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THE EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION IN *FAMILY GUY*
ANALYSIS OF THE SERIES FROM AN ECOFEMINIST
PERSPECTIVE

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The Employment Discrimination in *Family Guy*: Analysis of the Series from an Ecofeminist Perspective

Abstract:

As a branch of feminism, ecological feminism is concerned with social and environmental issues. This feminist environmental philosophy on ecology focuses on a gender perspective which tackles the relationship between the 'natural' world and humanity. It has been widely suggested that the Western patriarchal society and culture has brought systematic degradation to the world and the human/nature relationships. Likewise, it implies the existence of a relationship between the oppression and exploitation of socially and culturally considered groups (such as women) and the violence exerted over nature and all its living beings.

The aspect of female work oppression is very common in *Family Guy*, a sitcom that continuously depicts female characters in a very biased way from male-dominated (and targeted) view. The study of the series from a gender and ecofeminist perspective will serve to bring powerful insights on the unequal representation of women and their relationship to the world. In this sense, I will analyze the employment discrimination in the series in this paper to see the extent to which *Family Guy* illustrates the concerns that ecofeminism deals with.

Keywords: ecofeminism, *Family Guy*, gender, human-nature relations, job, nature, subtitling, women.

***Family Guy*'daki İstihdam Ayrımcılığı: Dizinin Ekofeminist Bir Bakış Açısından Analizi**

Özet:

Feminizmin bir branşı olarak, ekolojik feminizm sosyal ve çevre sorunlarıyla ilgilenir. Ekolojideki bu feminist çevre felsefesi, “doğal” dünya ve insanlık arasındaki ilişkiyi ele alan bir cinsiyet perspektifine odaklanmaktadır. Batılı ataerkil toplum ve kültürün dünyada ve insan/doğa ilişkilerinde sistematik bir bozulmaya yol açtığı yaygın biçimde öne sürülmüştür. Aynı şekilde, toplumsal ve kültürel olarak kabul edilen grupların (kadın gibi) baskı ve sömürsü ile doğa ve tüm canlı varlıklarına uygulanan şiddet arasında bir ilişkinin varlığını ima eder.

Kadın iş baskısının görünüşü, kadın karakterleri erkek egemenliği (ve erkek hedefli) görüşünden devamlı olarak taraflı tasvir eden durum komedisi *Family Guy*'da çok yaygındır. Dizinin toplumsal cinsiyet ve ekofeminist bir bakış açısından incelenmesi, kadınların eşit olmayan temsiline ve onların dünyayla olan ilişkilerine güçlü bir bakış açısı getirmeye hizmet edecektir. Bu anlamda, *Family Guy*'ın ekofeminizmin uğraştığı endişeleri ne ölçüde yansıttığını görmek için bu makalede dizideki istihdam ayrımcılığını analiz edeceğim.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ekofeminizm, *Family Guy*, cinsiyet, insan-doğa ilişkileri, iş, doğa, altyazı, kadın.

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1. Introduction

1.1. General introduction to Ecofeminism

According to Greta Gaard, ecofeminism (shortened form of Ecological Feminism), which emerged during the 1970s, is “a theory that has evolved from [...] feminist inquiry and activism: peace movements, labor movements, women's health care, and the anti-nuclear, environmental, and animal liberation movements” (1993, 1). In this sense, Cristina Carrasco argues that by XIX – coinciding with the First-wave feminism – women started claiming their right for a job and condemned labour and salary discrimination between the sexes (2006, 1).

Besides, Yayo Herrero points out that ecofeminism is a school of thought and a social movement that explores the meetings and synergies between ecology and feminism (2013, 280). Similarly, other authors, such as Karen Warren, suggest that ecofeminism includes a variety of multicultural perspectives regarding the complex relationships and interconnections that take place in social systems of domination and subordination, such as racism, ethnocentrism, imperialism, colonialism, age discrimination and sexism (2004, 63-64). In this sense, Ravera and Arandia argue that ecofeminism is specifically concerned with social and environmental issues that demand the integration of forms of knowledge and pluralism of epistemologies, sensibilities and transdisciplinary methodologies (2017, 42). In the next section (**See 2**), I will explore ecofeminism in depth and discuss the different but interconnected trends on ecofeminism.

Likewise, ecofeminism focuses on a gender perspective with the aim of tackling the relationship between the natural world and humanity. Theorists such as Françoise d'Eaubonne¹ (who coined the term *ecofeminism*) have suggested the existence of a relationship between the control, dominance, oppression and exploitation of socially and culturally considered groups (women, racialized groups, the poor, among others) and the very same violence and colonization exerted over nature (animals, land, water, etc.). The Western patriarchal society and culture, in terms of Sandra Harding, is “a

¹ “Ecofeminism, [...] grew out of various social movements – the feminist, peace and ecology movements – in the late 1970s and early 1980s. [...] The term became popular only in the context of numerous protests and activities against environmental destruction, sparked-off initially by recurring ecological disasters” (Shiva 2014, 13).

system of male-dominance [and] control of women's productive and reproductive labor" (1983, 313). In an attempt to tame, penetrate, control and dominate nature and women's sexuality, fertility and their work capacity or labour [and regenerative and creative] power (Maria Mies in Vandana Shiva 2014, 120), the patriarchy has brought systematic degradation, alienation and devaluation to the world and the human/nature relationships.

