julie's adoration for him, which is a signal of their reunion [11]. Furthermore, it proclaims Julie's final triumph in both the long-running conflict over adolescent love and the fight for gender equality.

6. Conclusion

The analysis in this paper has shown that the film *Filmed* is not only a lively and youthful story of first love, but also a metaphor for the author's thoughts on the dilemma of women's discourse in the 1950s and 1960s in America.

Women have been silenced and ignored because they are the antithesis of historical male dominance. Men and women continue to be viewed in antagonism. The encouragement of reconciliation between men and women, between man and nature, and between men and women is more facilitated by the elimination of the dichotomy. Women's status has improved in the political, economic, cultural, and educational areas in the modern world, but their proportion in these fields is still very limited. Therefore, in order to significantly advance the fight for women's voice and essentially improve the status of women, it is essential to alter one's perspective on the primacy of the principle of the public good and work to eradicate gender inequality and hierarchical oppression.

This paper aims to analyze the film from an eco-feminist perspective, highlighting not only Julie's discourse gain and loss but also the characterization of Julie's female supporting cast members to enhance the research of the female group in the story.

The sycamore tree's metaphorical symbolism, which keeps popping up frequently in the film, is associated with a study of how women and nature interact, which deepens the subject of the film even more. Women of different ages have very different levels of control over their voices and naturally make different contributions to society and its development as a result of various natural environmental factors during this time of alternation between old and new thinking. However, the present research in this article is more concentrated on the stage of identifying the causes in the analysis of the discourse surrounding the fight for equality for women. The findings of the research undertaken have not been adequate to offer a viable solution on how to support and undermine the hegemony of discourse and guarantee that every living subject has the right to be heard.

However, researchers believe that almost everyone, from Lynetta of the Beat Generation to the feminist rebel Julie, pushed in their own way for women to be treated more equally to men, whether it was Patsy, the mother who undermined the "male submissive" family paradigm. They all advocated for women to have a voice that is comparable to men in their own unique ways. There is promise for the future if women persevere in their fight for equal voice, but they still have quite a long way to go.

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