

From Harm to Healing: Gender-Based Violence in Laurence Anyways

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Gender-based violence (GBV) is a destructive force aimed to inflict harm on someone based on their gender and sexual orientation, or expression. The history of humankind has documented accounts of GBVs where one gender imposes its power against the others. However, a resignation into gender's socio-cultural and systemic norms often leads to violences within the gender– not necessarily physical– where one member tries to assert its episteme at the expense of the other. *Laurence Anyways* (2012), a film by the French Canadian director Xavier Dolan, chronicles three women who, similarly, though unintentionally, become agents of cultural (Galtung) and symbolic (Bourdieu) GBVs against one another. The narrative maps the journey of a transgender woman, Laurence's, voyage out from living as a man to, eventually, transitioning into a woman. Her relationships with the woman she has loved since her life as a man, and with her mother, make the premise of this study. Placed within heteronormative socio-cultural dynamics, the three women find themselves protecting, resisting, and negotiating their disparate perceptions of what it means to be a woman, consequently rejecting the others' lived experiences. The study analyses the film for GBVs as sites of ideological impasse wherein the only way out is through introspection, sympathy, and unlearning. Furthermore, this paper observes how the three women evolve out of the violences of heteronormative expectations into more inclusive and habitable notions of gender.

Keywords: Laurence Anyways, gender-based violence, intersectionality, gender, woman