

The Film and Television Production of "Feminist Fallacy": The Singularity of Feminist Narratives

Yushan Cao *

School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Qingdao Agricultural University, Shandong, China

* Corresponding Author Email: caoyyyssshnm@gmail.com

Abstract. In an environment where feminist ideas are gaining ground, the emergence of "Feminist fallacy" in the film and television industry has raised people concerns. The research paper select Hua Mulan, Wonder Woman 1984 and Black Widow as explication cases, and applies textual analysis and case study methods to study the performance characteristics of the narrative single-mindedness in these three films. The results of the research illustrate that this type of audio-visual work often limits the definition of feminism to empty slogans, simplifies the development of female sexuality, avoids the reality of tackling structural oppression of gender, and compresses the success of women into the restricted categories of personal heroism, family or family reconciliation. Namely, these kinds of works still advance under the patriarchal logic and commercial logic of the first birth. In the research conclusions on this question, the "Feminist fallacy" eastcribed here is practically a question of tactics and the commercial exploitation of feminism by capital. In the context of problems raised here, the creators of film and television works should fully consider various aspects of female perception, criticize the problems of women in society, and establish narratives in which genuinely critical social transformation takes place. The present study gives not only to spectators the means to discover the true nature of "Feminist fallacy" in audio-visual works, but also a theoretical basis for the building up of genuinely feminist narratives in the sphere of media production.

Keywords: The singularity of film and television narrative; feminist fallacy; feminist movie.

1. Introduction

In the context of the flourishing global feminist currents, this paper focuses on the fact that an abundance of audio-visual works labeled as 'female growth' or 'independent leading female characters' have emerged in the film and television world. This is very important because of the necessity to distinguish, in the creative activities, true from false narratives of the feminist kind, to lead the audience in the critical assimilation of its content. It is primarily directed towards certain dimensions, such as the manifestations, the prerequisites and the tactics of modification of the narrative singularity in audio-visual productions of 'Feminist Fallacy'. Textual analysis and the case-study method were used to make possible a thoroughgoing inquiry into the narrative methods (such as the characterization and plot construction) in typical 'female-centered' film texts: Hua Mulan, Wonder Woman 1984, and Black Widow. In addition, it was endeavored to make use of the literature-analysis method to find and examine relevant material and literature. The chief virtue of this method is its power of essentialists exposition of the deeper ideological implications. At the same time, the statement of how the external narrative of a text relates to its underlying ideological form gives a clue to critical exercise, —the sort that includes the narrative techniques of film and television with the theory of patriarchy. The final intention of this study is to lay bare the intent he characteristics and narrative methods of 'Feminist' fallacy in film and television, to show the subterranean logical structure of the resulting patriarchal cultural narrative, and to give theoretical pointers and suggestions for the path leading to the construction of truly critical and diverse narratives of a feminist kind in audio-visual works. In order to do this, a comparative study and theoretical elaborations of several cases were made use of.

2. Literature Review

In her article *Images of Power and the Feminist Fallacy* (1990) Ferguson examines how the media constructs images of powerful women to represent female power and uncovers the 'feminist fallacy' in this practice [1] - which is to present power as a visual spectacle without questioning the patriarchal structure. The analysis here makes an important contribution to our study, particularly in terms of a high-level theoretical critique and giving us tools for doing a power analysis. However, in this article, the analysis concentrates mainly upon the semiotic dimension of the images and does not deal adequately with the specific narrative mechanisms by which the different commercial film genres produce 'fallacies' of this type in the context of globalization.

Later studies, such as Taylor and Glitsos' examination of female-led superhero films, and Qingli and She's case study of Disney's adaptation of Hua Mulan, have developed Ferguson's investigation at the level of case study. These works show how commercial genre films "integrate" or simplify feminist issues through narrative strategies, thus creating a specific variety of "feminist fallacy." [2,3]. Although these studies are interesting in showing the "problem" in specific varieties or cases of such forms, however, the field remains under-researched. The studies tend to focus on particular genres or texts, which means that they are unable to systematically present the complete picture of "false feminist" narrative patterns when viewed through a holistic lens of feminist film and television narration. Moreover, they do not sufficiently attack the methods by means of which narrative breakthroughs might be achieved. Although Ilmonen's work on cross nontelative modes provided a key theoretical orientation for this work (and pointed out the necessity of narratives that go beyond a single dimension of identity [4]), it lacks a direct interest in the problem of the systematic criticism of "feminist fallacy."