Women and nature are turned into passives sites to be produced and added value, therefore, means of ownership and control (Shiva 2014, 25). As for human relationships, Shiva argues that violence against nature is associated to women and it is as old as patriarchy, a system that "has structured our world-views and mindsets, [...] social and cultural worlds on the basis of domination over women, and the denial of their full humanity and right to equality" (XIII-XIV, 2013 in Shiva 2014; 1988, XIV).

1.2. *Family Guy*

1.2.1. Introduction to the sitcom

Family Guy (1999-) is an American adult animation situational comedy (or sitcom) created by Seth MacFarlane for the Fox Broadcasting Company. The series revolves around the Griffin family (Peter, the father, Lois, the mother, their three kids: Meg, Chris, Stewie and their anthropomorphic dog, Brian) and their friends (the Brown family, the Swanson family and Glenn Quagmire). The show is famous for dealing with socially and culturally controversial issues such as religion, homophobia, race, gender violence, pornography, abortion, among others. All these topics are dealt with explicit violence, nudity, sexuality and plenty of slurs by using satirical and off-colour humour.

One aspect that (re)appears in the series is the way in which women are (re)presented in it. Oftentimes, the verbal and non-verbal language used towards women is degrading and offensive, and female characters are usually framed and displayed in specific roles that show a clear stereotyping, objectification and sexualisation within the family and social arenas. In a way, we can claim that *Family Guy* emerges from the patriarchal society and culture, therefore, it is a product of its sociocultural environment. The show reflects the way in which these two aspects continuously produce and reproduce certain

values, perceptions and stereotypes on women's body and sexuality, language and thought, attitude, personality, and identity. However, the constant repetition of sexist jokes throughout the series can also lead to a trivialisation of important matters, their acceptance and their naturalisation.

1.2.2. *Family Guy* and Ecofeminism: General aims

As for this article, I considered that it would be very interesting to tackle the series from an ecofeminist perspective. This way, I want to show the extent to which I can apply the trends on ecofeminism and their evolution and constant rethinking to the series to see if *Family Guy* also experiments a development in terms of ecofeminist concerns. In order to tackle the series from an ecofeminist perspective and incorporate the different, though interrelated views on ecofeminism, I will explore some of the concerns that ecofeminism deals with. This way, I will analyze the female work situation oppression in *Family Guy* by means of discussing the characterization and (re)presentation of female characters in the series and the sexual division of labor and the inequalities in employment that women suffer in a mainly male-targeted series. The study of *Family Guy* will be intertwined with an overview on the trajectory of ecofeminism, in which I shall review the most prominent voices and trends on this topic until modern times.

The first part of the article will be devoted to the sexual (re)presentation and objectification of women. Here I want to show the relationship between the continuous sexualization, objectification and stereotyping of women – by means of the animalization and dehumanization of female characters – and the initial nature-women link that ecofeminism postulated. In the second section of the article I shall discuss the extent to which the job situation in the series is gender-related by means of exploring the roles and jobs that characters have – or are expected to fulfil. I will tackle the aspect of female empowerment, the fake ascension in the social scale and male appropriation. This way, I shall comment on how these aspects contribute to female impoverishment and consequently, female dependence on men for financial support and maintenance.

In general terms, I shall link the analysis with the theoretical views on ecofeminism so to give an overall study of the theoretical background on ecofeminism and the job inequalities and discrimination against women that take place in *Family Guy*. This way,

I aim to carry out an analysis that incorporates the different views and trends on ecofeminism and *Family Guy* so to interconnect the sitcom with the evolution of ecofeminism and interrelate the trends and concerns, rather than showing them as completely different points of view.

2. State of the Art

In the introduction section, I briefly mentioned the fact that there are some different but interconnected trends in ecofeminism. Here I shall give an overview on the evolution of ecofeminism, the old and modern trends and the concepts and concerns of ecofeminism so to give a general outlook on how ecofeminism has changed until modern times. Ecological feminism has evolved from its beginnings and it has been fueled by two main trends that foster continuous reassessment and rethinking. One sub-branch of ecofeminism postulates the intrinsic relationship between women and nature as one being. According to this approach, women assume the role of the provider, the nurturer, the caregiver and the carer. In other words, this view interconnects women's biology to being both the essence and part of nature. As Ariel Salleh argues, "the 'material' resourcing of women and of nature are structurally interconnected in the capitalist patriarchal system" (XI, 2013 in Vandana Shiva 2014). One of the prominent voices of this trend is Vandana Shiva. However, her views will also be incorporated and connected in the other trend too, rather than presenting them as completely opposite points of view.

