

**THE PRESENTATION OF FEMINISM THEN, AND NOW, IN THE MOVIES:
SARAH GAVION'S *SUFFRAGETTE*, NIKI CARO'S *MULAN*, AND DABBY
CHIMERE'S *ENOUGH*, A COMPARATIVE STUDY.**

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of study

This essay examines the portrayal of feminism in four different movies. The primary objective is to explore how the goals of the first - wave feminism particularly suffrage, differ from those of contemporary feminism. By examining the strategies employed by suffragist and contrasting them with the tactic used by today's feminism, we aim to uncover shift in social change across different historical periods. Additionally, we investigate the evolution of feminist's perception and the persistent challenges faced by the movement. This study seeks to dispel doubts, rectify misconceptions, and present a positive and essential view of feminism for both current and future generations.

1.2 Scope of study

This study encompasses the analysis of four selected movies: 'Suffragette' directed by Sarah Gavion, 'Mulan' directed by Niki Caro, Lionheart directed by Genevieve Nnaji and 'Enough' directed by Gabby Chimere as it's primaries. The study also, covers feminism historical context and ideologies which delves into the four waves of feminism; hence, applies the theory of evolution and film for its analysis. Other secondary texts are dictionaries, photographs and journals sourced from the web, which discussed similar topics on comparative analysis of the evolution of feminism from its early stage to the present. Reference are sourced largely from the web since there are scarcely others who have researched on the selected movies.

Through these interconnected areas this scholarly essay aims to provide a comprehensive view of feminism and its evolving significance.

1.3 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative data analysis to explore and compare the four waves of feminism. The evolution theories are used to analyze the selected movies, exposing instances and events which transpired in different period and time.

Data collection are gotten from the four selected movies, while secondary data are gotten online. This study will first unravel feminism ideologies and related theories before delving into proper analysis of selected movies.

1.4 Theoretical framework

This study adopts revolution theories. Revolution theories explore the dynamics of rapid and radical social, economic and political change within societies. They emerged as a response to major historical events like the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution. The Oxford learners dictionary defines Revolution as 'a forcible overthrow of a government or social order in favor of a new system'. It is force change through non-institutionalized means (such as mass demonstrations, protests, strikes, or violence). Theda Skocpol sees Revolutions as rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below. Samuel P. Huntington asserts that revolution is a rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and policies. While Crane Brinton defines Revolutions to be, 'sudden changes in the macro-structure and basic characteristics of societies and political systems, involving an organized revolt of the mass public and resulting in the replacement of political elites. Perhaps most often, the word "revolution" is employed to denote a change in social and political institutions (10)(11)(12). Jeff Goodwin gives two definitions of a revolution. First, a broad one, including any and all instances in which a state or a political

regime is overthrown and thereby transformed by a popular movement in an irregular, extraconstitutional or violent fashion. Second, a narrow one, in which revolutions entail not only mass mobilization and regime change, but also more or less rapid and fundamental social, economic or cultural change, during or soon after the struggle for state power (13). Jack Goldstone defines a revolution as an effort to transform the political institutions and the justifications for political authority in society, accompanied by formal or informal mass mobilization and non-institutionalized actions that undermine authorities (1). Early scholars debated distinctions between revolutions and civil wars. They also debated whether revolutions were purely political (concerning the transformation of government) or whether they were more expansive in nature to encompass broader social change.

Revolution theories serve as frameworks to understand the causes, processes, and outcomes of revolutions. Throughout history, scholars have developed various perspectives on how and why revolutions occur. five prominent types of revolution theories, are classical, modernization, structuralist, cultural, and world systems theories. The classical theory, spearheaded by scholars like Karl Marx, attributes revolutions to socio-economic factors. It posits that revolutions arise from class struggle, where the working class rises against the ruling bourgeoisie. According to this theory, revolutions occur when the prevailing social order becomes unsustainable, leading to the overthrow of the ruling class. Modernization theory alternatively known as development theory, focuses on rapid socio-economic changes and modernization processes. Revolutions are viewed as a consequence of increased urbanization, industrialization, and a growing middle class that demands political and social rights. Modernization theory suggests that revolutions are driven by societal shifts and the desire for democratic reforms. The structuralist theory emphasizes the role of political and institutional frameworks in driving revolutions. It argues that revolutions occur when a crisis arises within the state's ability to govern and provide for its citizens. Such crises can stem

