

FEMINISM SPIRIT'S REFLECTIONS ON 'JORDAN O'NEIL' IN *G.I JANE* MOVIE

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with feminism Spirit's reflections on 'Jordan O'Neil' in *G.I Jane* movie. The study is conducted by using descriptive qualitative approach. The objectives of the study are to find out kinds of oppression faced by O'Neil and her feminism spirit's reflections in term of oppression that she had faced. The data are collected from dialogues and scenes in the movie. The object of the study is Jordan O'Neil as the female main character. The study revealed that there are three major oppressions faced by O'Neil according to Young's theory: being marginalized, exploited and experiencing powerlessness. Feminism Spirit's reflections on Jordan O'Neil in term of oppression that she had already faced are three major parts: being persistent, independent, and courageous.

Keywords: *feminism spirit's reflections, Oppression, Jordan O'Neil, G.I Jane Movie.*

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INTRODUCTION

Movie is a kind of literary work which has widely been linked as a modern literary work. Bannet and Royle (2004: 142) state that over recent decades cinema has increasingly come to be incorporated into university literature courses and literature professors have been pronouncing on films, as well as on novels, poems and plays.

Movie, as a literary work, is deeply rooted with this world and its social issues. One of those social issues is feminism. Feminism, which stands with legal and equal right between men and women in every aspect of their lives, has been being put as object of working by film makers. One of the many movies that depicts about feminism's issue is *G.I Jane* movie.

G.I Jane movie is a movie about a woman, Jordan O'Neil (Demi Moore), who becomes the first woman to undergo training in U.S Navy Special Warfare Group. In pursuing her carrier and especially, equal status, Jordan O'Neil first experiences how it is called as oppression. Hinson and Bradley (2008: 1) state that a person lives within structures of domination and oppression, if other groups have the power to determine her actions. Individuals experience oppressive conditions because they are part of a group that is defined on the basis of shared characteristics such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, age, ability, or interest.

Young (1990: 37) states that injustice creates oppression and domination. Young (1990) further defines oppression into five faces of oppression. They are exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural dominance, and violence.

The study was designed to examine about feminism spirit's reflection on Jordan O'Neil in *G.I Jane* movie in term of oppression that she had already faced. Even though there were many newly launched movies depicting women and idea about feminism, *G.I Jane* had powerful messages that lead this research to be done.

The research questions of the study were: What kinds of oppression were faced by Jordan O'Neil in *G.I Jane* movie? And what kinds of feminism spirit's reflection were shown by Jordan O'Neil in *G.I Jane* movie in term of oppression that she had faced?

OPPRESSION

Oppression is injustice that happens in society (Young, 1990: 37). Some groups may suffer from injustice in major economic, political, and cultural institutions which creates domination and oppression to the minority groups. It happens because the ones, who have power, determine the other groups who have lesser power. Individuals experience oppressive conditions because they are part of groups in society that is defined on the basis of shared characteristics such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, age, ability, etc.

As members of certain social groups, people usually experience oppression as one or more of the following conditions: exploitation (a situation when someone's effort is controlled to benefit others by manipulating them), marginalization (a

situation when someone who is not or cannot be used by society due to their race or disability), powerlessness (a situation when someone has no status, they will be shut out of making decisions to the conditions of their employment, and, beyond that, the basic conditions of their lives), cultural dominance (a situation when some group claim that their culture and history are more superior to any other groups), and violence (a situation when someone suffers or humiliates owing to their status or classes).

FEMINISM SPIRIT'S REFLECTION

Feminism movement, which stands for equality between men and women, has brought new hope for women all around the world. As a social movement which stands in one purpose, to offer the same opportunities to women as well as men to actualize themselves in a patriarchal culture, feminism spirit is a must tool to advance it.

According to Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, spirit is the force within a person that is believed to give the body life, energy, and power. It means that spirit exists inside human being, something that cannot be touched or seen but has power even to change the world. When someone has spirit, it is a sign that they are alive which distinguishes someone's quality of life to others. Many people may exist but somebody with spirit within them is the one who knows how to live every single day of lives.