This first trend, though, has been overcome and eschews one that refuses the essentialism of the above-mentioned traditional and biology-related approach. Instead, it evolves into an activist, social and intersectional movement which fights social injustice and seeks equilibrium and (gender) equality. This view explores the marginalization, submission, stereotyping, oppression and male domination that women suffer in many areas and that negatively influences their self (representation) and contributes to a growing job inequality and impoverishment. Moreover, it reinforces the idea that behind the female oppression there is a paternalistic, male-dominated force in charge of a biased female (re)definition and (re)presentation. However, it must be noted that the traditional categories of 'masculine' and 'feminine' are socially and culturally constructed (Shiva 1988, 47), therefore, their meanings applied to them are constructed (and to be deconstructed) too.

Women, as Sherry Ortner argues, are symbolically presented as inferior, as “something that every culture devalues, [a] lower order of existence” (1974, 72); humanity (men) and technology are used to tame and control nature (and women). This idea shows how the patriarchal thought structures the world in dualisms or opposite pairs with unequal value, dichotomies, such as culture *or* nature, mind *or* body, reason *or* emotion, independence *or* dependence, man *or* woman. In this sense, Yayo Herrero and Marta Pascual state that the primacy of masculinity (associated to reason, independence, mind and culture) legitimizes the dominance over women, who are relegated to emotions and nature (2010, 1). The marginalization and submission of women takes place in many areas and adopts different forms of representation: from the gendered language in which nature is represented, the animalized language used to describe women to the social and cultural roles that women are traditionally expected to fulfil in society.

In this sense, women end up being represented in stereotypical and stigmatized ways in a society that does not allow their full and diverse (re)presentation as human beings but only as second-class citizens. As a consequence, women (regardless of their race, ethnicity, class, sexuality and social status) are constantly denied the same life and job opportunities as men. In patriarchal societies, as Herrero argues, women have been involved in jobs of caring not because they are better at it, but because this is the role that sexual division of work imposes. Besides, they carry out such tasks in the private and invisible space at home (2013, 281), as will be exemplified later on the analysis of *Family Guy*. In the aspect, Cristina Carrasco comments that traditionally, society has established two separate and antagonist spheres: on the one hand, a public, masculine, social, political and economic arena, which fosters values such as success and power. On the other hand, a private, feminine, invisible, affective, homely arena without social participation (2001, 47; also, Herrero 2013, 30). Herrero and Pascual state that women’s jobs, though considered separate from the production environment, constitute the workforce of the economic system. Therefore, their job is essential for the functioning of the system (2010, 3). Moreover, both authors point out that in many places, part of the production and subsistence depended on women, since they were in charge of organizing communal life and defended their land and survival of their families and communities (2010, 5).

Despite the fact that women's work and knowledge is central to biodiversity and conservation, Shiva comments that regardless of their contribution, women are left invisible because their work is not considered 'production' (2014, 166). In an interview conducted in *Roar Magazine*, Maria Mies pinpoints on the origin of domination and control parallelism between women and nature. While rejecting biologism, she postulates that the main source of violence is to be found in the history of the sexual division of labour. In this sense, there were roles in life, such as childbirth, cooking and cleaning that were seen as 'natural' and female, therefore, not paid. Federici (2004 in Carrasco, Borderías and Torns 2011, 23) defines it as "the patriarchy of wage", a devaluation that distinguishes between the value of paid work and the no-value from household work. In order to explain this, Mies revolves around Karl Marx's concept of work. His main difference was that the (male) work in a factory was seen as *productive*, while the role of housewife was understood as *re-productive*. While female work was necessary, it was reduced to the private area. Since it was natural to do, it was seen as a 'free good' (2014, also Carrasco 2006, 16).

The aspect of job inequality is impoverishing women in many aspects. For example, a lack of female power, representation and equality leads to understand that women are expected to fulfil certain social roles in the public and private arenas that systematically degrade, reduce, destroy and dehumanize them in many levels. At the same, this situation deteriorates human interrelationships and growth because in the majority of areas, it is only men that enjoy their privileges at the expense of other's suffering. Ecofeminism also suggests some solutions to fight female exploitation and impoverishment. Andrea Nightingale argues that a reversal of environment destruction cannot fully occur without the emancipation of women (2006, 167).

According to Herrero, ecofeminism has been perceived as a thread due to the historical and patriarchal associations between women and nature. This essentialist view, she argues, has been the argument to maintain sexual division of labor. It reduced women to certain tasks, prevents their autonomy and decision and it does not subvert traditional family models (2013, 31). Orozco and Herrero argue that one step is to give importance and recognition to female-related tasks (housewives, carers², etc.). Here Orozco and

² Carrasco, Borderías and Torns talk about taking care of elderly people (2011, 27). There are no examples in my corpus of such work, so I focused on child raising/caring.

Kabeer and Natali claim that complementarity, shared employment and responsibilities between men and women in the micro/private and macro/public areas would help gender equality (Orozco 2014, 52; Kabeer and Natali 2013 in UN Women 2014, 13; also, Carrasco 2001, 66). However, only a subversion of the actual patriarchal model of sexual division towards a general welfare system would entail a positive change. This way, they argue, we would increase the visibility of women, their presence in the economy and their active full participation and involvement in the labour market (Orozco 2014, 46; Herrero 2013, 35; 2011, 51; also, Agarwal 2010 in UN Women 2014, 13).