This paper will therefore build on and bridge the existing scholarship identifying the "feminist fallacy," while incorporating pertinent theoretical perspectives and case studies to facilitate a comprehensive, systematic research project. The researched content of this paper will select two globally influential "female-led" film and television genres, namely superhero narratives and fairy tale adaptations, as the cases for the research. The purpose is to illustrate the common narrative logic involved in these genres and the fallacies involved in them, and to explore some ways of escaping narrative singularity in order to construct genuinely diversified feminist narratives. It is intended that the paper will be able to fill the aporia and silence of scholarship in respect to the integration of theoretical critique together with systematic analysis of the cases, while also addressing the practical aporia in the production of feminist films and television works.

3. The Case of Narrative Monotony in "Feminist Fallacy" Film and Television Narratives

3.1. Wonder Woman 1984

Wonder Woman 1984 also reduces Diana's "female power" to personal "heroism," while at the same time disallowing any reference to the social context. Wonder Woman 1984 presents Diana as a strong individual hero with an inordinate emphasis on her extremely wonderful (but fictive) fighting skills, while neglecting the real burdens women have in the world. In the United States in 1984, there was great discrimination against women, who received unequal treatment in many areas, such as in business and family matters. The problems that Diana faces in the movie are more of the nature of super villains, rather than those which have to do with the oppression of women as it exists in extra-cinematographic society.

The film illustrates that the "power" of Diana amounts only to courageousness, allowing her to solve emergencies by means of her superpowers only. A misleading impression that great individual power allows women to cope with all questions is thereby fostered [5]. But real power (in a feminist sense) must consist in the rigor of every societal level, including those that deal with obtaining equal right and the vanquishing of the subtler forms of feminine oppression. So the film eludes the

possibility of dealing with the important social background of woman's condition of oppression caused by the discrimination of sex and fails to depict the struggles and difficulties of woman's striving for equality. The result of this is that Diana is a character cut off from actual realities, and hence fails to depict in a true light the conditions and needs of the women of to-day. Thus the power of women is, in this instance, shallow and empty, and even less likely to help those women who might wish to obtain an effect that was different from those above mentioned. So superficial or empty dressing of feminine power is given and distorted in the public mind our impression of feminine power. A much more genuine alternative, however, should have been set forth in the way of a real alternative, i.e., a character type based on such experience of ordinary women.

3.2. Black Widow

Black Widow presents "family reconciliation" to signify the female success story. The title character's development as an individual character depends on her juxtaposition with male family members while downplaying any professional problems and gender-based issues arising from her role as a "female agent." On the other hand, the darker side of the superhero persona "Black Widow," indicates unexpressed repression. The 2021 standalone film, *Black Widow*, featuring Natasha Romanoff, could have explored in greater depth those central themes of female solidarity and escape from the patriarchal framework. Instead, it fixated on the everyday theme of women's success as nothing more than family reconciliation. The protagonist's emotional ties with her family (the context of this family reconciliation) provide the main vector of the narrative, which focusses on the restitution of this reconstituted family. From their original alienation and distrust, to their cooperation against the "enemy" and emotional farewell as a family group, the impression is given that family reconciliation has become the primary aim of the character development of Natasha.

This premise overlooks the variety which exists in women's success and sharply differs from other male Marvel heroes. Being the only woman in the original *Avengers*, Natasha could have shown her worth socially—by championing women's bodily autonomy and their willpower autonomy and speaking for the victims—rather than by merely being confined within the family circle [6]. In making domestic tranquility equate itself with the ultimate female goal, the film shows itself to be caught, practically, within the ordinary programming of patriarchal society: a society which locks women's lives up within the family. This obviates the significance of *Black Widow* in representing a female hero in the battle against gender oppression, besides reducing the meaning of "feminine success" to a too simple form.

3.3. Hua Mulan

In Disney's 2020 live action remake of *Mulan*, feminism is emptied of substance, having its historical context ripped away, and is reduced to the meaningless slogans of: 'I am woman, hear me roar', and 'strife endured by women in a feudal society is a mere extension of personal struggles, to provide justification for one's rise from the feminine to the masculine spheres - in practice, the everlastingly male traits of aggression, spatial dominance and pyramids of power. *Mulan* and her sisters (dimniuric selves) discovered that strife meant nothing, that what was sought after was not a sense of personal self-adeptness, and knowing one's gender role, but the far greater: a rejection of the prevailing ethos. And here the movie cannot explore the nature of the problem, preferring a version of 'equality' that is as ignorant of the outcries of Eastern women as it is of its thoughts of the nature of the essence of the female in the first place.