It can be concluded that feminism spirit is unconditional energy and power within somebody to fight for equality in all aspects of women's lives. Every human being who fights for women equal status or oppressive acts toward them for the rest of their lives continually and unconditionally can be called as someone who has feminism spirit within them.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted by applying descriptive qualitative method. Conducting qualitative research means doing more exploration to an object. It can be conducted by several techniques: in dept interview, observation or documentation (Suryana, 2010: 36). This study was designed to find out feminism spirit's reflection on Jordan O'Neil in *G.I Jane* movie in term of oppression that she had faced.

The data of this research were taken from dialogues and scenes which shown feminism spirit's reflection on Jordan O'Neil in term of oppression that she had already faced. The source of data of this research was *G.I Jane* movie which was directed by Ridley Scott and released on August 22, 1997 by Hollywood Pictures. It runs about 124 minutes and stares Demi Moore as Jordan O'Neil.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of analysing data from dialogues and scenes of *G.I Jane* movie were presented as follow.

1. Feminism Spirit's Reflection on Jordan O'Neil in *G.I Jane* Movie

Oppressive acts which was received by Jordan O'Neil were being exploited, marginalized, and experiencing powerlessness.

a. Being Exploited

Exploitation is situation when someone's effort is controlled up to benefit others by manipulating them (Young, 1990). There were some exploiting acts done by people toward O'Neil in the movie. They came from Senator DeHaven and Cortez, her fellow training.

DeHaven : **Well, this'll be a toot. You read, I'll pour. It's just a test case Jordan, but if things work out, if you can go the distance, it could well change the military's official policy on women in combat. Or, actually, its official non-policy.**

(G.I Jane, 1997)

Even though DeHaven seemed to care about women's issues by saying those words, it was actually her intrigue to prevent military base closing in her home state (Texas) and uplift her fame for the next election. What she had already said to O'Neil was kind of exploitation in order to benefit herself. Since O'Neil was more feminine than the other candidates, it would be great success if she involved in the training.

O'Neil : Come on! Come on!

Cortez : Help me up, Jordan.

Cortez : **Grab my hand. Give me your hand. Why don't you quit, O'Neil? Quit now.**

(G.I Jane, 1997)

At first O'Neil gaver her hand to Cortez and what Cortez did was in contrary. It was a wicked thought that had ever been committed by a man like Cortez. He

became the actor of exploitation since he used O'Neil's shoulder as 'tool' for him to climb up, and later when he reached the top, he simply refused to help his teammate to pass the obstacle.

b. Being Marginalized

Marginalization can be defined as situation when someone who is not or cannot be used by society due to their race or disability (Young, 1990). O'Neil was being marginalized by some people: Royce, Commanding Officer, and her instructor.

Royce : They will eat corn flakes out of your skull.
Okay? To tell you the truth, I don't get it. I mean, you're doing shit-hot at intel. **Why do you wanna go off and play soldier girl for?**
(*G.I Jane, 1997*)

'Why do you wanna go off and play soldier girl for?' meant that O'Neil did not have to accept the training because she had already good at her position in intel. Those words, said by Royce, meant that women, basically, did not need to work hard to get higher position and consciously had to lower their expectation than men in every part of life.

C.O : **We're not trying to change your sex, Lieutenant.** You'll have a separate bed, a separate head. If you have any special medical needs, inform the infirmary. If your classmates or a superior acts in a harrasing... or otherwise unbecoming manner, you are to inform me immediately, so that I can deal with it immediately. It may not always run smooth, but we're trying to make it as painless as possible.
(*G.I Jane, 1997*)

'We're not trying to change your sex, Lieutenant' meant that they had already known and realized that women, physically weaker than men, and they deserved more special 'desert'. The idea emerged by the C.O sounded good for some

women who thought that they were weaker than men, but for O'Neil, it was a humiliation.

Instructor : Group two: Miller, Flea, Powell, Ayres, Cortez and O'Neil. **You will find a white step that is mandated female aid, O'Neil. You will find and use them on every barrier obstacle.**

(G.I Jane, 1997)

From dialogue above, instructor had put her as a woman without any resistance to cope with the barrier obstacle which them to make white step to help O'Neil. They did not see O'Neil as the 'trainee' but 'female trainee' with her million weaknesses.

c. Experiencing Powerlessness

Powerlessness, generally speaking, deals with status. When someone has no status, they will be shut out of making decisions to the conditions of their employments, and, beyond that, the basic conditions of their lives (Young, 1990).