3. Methodological Framework

3.1. Aims

As for the analysis to be carried out in this paper, I have used the complete, original and uncensored DVD version of *Padre the Familia*³ currently available in Spain, which comprises 284 episodes distributed from season 1(1999, 2000) to season 17 (2017). The corpus of my study contains 5 episodes (9, 11, 7, 4; 9, respectively) from different seasons (1, 5, 6, 7 and 14). I chose the episodes that contained more textual information about the female work situation (**See Annexes I**). The study will be a textual analysis of the English subtitling⁴ (verbal language) from the above-mentioned episodes. This way, I am to apply the theoretical ecofeminism trends to the textual representation of *Family Guy*. Since I deal with very specific examples from the subtitling, I considered adding a short section to briefly contextualize each episode's plot as a general overview (**See Annexes II**).

In short, the aim of this research is to carry out a study of the global job situation and representation of female characters. From a descriptive, qualitative and ecofeminist approach through the English subtitling, I aim to relate the essential and social trends

³ I use the Spanish DVD version of the series because of its availability in my country. Certain linguistic aspects might change depending on the country that produces and reproduces them (for example, cultural issues, censorship, etc.). Another aspect to consider is that season-episode coding slightly changes between the American and the Spanish DVD versions (also between DVD and TV episode broadcasting). The reason is because of the different episode reorganization across countries.

⁴ All excerpts include the time code record (TCR) and the season-episode coding. Due to subtitle timing, there are normally two subtitles onscreen. I did not keep this layout.

and to what extent they can be applied in the study of *Family Guy*. Since I am dealing with a famous product of visual consumption that reaches a global vast audience, I consider that it is interesting to analyse the series from a different perspective and see the extent to which the theoretical and practical ideas on ecofeminism bloom in the study of *Family Guy*.

3.2. Previous Research on *Family Guy*

The American sitcom has attracted academic interest from several perspectives: on gender and stereotyping⁵, on the perception and reception of the series⁶, on the use of humour in this sitcom⁷, on the translation and culture-specific humour⁸ and on the (Spanish) translation, dubbing and subtitling⁹. It has been widely argued that the series, which widely targets a young male audience, uses satirical humour to deal with socially and culturally controversial topics.

So far, to my knowledge, no research has focused on a gender approach to study *Family Guy* from an ecofeminist perspective. After having seen a lack of studies on ecological feminism in *Family Guy*, I thought that it would be interesting to carry out a descriptive analysis and study the series from an ecofeminist perspective and bring new insights on the studies of *Family Guy* from a different point of view. This way, it perhaps serves to open a debate of how the great concerns of ecofeminism can be applied and interpreted in the sitcom.

4. Results

4.1. The personification, dehumanisation and animalisation of female characters in *Family Guy*

In this first section of the paper, I shall comment on the personification, dehumanisation and animalisation of female characters in the series from an ecofeminist perspective. As

⁵ Carson, M. 2001.

⁶ Zenor, J. 2014.

⁷ Martínez Sierra J. J. 2016; Reilly Judd 2015; LaChrystal, D. R. 2012; Medina Vicent 2012; Crawford A. 2009; Hughey W. M. and Muradi S. 2009; Medjesky 2009; Awalt, D. A., DeRochi 2008.

⁸ Bosch, B. 2016, Erguvan, M. 2015.

⁹ Botella, C. 2009, Bonaut, I. J. & García, L. J. 2010.

it has been previously explained, *Family Guy* highly uses off-colour humorous language. In the case of female body (re)presentation, it is interesting to see how the following examples seem to show an ascending scale on the degree of dehumanising women.

Episode and example	Insult and Situational Context
S1E9 (#12)	<i>Slut</i> – Peter publicly insults Lois in order for him to win the school board presidency that both aspire to get.
S6E7 (#13)	<i>Whore</i> – Quagmire insults a woman that he had sex with once she frets about and refuses his obscene sexual practices.
S6E7 (#14)	Women as sexual objects for male pleasure.
S5E11 (#15)	Male request to use a young woman’s ass as a bongo drum.
S14E9 (#16)	Phallogentric sexual joke.

Table 1. Dehumanisation of women in *Family Guy*

To begin with, women in *Family Guy* tend to be insulted with sexual remarks in disturbing scenes. In the first two examples from the table, we see that women are referred as prostitutes (to prevent them to socially ascend and for their right to say no). In the third example, it shows the lack of emotional and human interrelation between men and women. Instead, the scene presents men as incapable of feeling emotions and empathy towards women. Another important aspect is the constant hyper-sexualisation that female characters suffer is verbally expressed by fragmentation. Women are dehumanised by being (re)presented as (sexual) objects or parts of objects. This can be seen in the last two examples, especially in the last one, in which there is a wordplay on the musical and sexual topics. Here the joke is based on the paronymy in “Bach” (back), “Debussy” (the pussy) and “the pianist” (the penis). As Jean Killbourne claims, the fragmentation of the female body into ‘things’ leads to (verbal and/or physical) violence towards women. (2014).