In the original story, the important factor in the decision of *Mulan* to disguise herself as a boy, and join the army, was simply that this was a way of expressing the *filia pietas* that is so much impressed into the feudal system of ethics. In this screen version there is a tendency to idealize and to confound the idea. To *Mulan* the one idea is the realization of the "true self" and in place of the wonderful portrayal of gender troubles they have action pictures with special effects. It intentionally overlooks the significance of feminism in resisting real-world barriers: it fails to depict the difficulty ancient women encountered in transcending gender restrictions, and it does not engage with the lived reality

of women in a patriarchal society. Consequently, it has forfeited its cultural foundation and practical meaning [7].

4. The Reason for the Singularity of Narrative in ‘Feminist Fallacy’ Films

Asks Ferguson, Marjorie, "Or are we looking at these representations as an end in themselves?" [1]. Or rather should they feel that these representations in the media are simply a means or instrument? Our object should be to study how they are made, by whom made, why made, and how (or how not) they are capable of serving as a cultural force, efficiently promoting social and political changes in reality (and not theoretically) and changing the real distribution of power. Says Marjorie Ferguson, the identity of media luminary with social luminary is a false one because it confuses representation with realities and opens the door to their commodification [1].

Above all, it is primarily commercial capital's response to the logic of the market at work here. In the context of globalized film industry, it is massive crowd-pleasing blockbuster films that profit most at the box office. This gives rise to a reliance on tried and tested, conservative narrative formulas. These do not address, let alone resolve, social contradictions, but reproduce on the screen the more simple retailable genuine items of women's empowerment, such as distinctive costumes, smart one-liners, stunning imagery, and so on. By now it seems to have had the result that the stories told of women's lives are more and more often being used as "marketing strategies" or "traffic drivers", thought out with a particular target in mind, of the female sex, who offer a growing capacity for consumption. But such stories always emphatically refuse to address the real dilemmas and problems of women [8]. Thus, in consequence, the meaning of such films is vitiated and not apparent, because any deep critique or comment on the patriarchal narrative logic would challenge the established social order and lead to controversy, i.e. "market risk" of great proportions, which any commercial capital is inclined to avoid.

Secondly, the limited perspective of the creative group results directly in distortion of the narratives. While the number of female film directors is steadily growing, the highest levels of decision making in commercial film making such as the producers and the writers are still quite exclusively male. Even though a film is in the hands of a female director, her interpretation of the story is incorporated in a strong, established production system and its demands for commerciality. This structural limitation of the way the creative group is able to understand actually and sympathise adequately with the real life situations which women daily meet with, leads them often to the unreal simplification of feminine problems into assertions like, "women can fight like men" or "women can do without men". Such a superficiality does not comprehend the actual situation of the richness and meaning of the woman's life as mainly reflected in the inner experiences going on in her own mind, with her feelings and the fetters put upon her by social convention. Consequently, the female characters created appear strong but unreal, destined in the end to be dominated by man's powerful personality, because they are one-dimensional and do not have the complications of actual life.

Ultimately, the instrumentality and standardization of character portrayal directly gives rise to a narrow one-dimensional plane of vision and conception, which has practically two results. The one is that of the "pseudo-independence," in which the female figure is shown to be vigorous and independent, at the same time proving that her independence and success are due, not so much to the conscious awakening of intelligence and the inner growth of herself, as to the succor of the male figure to the necessity of rescue, or to luck of fortune, or to superhuman powers. In *Mulan*, for example, that a male officer must always be relied upon as her essential lifeline would much destroy the story of womanhood's indimenticability of the independent victory over her obstacles. The other is the "homogenized representation." In the field of the motion picture and television, the so-called "big female lead" is almost invariably, and always at least much confined to a young, beautiful, slim body, often hopelessly obeying the conventional standards of natural beauty. This practice is in itself entirely void of valid ramifications on the page of the actions and reactions of a myriad of women who as represented by the past and those of different conditions of degree and experience of age,

beauty and types of body and social standing is eligible by inheritance, being idiomatically effectual of the symmetry and beauty of their characters as shown in the past. In the last analysis, it is again nothing more than an aberration of the patriarchal discipline and mobility of the female body.