from inefficient institutions, corruption, or loss of legitimacy. Structuralist theory concentrates on internal dynamics within the state. Cultural theory gives weight to cultural factors in revolutions. It posits that revolutions manifest when there is a cultural shift or a change in collective consciousness, leading people to challenge existing norms, values, and beliefs. Ideological and symbolic conflicts play a key role, often revolving around nationalism, religion, or identity politics. World system theory developed by Immanuel Wallerstein, contextualizes revolutions within global power dynamics and the capitalist world system. It argues that revolutions occur as responses to the exploitation and inequality generated by capitalism. World systems theory suggests that revolutionary activity is more likely in peripheral regions of the world system, where socio-economic disparities are more pronounced (Goldstone et al 37-63).

"Suffragette" directed by Sarah Gavron, 'Mulan' directed by Niki Caro, Lionheart directed by Genevieve Nnaji and 'Enough' directed by Dabby Chimere are movies which give a redefined meaning to revolution theories. Examining the themes of social change, collective action, and challenges, rebellion and overthrow of an existing order and transformative aspects. While a traditional understanding of revolution may primarily relate to political or societal changes, it can also be applied to the individual, organizational, or cultural context portrayed in the movies.

One key aspect of the theory of revolution is the critique of the existing social order and the desire for fundamental change. In the movie "Suffragette," the main characters are part of the suffragette movement in early 20th century Britain, where women were denied basic rights and political representation. The women in the film are exposed to the harsh realities of their oppressive society, which becomes a catalyst for their revolutionary actions. Their struggle represents a broader critique of the existing social and political structure that denied women their rights and relegated them to second-class citizens. Another important aspect of

the theory of revolution is the role of collective action. The movie portrays the suffragettes coming together as a collective group, organizing protests, demonstrations, and acts of civil disobedience to challenge the status quo. They form strong bonds of solidarity, with women from various social backgrounds joining forces to fight for their shared cause. This collective action is depicted as central to their revolutionary objectives, with the women supporting and empowering each other. Moreover, the theory of revolution highlights the challenges and obstacles faced by revolutionary movements. In "Suffragette," the suffragettes are met with resistance, hostility, and violence from both society and the authorities. They are subjected to heavy surveillance, intimidation, and physical abuse. These challenges serve as a reminder of the entrenched power structures they are up against, and the risks they are willing to take to effect change. The movie also highlights the internal debates and conflicts within the suffragette movement, reflecting the complexities and dilemmas often faced by revolutionary groups.

In "Mulan," there is a clear presence of social inequality based on gender, there is socioeconomic discontent, revolutionary catalyst, potential and overthrow of order. 'Mulan', a movie where a female character known as Mulan disguise herself in form of a man to go for war, in order to fight for her country. Mulan as a young woman, is expected to follow traditional female roles, while her desire to fight in the army challenges those norms. This gender-based inequality can be seen as suppressing the potential of women in Chinese society during that time secondly, the Huns, led by Shan Yu, pose a threat to the Chinese empire, creating a sense of imminent danger and insecurity. This situation can be seen as symbolic of socio-economic discontent, where the ruling elite fails to adequately protect and provide for the masses, causing a brewing dissatisfaction among the people. Mulan's decision to take her father's place in the army can be understood as a revolutionary act aimed at addressing this discontent. Also, Mulan's act of defiance and her subsequent journey to fight against the

Huns can be considered as the catalyst for revolution. Her decision to challenge the prevalent gender norms and prove her capabilities initiates a series of events that disrupt the established societal order. Her transformation from an obedient daughter to a warrior can be seen as a metaphorical revolution within herself, disrupting the traditional expectations imposed upon her. In addition, Mulan's role as a revolutionary figure expands beyond her personal journey. Through her actions, she challenges both social oppression and unjust norms, posing a threat to the existing power structures. Her resourcefulness, determination, and leadership qualities inspire her fellow soldiers, and they collectively rally behind her cause. This depiction highlights the potential for collective action and unity in a revolutionary struggle. Ultimately, the climax of the movie showcases a revolutionary victory, where Mulan's ingenuity and courage lead to the defeat of the Huns. This victory symbolizes the overthrow of an oppressive force and the potential for societal transformation. Mulan's triumph within the male-dominated military hierarchy also mirrors a dismantling of gender norms and the emancipation of women.