In this section, I will tackle the animalisation that female characters suffer in the episodes that I have chosen. The initial essentialist trend on ecofeminism from Vandana Shiva postulated the interconnection between women and nature. By extension, the

patriarchal society has established a correlation between women and other non-human beings, thus reducing women’s capacities and human abilities by positioning them in an inferior scale of the hierarchy. In her article, Irene López argues that metaphors regarding the animal imaginary often establish differences between social groups. In other words, these tropes tend to categorize groups as inferior or superior and dependent or independent, which consequently define ‘the other’ negatively (2009, 78-80). As it happens in the human world, there is also social and status hierarchies (or levels of complexity) in the animal domain and the relationship between beings (81). This relationship, as López explains, comes from “the notion of control, or rather, lack of [it]” (81). Interestingly, Leach (1964 in López 84) considers that the categorization is based on social distance and edibility. On women, it depends on their sexual availability. As we will see in the following examples, the animalisation¹⁰ of female characters in *Family Guy* is rather common. There are some references that link women to certain animals, such as bitches, foxes, chicks, among others. I classified the examples from the series based on the categorization that López puts forward in her paper:

Episode and example	N° instances – Animal – Group	Situational Context
S6E7 (#17; #20)	2 <i>bitch</i> pets	Male characters feel envy (#17). Male characters to tell women off when they complain (#20).
S6E7 (#18; #19)	2 <i>chick</i> pets / farmyard	To describe a superficial and/or vulgar woman.
S14E9 (#21)	1 old bird ¹¹ pets	To describe a vulgar and ugly creature

Table 2. Animalisation in *Family Guy*

¹⁰ It must be noted that I deal with a very reduced corpus. The conclusions cannot comprise the animalisation in *Family Guy*, which is far more extensive and complex.

¹¹ It appears in the deleted scenes. The DVDs contain deleted and unpublished scenes.

As Irene points out, the choice of an animal name is not arbitrary. In fact, she argues, it shows social and cultural expectations (82-83). Regarding the corpus of analysis, there is a reference to 'bitch' (female dog), 'chick' (baby bird/chicken) and 'old bird'. It is interesting to see the categorization of animals and the control-relationship of women towards men. There are three main animal groups: pets, farmyard and wild animals. Pets (the most common one, a dog) are considered to be small domestic animals, known for their faithfulness. When applied to women, 'bitch' implies promiscuity and ugliness, and by extension, a prostitute (Eble 1996 in López 83). It also means 'malicious, spiteful and bossy' (Hughes 1991 in López 85).

Birds could be considered pets. They connote the sense of "small, size, youth, domesticity and entertainment" (86). If it could be an affective term for girl or a young woman, then 'old bird' acquires negative connotation of old age. As for farmyard animals, they are reared for human consumption. One example could be small birds, such as 'chick'. When applied to women, it denotes youth and sexual attractiveness. It is interesting the correlation that it exists between consumption/edibility and hunger/desire (89). From these two examples ('old bird' and 'chick') we see that size, age and beauty (appearance) are clear variables that qualify women in positive terms while getting old/fat seems to cause derision and reject (90).

Pets and the majority of livestock animals depend on men. Pets are companions, entertainment; farmyard animals are exploited and consumed. In the corpus of analysis there are no examples of wild animals (also, there is no animalisation on men). López argues that wild animals are those characterized by complete freedom and independence (90). It would have been interesting to find instances of wild animal metaphors applied to women and see whether their freedom would have been (manly) praised or punished. I venture to say, though, that there might not be many metaphors of wild animals in a series that tends to depict women as subordinate and dependent. Even though some of the terms analysed (such as the uses of 'chick') do not refer directly to a character, all words ('bitch', 'chick' and 'old bird') seem to have the same meaning. They are used directly/indirectly to undervalue (characters or situations related to women), subjugate, domesticate and control female characters. The repetition of such views contributes to the naturalization of stereotypical ideas of womanhood: dependence, inferiority and domesticity.

Since I dealt with the objectification, dehumanisation and animalisation of women, that is, their reduction of human capacities and capabilities, I will briefly tackle the personification in *Family Guy*. Though this might seem an oxymoron, the personification appears in the series when dealing with sex dolls, which tend to be with human abilities of reason and action. This can be seen in SEE11, in which two male characters discuss upon sex dolls. Here the verb ‘capable’ confers certain human attributes, such as the ability of judgement, which is applied to the sex dolls and whores. In any case, they are both reduced to a sexual function. (#22)

4.2. Initial Female Empowerment and Male Appropriation

After having seen how female characters in *Family Guy* are represented within the animal kingdom of dependency and domesticity, the second and last section of this paper will be devoted to the job situation in the sitcom. From a social ecofeminist perspective, I will deal with female empowerment and male appropriation and entitlement. Before the analysis, I considered to briefly comment on female empowerment. *Female empowerment* makes reference to the changes and policies that aim at fighting discrimination, violence against women and female poverty (UN WOMEN). According to *Mujer e Igualdad de CCOO*, it refers to the process of acquiring and reinforcing capabilities, strategies and importance (individually and collectively) so to access an autonomous life of participation and power, equality, full access to resources and decision making in all spheres (public and social) of life in a context of disadvantage and inequality because of structural gender barriers.

