

## A Study of the *Flipped* From the Perspective of Feminism

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### **Abstract**

The *Flipped*, a long story written by Wendelin Van Draanen, has wined a lot of praises from media and audience since it was adapted into a movie in 2010. It tells a love story between the adolescent boy and girl who grow up with the first love, in which, the heroine, which exudes a unique personality charm, becomes a major highlight of this story. This paper is written to analyze the *Flipped* from the perspective of feminism and it is enlightening to the construction of the characters of Chinese female.

**Key words:** *Flipped*; feminism; female power; comparison

### **1 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Brief Introduction of the *Flipped***

*Flipped* is a 2010 American romantic comedy-drama film directed by Rob Reiner and based on Wendelin Van Draanen's novel of the same name. Since it is released in August 2010, it is loved by the majority of the audience.

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**Cite this article:** Liu Qing (2019). A Study of the *Flipped* From the Perspective of Feminism. International Journal of Arts and Commerce, 8(1), 45-49

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There are three phases in the *Flipped*. It is a sunny day, when second-graders Bryce Loski and Julianna Maryellen Baker first meet, Juli knows it's love, the story began. However, at this time, Bryce doesn't like Juli; he thinks she is so strange that Bryce tries to avoid getting along with Juli. By the sixth grade, Bryce tries to get rid of Juli by dating Shelley Stalls, whom Juli despises most. This is the first phase, she loves him, but he wants to escape.

There's a large, old sycamore tree beside Juli's house. Juli loves the tree very much because it offers her a new world. One day, a group of landscapers come and want to cut down the tree so that a house could be built there; Juli tries her best to stop it but no one supports her, no one understands her include Bryce. Finally the tree is cut down, despite Juli's opposition. She becomes very depressed afterwards. When Juli finds out that Bryce has been throwing away the eggs she offered his family, out of fear of salmonella, she feels hurt and starts avoiding him. When Juli doesn't talk to Bryce or make eye contact with him anymore, Bryce begins to care about Juli. This is the second phase, he takes interest in her, but her heart is broken.

Bryce tries to talk to Juli even though she wants to be left alone. Bryce plants a baby sycamore tree in Juli's front yard to show her how he feels. When Juli sees the sycamore, she goes out to help him. Bryce puts his hand on Juli's and they share loving smiles and plant the tree together. This is the third phase, they finally get to understand each other and learn forgiveness and love.

## **1.2 Brief introduction of feminism**

Feminism is a range of political movements, ideologies, and social movements that share a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve political, economic, personal, and social rights for women.

The history of the modern western feminist movements is divided into three "waves". Each wave dealt with different aspects of the same feminist issues. The first wave comprised women's suffrage movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, promoting women's right to vote. The second wave was associated with the ideas and actions of the women's liberation movement beginning in the 1960s. The second wave campaigned for legal and social equality for women. The third wave is a continuation of, and a reaction to, the perceived failures of second-wave feminism, beginning in the 1990s.

First-wave feminism was a period of activity during the 19th century and early twentieth century. In the UK and US, it focused on the promotion of equal contract, marriage, parenting, and property rights for women. By the end of the 19th century, activism focused primarily on gaining political power, particularly the right of women's suffrage, though some feminists were active in campaigning for women's sexual, reproductive, and economic rights as well.

The second-wave feminism was a period of activity during mid-twentieth century. From the beginning of the 20th century to the 1960s, people experienced two world wars. Feminism in this turbulent period developed rapidly. Especially after World War II, with the gradual recovery of the US economy, people's spirit has a new look. A majority of women who have consciousness of feminism quietly grew with the more intensive desire for independence and freedom. American historian William H Chaff pointed out: "World War II and its subsequent years constitute a milestone

in the development of women in the United States World War II to make women's awareness of women in the United States to improve, not the 20th century, 60th's feminist movement buried the seeds of the revolution."

American feminist Betty Fredan published a book in 1963, "the mystery of women", deconstructed the wife and mother of the "ideal female" model advocated by the society, called on women to go out of the house, change the loss of self-life, play their talents and potential, with the facts criticized the "feminist theory". After the publication of this book, it inspired the middle class women in the United States have awareness for men's sense of social, and it led to the second wave of the feminist movement in the United States. Since then, the influence of the feminist movement has penetrated into various fields of society. Most of the films and works created by this thought have attached great importance to the spirit of women's independence and self-improvement and the equal rights of men and women.