"Lionheart" by Genevieve Nnaji, provides insights into transformative aspects depicted in the film. While a traditional understanding of revolution may primarily relate to political or societal changes, it can also be applied to the individual, organizational, or cultural context portrayed in the movie. Although political change is not the central theme of "Lionheart," it touches upon it indirectly. The movie showcases the challenges faced by a female protagonist named Adaeze in her efforts to save her family's transportation company. Adaeze challenges gender stereotypes and traditional patriarchal norms by attempting to take leadership in a male-dominated industry. In this sense, the film hints at a political revolution in terms of promoting gender equality and redefining women's roles in Nigeria. Adaeze's struggles in "Lionheart" also reflect the need for a socio-economic revolution. The movie highlights the entrenched corruption and greed in Nigerian society, particularly within the business sector.

Adaeze seeks to combat these systemic issues by aligning her business practices with ethical values, insisting on transparency, and avoiding bribes. Her efforts signify a revolutionary approach to business that challenges the prevalent corrupt practices. Another aspect of revolution portrayed in "Lionheart" is the need for cultural change. The movie showcases the clash between traditional Nigerian values and the influence of Westernization. Adaeze's character represents a new generation that is torn between preserving cultural heritage and embracing the benefits of globalization. The film subtly raises questions about cultural identity, as the family's transportation company is named after their father's traditional title, "Lionheart," which they fight to retain against external influences. Thus, the movie presents an undercurrent of cultural revolution by addressing the tension between tradition and modernity. On an organizational level, "Lionheart" depicts the need for a revolution in leadership styles and business practices. Adaeze struggles to transform her family's failing transport company by introducing innovative ideas and a more inclusive leadership approach. She hires a competent but older driver, who brings extensive experience, and she inspires her team by fostering collaboration and recognizing the importance of every team member's contribution. This showcases a shift in traditional hierarchical structures and promotes a more participatory and empowering form of leadership, fostering an organizational revolution within the company in summary, while "Lionheart" might not depict political revolution explicitly, it touches upon various aspects of revolution, such as political, socio-economic, cultural, and organizational changes. The film highlights the need for transformation in multiple dimensions, including challenging gender roles, combating corruption, reconciling cultural identity with globalization, and promoting inclusive leadership. These themes demonstrate how the theory of revolution can be used to analyze the transformative elements portrayed in the movie.

The last movie 'Enough' by Dabby Chimere explore the transformed aspect of women. Themes such as abuse, identity, right, empowerment and survival which are metamorphic elements that brings revolution are eminent. The movie portrays three women who faces abuse from their husbands. While one dies out of carelessness, empowerment and indecision, the other two chooses their lives wisely by divorcing their husbands. The movie depicts cultural Revolution at the changes in society and culture as portrayed in the movie. We experience an outcome of a revolt against abusive marriage which marginalised women in traditional patriarchal society as the women seeks identity empowerment and survival.

In conclusion, by examining the portrayal of social change, collective action, and the challenges faced by the suffragette movement in 'Suffragette', The film demonstrates the critique of the existing social order, showcases the importance of collective action, and portrays the obstacles and risks involved in revolutionary movements. Overall, it provides an insight into the revolutionary struggle for the theory of revolution, popularized by political philosophers such as Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, examines how societal systems can undergo radical transformation through a process of rebellion and overthrow of an existing order. Applying this theory to the movie "Mulan," we can analyze the transformative nature of revolution within the narrative. "Mulan" is seen through lens of the theory of revolution, examining the systematic oppression faced by women and the potential for transformative change. Mulan's rebellious actions and her journey of self-discovery align with revolutionary narratives, highlighting the power of individual and collective resistance against existing social, gender, and economic hierarchies, women's suffrage and the enduring impact of the suffragettes' actions. while "Lionheart" might not depict political revolution explicitly, it touches upon various aspects of revolution, such as political, socio-economic, cultural, and organizational changes. The film highlights the need for transformation in multiple dimensions, including challenging gender roles, combating corruption, reconciling cultural

identity with globalization, and promoting inclusive leadership. These themes demonstrate how the theory of revolution can be used to analyze the transformative elements portrayed in the movie. Last but not the least is 'Enough' which stressing on identity, rights, empowerment and survival showcases cultural Revolution to depict shift, transformation and change in traditional patrachian marriage system and the role of women in the society. Hence, there is no better way to show examples of revolution theories than what had been done in these movies.