In *Family Guy*, most of the times, male characters undertake jobs that reveal action, independence, knowledge, power, strength and ability. This way, men tend to carry out socially and culturally associated ‘male’ jobs. Women, on the contrary, are placed in a second, passive and dependent level, where a (physical or imaginary) male figure will exert his power upon them from above. Female characters are not praised (or paid) for their intelligence but for their (sexualised) bodies. In the table below, I show examples of common male and female jobs in the series:

Male	Female
Actor, athlete, boss, business man, CEO, cook, doctor, hero, inventor, lawyer, mayor, policeman, president, writer.	Carer, cheerleader, cleaning lady, dancer, housewife, model, nurse, playboy bunny, princess, porn star, prostitute, receptionist, secretary, stripper.

Table 3. General male and female jobs in *Family Guy*

Despite the situation of job inequality, sometimes female characters try to ascend in the social job scale. Triggered by movement, a desire to change and better themselves or a situation, female characters tend to deviate from their path and get another job, usually one that is male-associated, as shown in the above-mentioned table. Here we see some examples of female ascension started by inner motivation.

Example and episode	Female character	New job
S1E9 (#1)	Lois (housewife)	School board presidency
S7E4 (#2)	Lois (housewife)	Mayor
S14E9 (#3)	Lois (housewife)	Assistant store manager

Table 4. Representation of female ascension

Compared to the general job description (**See Table 3**), Lois comes from a traditional ‘female’ job (housewife) and only in two instances Lois assumes (or aims to get) a male-targeted job (mayor and president of school board council) with full responsibility, power and independence. In example 3, however, she still depends on male director/CEO. The examples, though, are tricky. As it will be seen later, Lois loses the candidature of school board presidency and her role of assistant manager is at the grocery’s store, the shop where she fulfils her role of housewife (buying food for later cooking it).

In #1, Lois is determined to change the James Woods Regional High School policy because considers that background checking for teachers should be compulsory for school safety. In #2, Lois is decided to make a difference with her campaign for mayor of Quahog. She is determined to bring good to the town and she starts by cleaning up the lake, which was polluted during Adam West’s mayoralty. In #3, Lois searches for a

job to financially maintain the family while Peter is unemployed. While working at the grocery's store, Peter assumes the role of househusband, undertaking the role of Lois.

In S7E4, it seems that Quahog is due to a disaster¹² due to West's negligence, or in Vandana Shiva's terms, 'climate havoc or chaos' (2018). However, Lois is concerned about the environment and ecological solutions that no man in the episode seems to be interested in. In this sense, we can link this case to Shiva's arguments on feminism and ecology, despite the fact that we introduced her voice in the first trend of ecofeminism. However, I consider that her work can also be discussed in the social and activist ecofeminist trend. Shiva claims that the highest creativity lies in nature and in women because they have both worked with biodiversity, not because women are inherently and biologically loving and compassionate – as Herrero also supports –, rather, these characteristics have survived on them. Therefore, she argues, we have to foster the economy of care (and empathy), which needs to be everyone's economy (2015).

As Herrero and Pascual mention, feminism realised how the naturalisation of women became a tool to legitimise the patriarchy. Ecofeminism brings an alternative that aims at “renaturalising” men rather than denaturalizing women. This “renaturalization” also needs a “reculturalization”, which suggests an adjustment to the political, relational, domestic and economic organization (2010, 8) and a reorganization and fair distribution of work (Herrero 2013, 302) so to gain liberation from patriarchal subjugation. So, in all the above-mentioned cases, we appreciate a wish to make things better for the family (private area) and the world (public area). We could argue that Lois, as a female character, seems to fight injustice and make a positive change. It could be said that Lois is (un)consciously leaving the comfort zone in order to (in)directly find a place in the world. Triggered by inner motivation and sheer desire to change, Lois feels determined and empowered. In a way, she exceeds her possibilities and capabilities, showing that she really can if she wants to. However, it can also be presented as if Lois aimed for equality and tried to break the glass ceiling, the invisible barrier that prevents a group to reach a higher position in a hierarchy.

Nevertheless, once exposed to the male work world, Lois is sexualised and diminished. In S1E9, Peter wants to beat Lois at all costs but only for the sake of competition and

¹² The pollution of Lake Quahog turns is into a green oily pool which kills the fish and makes the citizens lose their hair when in contact with the water.

selfish wishes. He ends up showing a naked picture of her to publicly discredit and humiliate her. At the end, she loses the candidature because people cease to trust in her. In S7E4, Lois becomes mayor, but the news reporter Tom Tucker constantly question her aptitudes and power by reducing her to biological functions, such as menstruation (#4). Later on, Brian sexualizes and diminishes Lois' possibilities, acknowledging her physical attributes rather than her professional skills, as in (#5). Compared to the previous section in this article (See 4), women are dismembered, represented and validated as sexual and sexualised bodies, and questioned for their bodily functions.