O'Neil experienced powerlessness when she was engaged in the allegation about being a lesbian.

Lieutenant Burke : **We're not asking if you are, Lieutenant, and you are not required to respond even if asked.** This is merely an merely informal inquiry.

(Appendix II, p.56)

Lieutenant Burke emphasized his power as the investigator of O'Neil's case when he limited and blocked O'Neil's confirmation toward malicious allegation addressed to her. O'Neil experienced powerlessness since she could not be given chance by them to tell what actually had already happened between Blondell and

her. It emphasized O'Neil's zero status in the society that she had to accept the decision, no matter what.

2. Feminism Spirit's Reflection on Jordan O'Neil in *G.I Jane* Movie

There were three kinds of feminism spirit's reflection on Jordan O'Neil in terms of oppression that she had already faced: being persistent, being independent, and being courageous.

a. Being Persistent

O'Neil was a woman with persistent and consistent character. Despite her status as a woman working in Navy, she firmly showed something that she believed was true. In the hard situation considering the position of the pilot in Korea, she was asked to analyze but she appeared giving different analysis.

Royce : Advise launch base accordingly, Goldstein. Now.
O'Neil : **Sir, I'd recommend against it.** These are skilled operators. They've grasped their problem by now and will take action to get back on-line. It's just a glitch in the net changeover, sir.
(*G.I Jane, 1997*)

The persistent character shown by O'Neil considering her analysis was one of many things directing her success. She firmly believed that the crews would reach plateau in ten minutes, which was the safest place among all places. Even though Royce doubted about her ability, she remained about her belief, which directed C.O's agreement upon it.

O'Neil : **Sir, I'm not looking for any special treatment.**
(*G.I Jane, 1997*)

Her saying above emphasized how seriously she took the training. She was persistent about her ability during the training that she asked her commanding officer to do the same treatment without considering herself as the female trainee.

b. Being Independent

O'Neil's independent character was not shaped by short-term process but it had been being started when she was a kid. She was surrounded by three brothers and male-dominated activities such as diving and jumping which forced her to survive and take care of herself.

O'Neil : **Honey, come on. I survived jump school, dive school and three brothers. I think I can take care of myself.**
(*G.I Jane, 1997*)

O'Neil was actually pointing out about her independence to her partner, Royce. She used to live in male-dominated environment which helped her to shape her independent character. Being surrounded by men and male activities were one of her early first stages of building her independent character despite her fear of being a victim of sexual politics.

c. Being Courageous

When O'Neil was chosen by DeHaven to follow the training, O'Neil was naturally shocked. It could be acceptable since SEAL is world-class warrior and everybody who follows the training must be well prepared, both physically and mentally.

O'Neil : **Begging your pardon, Senator, but you do understand this involves SEAL training?**
(*G.I Jane, 1997*)

O'Neil was courageous enough to ask such a thing like that because she did not want to be trapped into a hasty decision. She knew what and how SEAL training was and it would be wise to ask about first. It might sound that she was not well-prepared, but it was so courageous enough to ask first. Many people were trapped into something that they did not like just because they did not ask.

DeHaven : Did that piss you off?
O'Neil : **Yes, ma'am, it did.**
(*G.I Jane, 1997*)

Being courageous does not mean that somebody must be okay with all the things coming in their way. Being courageous means that somebody, despite their fear, is honest about their feelings. O'Neil did not try to hide her fear or impress DeHaven by her flowery words, she simply said what came in her mind instead. It was one of many indicators reflecting her courageous character.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusions

After analyzing feminism spirit's reflection on Jordan O'Neil in term of oppression that she had faced, it could be concluded some important points of analysis. The points were listed below:

1. O'Neil suffered from three major oppression during her involvement in SEAL training; being exploited, marginalized, and experiencing powerlessness.
2. O'Neil showed three kinds of feminism spirit's reflection in term of oppression that she had faced; being persistent, independent, and courageous.

B. Suggestions

Considering the conclusion above, there are some important suggestions needed to be examined. They are listed below:

1. The result of this study is suggested to be used as the reference for researchers who will conduct the same researches using feminism's theory or combinational theories to enrich the heterogeneities and variances of literary works.
2. The movie, G.I Jane is suggested to be used as tool and material in literature class that examines about feminism theory.

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