1.5 Review of Scholarship

Feminism is a social, economic and political movement that advocate for women's right. Britannica defines feminism as the belief in social economic and political equality of the sexes. Wikipedia characteristics feminism as a range of sociopolitical movement and ideologies aiming to establish equality between the sexes. Mary Wollstonecraft an early feminist thinker expressed feminist ideas as a vindication of the right of the woman. She argued for women right and challenged prevailing gender norms. Wollstonecraft advocated for education independence and equal opportunity for women. Bell hooks defines feminism as "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (8). She argues that feminism seeks social justice by addressing the intersecting forms of oppression and advocating for gender equality.

Simone de Beauvoir describes feminism as a movement that aims to challenge the patriarchal structures and achieve women's liberation. She states that feminism "demands that the whole female sex be acknowledged as the 'Other,' without distinction or exceptions" (33). Through her analysis of gender oppression, she emphasizes the need for women to reclaim their agency and transcend societal limitations. Judith Butler, offers a nuanced understanding of feminism. She argues that gender is a performative and socially constructed phenomenon. For

Butler, feminism is not a fixed concept but a continuous struggle that challenges traditional notions of gender and seeks to create a more inclusive and fluid understanding of identity. She states, "Feminism can never be fully articulated, fully manifested, fully put into practice because its purpose is to challenge power at its source" (14).

Karen Offen provides insights into the historical context of feminism. Although her works does not directly analyze specific films, it contributes to our understanding of feminist movements by delving into the historical development of feminism comparing its various definitions and contexts. It provides insights into how feminism has evolved over time. It is important to note that Karen Offen is a feminist who explored feminism in different geographical contexts and the interactions between various feminist movements. However, based on Offen's scholarship, it can be inferred that her understanding of feminism is rooted in the belief in gender equality and social, political, and economic justice for women. She has emphasized the diverse and intersectional nature of feminist movements, understanding that feminism is not a monolithic ideology but encompasses a range of perspectives, experiences, and goals. Offen recognizes the historical struggles faced by women and the ongoing need to challenge and dismantle gender-based discrimination and oppression.

Tejashwini K.C explores the changing landscape of feminism in India, considering historical contexts and contemporary challenges. He discussed how feminism demands interests with socialist approaches to society policy. Companion to feminist studies conducted a comparative analysis of feminism, examines the rise and contemporary forms of feminism across different regions highlighting critiques of neoliberal globalization western feminism, band NGOisation from global south feminist.

The above scholars offer valuable perspective on Feminism's past and present shedding light on its global variations and ongoing debates. However, they did not compare the goals and challenges of feminism in the past and present of which, this essay seeks to unravel.

Sarah Gavron and screen writer Abi Morgan Niki Caro, Genevieve Naji and Dabby Chimere are movie directors with Feminism interest and has shown this in their movies "Suffragette" "Mulan" "Lion heart" and "Enough" which exposes the injustice of the past. The struggles to triumph that comes in the final screens which has effect of tying up loose ends and suppressing uncomfortable continuities

A.O Scott gave a review of suffragette written by Abi Morgan and directed by Gavron. Considering its use of fiction to explore women history comparing it to other campaign of the economic implication of the right to vote. Samsara goes deeper to reveals that suffragette reminds us of the length women had to go for right that still don't have permission to exercise without harassment. She argues that the point of the film is not the achievement of suffragette but the length women had to go to be seen and heard and the level of frustration and disempowerment they were experiencing which made them take on such aggressive means to become a part of the conversation (1) he analyzes the core characters terrifying the diversity of how the foot soldiers of such a violent struggle came to find themselves making history. Justin change Suffragette from a refrain angle and gave a tribute "Deeds not words" Goes the refer of "Suffragette" he commented the handful of brave women who realized that polite law-abiding protests were not going to get them very far in the battle for voting right in Early 20th century Britain. But gave themselves to challenges and consequences of civil disobedience. Sarah Gavron the director of the "Suffragette" (2015), which focuses on the suffragette movement in the early 20th century has not directed any other feature films specifically centered around feminism.