At some point, Peter mocks Lois for wanting to look for a regular job, as in S14E9 (#6), since he thought that she wanted to be a prostitute. The comparison that is established between prostitute and lawyer is extreme: one job is too easy while the other too difficult for women. Though Lois does neither become a lawyer nor a prostitute in this episode, it is interesting to see that women, independently of the situation, are referred as bitches and whores (See 4). In Shiva's terms, the underdevelopment that women suffer is not because of their insufficient and inadequate participation (as seen, Lois tries hard to excel at her possibilities), but due to their asymmetric participation whereby they bore the costs but are excluded from the benefits (2014, 73-74).

Aside from insults and discouragement, female characters face another obstacle in their pursuit of a job: the implicit or explicit and constant reminder that their place is at home. As a housewife, Lois is not paid for her work and hardly thanked for. Instead, she is usually reprimanded. Though Peter experiences this temporal injustice and reproach when he becomes househusband and Lois the breadwinner (S14E9), Lois suffers the injustices undeniably way more. For example, in S1E9 (#7), Peters snaps a joke and urges Lois to make him breakfast and in S7E4 (#8), Chris reprimands his mother for spending too much time outside and not taking care of the drudgery of household chores. So far, I have been commenting on the fact that household chores and reproduction are essential, but according to Herrero, she highlighted in an interview that these tasks should not be exclusively undertaken by women. In this sense, she claims for a fair distribution of chores (2010). However, as seen from the previous examples, male characters not only do not participate in the private sphere but find themselves in the privileged patriarchal position to reprimand women and remind that their place is cooking, cleaning and maternity.

Despite the apparent efforts of initial female empowerment that I have exemplified, the ascension is false because the new jobs are always temporal. At the end of each episode, female characters always quit the current jobs and go back to their old life (in the case of Lois, as housewife) only after a process of realisation (the situation turned different to their expectations), partial job achievement (success in the initial goal) and restoration of male employment¹³. This proves that female professional advancement in *Family Guy* exists only as temporal job substitution. Lois refuses politics in S7E4 (#9) and she leaves the job at the store once Peter gets his job (and masculinity) back, in S14E9 (#10). In this sense, even if there was a slight desire to break the glass ceiling, the impossibility to achieve a position or goal (in S1E9) and the lack of work continuity (in S7E4) – due to the above-mentioned obstacles that Lois suffers – hinder female advancement.

Leaving the jobs also entails negative consequences, since Lois automatically becomes financially dependent on men. That probably explains why in *Family Guy*, female characters tend to be represented as gold-diggers, that is, craving (or interested) in their partner's money. This paternalistic identification of women as materialistic and frivolous increases the dependence and inferiority of women, which I also showed in the animalisation of female characters (See 4). In this sense, male characters – the breadwinners – are put above women because work equates to (financial) independence. If the woman's place is relegated at home (housewives, full-time carers, etc.), their income comes from men. This situation aggravates their representation and explains the constant impoverishment and female dependence and sustenance on male characters.

An example can be seen in S6E7 (#11), where Stewie makes it clear that his partners' money is also his. In the aspect of dependency and freedom, Mies comments on the fact that those who possess money have freedom. In this sense, she argues that “this freedom, equality [...] is always dependent on those who control the money and property” (in Vandana Shiva 2014, 66). As seen in *Family Guy*, this relationship is

¹³ One could argue that this is the typical end in a sitcom (the teaser, the trouble, the muddle, the triumph/failure and the kicker) and the characters go back to how they were at the beginning. However, there are many episodes in the series that show Peter changing his jobs and maintaining them for later episodes.

established by the breadwinner (men) and the housewife (women). Compared to the animalisation of female characters, the relationship is also clear: the owner, raiser and protector (men) and the pets and farmyard animals (women).

As seen from the above-mentioned situations and examples, there is a clear stereotyping and derision in the representation of female characters and in the jobs that they perform. Any attempts for female power are put down. Women are reduced, humiliated and displaced from social areas. In this sense, Shiva argues that the scientific revolution and the rise of the economic paradigm (with a centred interested on capital), declared nature as dead, inactive and valueless and women as passive, unproductive and non-creative. According to her, this contributes to the death of nature. She further considers that the root of violence, destruction and lack of respect towards nature and women comes from the marginalisation and exclusion of women, their knowledge, creativity and productivity, which as a consequence, nature's productivity and renewability were impaired, destroying its living forces and relationships (2015; 1988, 3;5).

Women's experience and knowledge is not taken into consideration in *Family Guy*. As a result, they are (directly, indirectly and bearing all the different situations) pushed away from their work responsibilities and forced to go back to their duties. In this sense, as Amaia Orozco argues, we have built a world in which there is an absence of women. Besides, the economic significance is denied in the private-home female-associated spheres while the normal economic situation becomes only masculine (2014, 37). In other words, "from being creators and sustainers of life, nature and women are reduced to being 'resources' in the fragmented, anti-life model of maldevelopment" (Shiva 1988, 5).

5. Conclusions

In this paper I have explored the theoretical essentialist and activist views on ecofeminism so to give an overview of how the movement has evolved throughout time. Besides, I have explored the interconnection between ecofeminism and *Family Guy* in order to see the extent to which a widely consumed sitcom can participate on the concerns that ecofeminism puts forward, such as the sexual division of labour, the unequal distribution of household tasks and the continuous impoverishment of women

and the consequent dependency on men. Also, I wanted to see if the ecofeminist practical solutions to these problems could be seen in *Family Guy*. This way, I aimed at drawing a comparison that could serve to analyse the sitcom from an ecofeminist perspective and see if the series also experiences an evolution.