5. Breaking through the Diversified Narrative Paths of 'Feminist Fallacy' in Film and Television Storytelling

Today there are innumerable film and television productions that proclaim to be "feminist," some of which, however, fall into the traps of commercialism and token simplification giving rise to what it might call "developments of feminist fallacy." To escape the monotonous narratives of this "feminist fallacy," it is necessary for film and television to embrace real diversity and depth of character. The road to such normalization is contained within the following premises.

First, it is important to explore narratives related to different women. The prevalent "strong female leads" in mainstream cinema are merely a very narrow part of female experience. The lens must be turned towards those women who traditionally and systematically have been denied voice, such as those from lower social-economic conditions, rural women, ethnic minorities, women with disabilities etc. For example, in *Return to Dust*, the character of Guiying, a rural woman, is magnificently painted. She has a disability from which she suffers physically and is felt to be a burden on her family. However, she represents a strong female agency which is often relegated to the shadows in mainstream discourse. The narrative, through her spirit of endurance and the mutually redemptive relationship she builds thus challenges the single monolithic image of elite women, presenting instead a fully three-dimensional character [9].

In addition, a critical inquiry must re-examine structural injustice rather than obscure its contradictory foundations. The dominant social narrative assigns to the individual failings of women the causes of their condition, such as lack of industry, or other defects of morals, of mind or of body. But substantial remains not to be found until the deeper causes of the discrimination is extended to include the great policies of discrimination inculcated by the biased treatment of maternity in the registered valuations and by the existing inequalities of sex in government and society, the thoughtlessness which causes the continuance of the mother's patronage in the home and society. Kim Ji-eun of 1982 by Korea is an instance of this. The life work of a certain Jin Ji-young is pictured by the writers of this narrative as being planned and oriented by a gradually-complete sex-bias and a universal discrimination against women. It points out effectively the might of the circumstances which permit of discrimination between man and woman in a certain sphere of life, pointing to the opportunities afforded the clients, not for a few but for all classes of mankind under their society and government. By viewing this narrative in this manner, it points the finger of blame more directly to the social and cultural failures, rather than the individual failures [10].

6. Conclusion

The case study analysis in this research shows a convergent pattern of simplification beyond fiction in women's parts in the screen works that it calls the "Feminist fallacy": women as protagonists are forced to a stereotyped independent character, chance also is invoked as the means by which they evolve, but analysis shows their portrayals are cleansed to avoid a real social criticism in their operation. The study concludes with the phenomenon that it illustrates the idea of the exploitation of feminism in economics by capital. Using both the uses of market need and the established characterizations in Oedipal fables, the same process continues of providing feminist analysis with the foot taken from beneath it.

The contributions made by this article are considerable. First, it offers a theoretical framework for feminist-tested critiques of narrative. It alerts creators to pitfalls of narrative common to most narratives, and signals some breakthroughs. It also arms audiences with a critical ability to read texts

for deeper meanings expressed subliminally beyond obvious meanings indicated by note and formalistic reading.

As such, it is vital that future research prioritizes the following lines of inquiry. First, cross-media comparative research is essential in order to investigate how new platforms such as short-form video and streaming services are influencing feminist narrative forms more generally. Second, applied research that seeks to bridge critical theory and creative practice is necessary and should aim to translate theoretical insights into creative solutions that are commercially viable, while remaining ideologically sound. Last, scholarship should research how to increase diversity in female narratives while at the same time seeking to address complex social contradictions.

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Yes no changes		Yes with minor revisions	√	Yes with major revisions		No	
Please expand on any weak areas in the checklist and offer specific advice as to how the author(s) may improve the paper.							
This paper has a sharp and precise topic, accurately pointing out the important phenomenon of 'pseudo-feminism' in current film and television creation. The structure of the paper is clear. Through three typical cases—"Mulan", "Wonder Woman 1984", and "Black Widow"—it systematically analyzes the specific manifestations of narrative singularity and delves into the commercial capital and patriarchal logic behind it, demonstrating a strong critical awareness and theoretical depth. However, some paragraphs have issues with redundant language, unclear references, and grammatical errors, which need to be revised.							