Andrew Arnold talked about difference power and discrimination in “Mulan” he studies the character of Mulan and assert that she displays an effort to recognize major areas of societal difference in gender roles change the perspective of power means and challenges the forms of societal base discrimination face by women and non cis gendered people. Film critic Roger Helbert on his review of Mulan write “This story this time isn't a retread of familiar western children classic but base on a Chinese folktale about a plucky Chinese teenage girl who disguise herself as a boy to fight the invading Huns” Helbert said his best “The outcome manages somehow to be true to feminist Dogman and romantic convention. He says that the film Mulan is a transcultural explorative product through transcultural hybridization, it creates a third space in which different cultures interact with each other (1). His key words Mulan transculturality, globalization, adaptation, hybridization and third space. He argues Mulan who is the protagonist is aware of her responsibility to bring honors to her family and embodies the idea of feminism. However cultural hybridization results in both misrepresentation and possibilities. He says that the feminism in the film is more like a tool for Mulan rather than a challenge to the whole gender structure. Nevertheless, it creates also a third space where different cultures interact negotiate, and integrate hence it blurs the cultural boundaries (4). Mulan 2020 is indeed directed by Nicki Carol. It is an adaptation of Disney animated film and portrays a strong female Protagonist. Nicki Carol is known. For directing films that often have strong female leads and teams of female empowerment. Her film whale rider (2002) is another notable example of a movie that present feminist theme.

Ucheoma Chidima Onwutuebe asset that with lion heart Genevieve's Naji has created a female lead who owns her ground without renegading culture. She says that Nanji has berthed a film with a feminist message that does not exaggerate the agenda of the movement but marries it to a world Nigerians and global audience can relate with (1) Victor Osaee examines the flow and contract flow of post-colonial anxiety in Genevieve's Naji lionheart.

The review of national identity and representation in the contemporary Nigerian nation-state amiss the fact of what has been termed "Fulanization". He finds that Nigerian is in a serious need of restructuring since the basics for which Alhaji Melkano agrees to save the Igbo family is the ability of the paterfamilias of the Igbo to speak Hausa. He concludes that the expansionist tendencies of the Hausa-Fulani is accentuated in lion heart since the only means of survival of the people of the south east is left to the hands as well as the will to act of the Hausa Fulani (1). The Walfiees sees lion heart has not an action parked movie that keep you at the edge of your sit but a movie that worms its way into people heart with simplicity and subtle messages of hard work determination, tribal unity, gender equality and value of family relationship. Genevieve Nnaji is a strong feminist who state her type of feminism to be the woman who has the right to make her own choices and do whatever she feels like which reflect in most of her movies she has acted like lionheart and "road to yesterday (2015)". She advocates for Nigerian girls to be able to have a say in who they chose to marry. She is against early marriage for the girl child and she is strongly against the abuse of men in the society hence she is a strong advocate for social justice.

The themes found in the trailer enough include domestic violence physical and emotional abuse toxic relationship self-realization female empowerment parents to child re-approchement and reconciliation, stalking, victimization, self-defense (Physical psychological and emotional) and revenge. IMDb.com shared a summary on the movie "Enough ", "A married with an overbearing attitude desperately want a male child from his wife after having daughters".

Conclusively, feminist film is a dynamic field and scholars continued to engage with new films and perspectives. While direct comparative studies may be limited, analysing selected movies within their historical and cultural contexts can deepen our understanding of feminism goals and challenges in past and present in cinema.

1.6 Thesis Statement

This study showcases that the goal of first wave feminism culminating in suffrage differ from those of contemporary feminism and social changes have been accelerated at the expense of altered social norms but there are different perception of feminism resulting persisting challenges.