### **1.3 The feminism in the *Flipped***

The *Flipped* describes the story of the 20th century, the late 50s and early 60s. This paper attempts to combine the *Flipped* with the American feminist movement development background, to explore the story in the female characteristics reflected in the female consciousness.

The story restores a pure love story in a fantastic pastoral style in the 20th century; it brings the audience a sense of nostalgic growth memory. In the 20th century, the rise of the second feminist movement in the 1960s analyzed the awakening of women's consciousness and the improvement of women's status in American women. From movie, we know the background is in the 20th century, the early 60s, this period is the Feminist movement, the second wave. And female has some right in life. Through describing what exactly happened in the early 1960s, the author input some symbolized feature into Juli, the awakening of women's feminine consciousness in the United States was fully reflected in characteristics represented by Juli.

## **2. The female powers represent in the *Flipped***

### **2.1 The courage to pursue love**

"The first day I met Bryce Loski, I flipped." The first time she saw him, she flipped. The first time he saw her, he ran. Juli knows clearly what she wants and what she appreciates. When she falls in love with the little boy, she takes action at no time. In face of the friendship or love, she is brave and dares to speak out her love and reveal her heart. And when she finds that there is maybe a hollow soul in Bryce's body, she gives up resolutely. In face of depression, she chooses to depend on herself and leave without hesitation. She really knows how to love and when to leave. This is female power. Her taking the initiative to pursue her love is a symbol of the awakening of women's consciousness. And her abandonment at appropriate time represents her independence and wisdom.

## 2.2 The willpower to guard the tree

When the big tree besides Juli's house is going to be cut down, she fights, lonely but firmly. Every time the landscapers come, she will climb the tree and protect it. The little girl has no fear, and wants to guard the tree at cost of her life. I believe that the audiences are electrified by her courage and resistance. This is female power. Her endeavor to prevent the tree from being cut down presents her spirit of resistance.

## 2.3 The resolution to defend her dignity

Juli is proud of everything on her own, and she has the ability to achieve a dream and down to earth. Her mother is not willing to have chickens at home, hence, she alone takes care of chickens hatched in the science fair, and the chickens are to be laying hens. And Juli is self-sufficiency by chicken, and also earns some pocket money; When the Bryce family ridiculed her courtyard dilapidated, and even suspected she sent eggs with Salmonella, she was determined to reorganize the courtyard, but the parents quarreled, so that she had to face this reality: the family's economic situation is strained, it is difficult to pay the cost of repair. So she hands-on, with the money to save the eggs to buy the grass, the mess of the courtyard clean and beautiful, strong fight back Bryce family's despise. This is female power. She defends her own and family's dignity in her way.

## 3. Comparison with China

American female writers have become a special power since early last century. The characters in their works have the representability of feminism. However, at the same time, the development of feminism is different in China. In the 1950s and 1960s, a number of works with women as the main images appeared in China. Most of these works described the lower-class laboring people in an in-depth and sympathetic way, focusing on the miserable life of women, which reflect the real social problems of that moment. The stability of the society is closely related to the fate of the people. In that turbulent era, most women reduced to homeless women. Generally speaking, there are two kinds of female images in the works of the 1960s. One refers to those who living at the bottom of society are suffered stigmatized and violated, such as rural girls, maids and prostitutes. The other category focuses on the life of women in the civic class, such as female intellectuals and professional women. However, most of these "new women" do not have a happy ending. They either sink into the society, or leave some regrets, or even lose their lives. In my opinion, these tragedies show that in the early 20th century, Chinese women lacked a mature consciousness of liberation; it is the deficiency of female power and collective unconsciousness that leads to their misery destiny.

## 4. Conclusion

The characteristics and female powers represent in the *Flipped* is worth thinking deeply. It is enlightening to the construction of the characters of Chinese female. In this world, here doesn't exist absolutely fair, but as human beings, no matter we are male or female, we should have the same right, the right to love and the right to choose. We female have to take the initiative in our own hands; only

in this way can we get the opportunity of equality. Only we female can liberate ourselves.

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