The analysis of *Family Guy* has been structured in two parts. On the one hand, I discussed and linked the essentialist biology-related trend on ecofeminism to the dehumanization and animalization of women. Regarding this aspect, I have shown that women are described in derogatory terms that objectify them. When it comes to the animalization of female characters in *Family Guy*, most of the animal-related metaphors suggested pets and farmyard animals, which are characterized by their dependency, inferiority and childlike behavior. When it comes to the job situation, *Family Guy* stereotypes women in certain jobs that are considered to be “female”, such as housewife and carer. As seen, female attempts for power, responsibility, independency and superiority have been put down by men. Women are sexualized, objectified and diminished rather than praised and encouraged for their knowledge, work skills and abilities. Since women are pushed away from the social arenas and relegated at home, this contributes to their economic dependency on men, therefore, female impoverishment.

In this sense, many authors, such as Orozco and Herrero have claimed the importance to recognize household tasks, share responsibilities, make women visible in the public areas and encourage their participation, involvement and presence in the economy and labour market. However, this is not the case in *Family Guy*. Probably because of the nature of the sitcom, female characters always go back to their private area and they never exceed at their possibilities. This way, though we can relate and find some of the concerns of ecofeminism in *Family Guy*, it cannot be argued that the series shows solutions to overcome female animalization, sexualization, objectification, dependency and impoverishment.

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7. Annexes

7.1. Corpus of analysis

English Title	Code
Running Mates	S1E9
Peterotica	S5E11
Chick Cancer	S6E7
It takes A Village Idiot, And I Married One	S7E4
Peter Problems	S14E9

Table 1. The corpus of analysis (English title and coding)

7.2. Episode code and plot summary

Episode	Plot
S1E9	Lois is not happy about the school running and decides to apply for school board presidency. Peter competes against her.
S5E11	Peter and his friends visit a dirty book store. Peter decides to write his own dirty book.
S6E7	Stewie is determined to get Olivia as her girlfriend. Meanwhile, Peter and his friends aim to shoot a 'chick flick'.
S7E4	Lois decides to present her candidature as the mayor of Quahog to change the town after realising Adam West's complete negligence on the lake.
S14E9	Peter is unemployed. While decides to work, Peter is a househusband. He becomes emasculated and loses his masculinity by assuming Lois' role.

Table 2. Episode plot summary

7.3. Examples

(#1): Thank you, Cleveland. Someone has to run against that awful Betsy Lebeau. She actually opposes background checks for new teachers. (1:02'–1:20')

(#2) ...but mostly I'm excited about all the good I'm gonna get to do. [...] The first thing I'm gonna do as mayor is clean up Lake Quahog. (14:43'–14:52')

(#3) You're looking at the new assistant store manager of Stop 'N Shop. (9:53'–9:56')

(#4): [...] Which leads political analysts to ask the question: "Can a woman be mayor? Or will she bleed all over the city?" (8:32' – 8:38')

(#5) Wow. Look at you. All that power and you've still got that body. (14:46' – 14:48')

(#6) (LAUGHS) What, like a lawyer? (8:35'– 8:37')

(#7): Hey, Lois, I got a joke for ya. How many losers does it take to make me breakfast? Just one. You! Heh-heh-heh! I'm kiddin'. But French toast, please. (16:48'– 16:56')

(#8): Mom, everyone on TV says you're running the town great. Maybe you could do some laundry. (16:58' – 17:03')

(#9): [...] You can have your job back. Politics does terrible things to good people. (20:48' – 20:57')

(#10): You don't have to anymore, because I got my old job back. (19:44' – 19:47')

(#11): Wouldn't it be shame if they took all my money out of both our wallets? (15:29'– 15:32')

(#12): (Peter on TV) Lois Griffin is a slut. (15:32')

(#13): I don't want my neighbours seeing a whore screaming at me on my lawn. (8:40' – 8:44')

(#14): Before I found these movies, women only made me cry through my penis. (10:12' – 10:15')

(#15): No. Would you be offended if I said I'd like to use your ass as a bongo drum? (S5E11; 07:10' –07:13')

(#16): [...] I love Debussy. Sometimes all I can think about is Debussy. [...] The pianist is so good with Debussy. [...] when Debussy was young, that's when you want Debussy. [...] Just make sure you finish on the Bach. Never finish on Debussy. (8:59' – 9:19')

(#17): What overblown contract has that dreadful bitch landed now? (0:47' –0:48')

(#18) Lois, why do I gotta sit through a chick flick? (2:27' – 2:30')

(#19): ...that she has incurable chick cancer. (12:15 – 12:17')

(#20): Bitch, I thought I said just shut up and be looking fine (17:38' – 17:41')

(#21): [...] I had sex with an old bird. (S14E9, deleted scenes; 1:28' – 1:30')

(#22): They're polyurethane sex toys, Joe. They are not capable of judgement. And even if they were, who cares? They're whores. (1:14' – 1:22')