

## **CULTIVATING DOMINATION: ECOFEMINISM, THE LOGIC OF CONTROL, AND THE WHITE TIGER ORCHID IN *UGLIES***

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the ecological irony embodied by the White Tiger Orchid as a symbol of energy revolution in the film *Uglies* (2024) through the lens of Karen J. Warren's transformative ecofeminism. The film depicts a futuristic society that relies on a genetically engineered flower as a sustainable energy source; however, this technological innovation ultimately contributes to environmental degradation and mechanisms of social control. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this research analyzes dialogues, visual imagery, and narrative events to examine the interconnected domination of nature and women represented in the film. The findings reveal that the White Tiger Orchid serves not as a sustainable solution but as a tool of exploitation that operates through value-hierarchical thinking, value dualism, and the logic of domination. Similar patterns of oppression are reflected in *The Transformation*, a mandatory procedure that reconstructs human bodies while suppressing individuality and critical awareness. Furthermore, the film presents an alternative ecofeminist vision through *The Smoke* community and Tally Youngblood's development of ecological consciousness, which challenges patriarchal structures of power. This study concludes that the White Tiger Orchid represents the paradox of technological progress that promises environmental sustainability while simultaneously reinforcing the domination of both nature and women.

**Keywords:** ecofeminism, energy revolution, irony, Karen J. Warren, patriarchy, *Uglies*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The increasing demand for energy has led to the widespread promotion of renewable energy as a viable response to environmental challenges and resource depletion. Although renewable energy is frequently presented as an environmentally responsible alternative, its implementation often involves ecological consequences that complicate

such claims. According to Roesdy et al. (2024), renewable energy projects are commonly developed in ecologically significant areas that support biodiversity and provide essential ecological functions. As a result, initiatives intended to reduce environmental harm may simultaneously contribute to the degradation of natural ecosystems. This contradiction raises concerns regarding the underlying assumptions of sustainable development. Kopnina (2018) argues that many environmental policies continue to be shaped by anthropocentric perspectives that prioritize human interests above the well-being of non-human nature. Within this framework, natural environments are primarily valued for their usefulness to society rather than for their intrinsic worth. Consequently, renewable energy development can reproduce patterns of environmental exploitation by legitimizing the transformation of ecologically valuable landscapes to satisfy growing technological and energy demands.

The consequences of anthropocentric thinking extend beyond environmental issues and are also reflected in gender relations. Ecofeminist scholars argue that patriarchal structures establish similar patterns of domination over both women and nature. As Öztürk (2020) notes, women and the natural world are frequently subjected to marginalization, objectification, and exploitation within the same hierarchical system. This parallel treatment suggests that environmental degradation and gender oppression are not separate phenomena but are closely connected through shared mechanisms of control and domination. In response to these conditions, ecofeminism advocates resistance against interconnected forms of oppression while promoting more equitable relationships between humans and the natural environment. Howell (1997) emphasizes that ecofeminism extends beyond theoretical criticism by encouraging collective efforts to challenge injustice and support ecological sustainability. One notable example is the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, initiated by Wangari Maathai, which mobilized rural women to address deforestation while confronting broader social and political inequalities (Hunt, 2014). Through this movement, environmental activism became a means of advancing both ecological conservation and women's empowerment.

These issues are not confined to real-world environmental and social contexts but are also explored through contemporary cultural narratives. One example is *Uglies* (2024), a film adaptation of Scott Westerfeld's novel that presents a futuristic society shaped by technological solutions to ecological crises. Within this society, the White Tiger Orchid

is celebrated as a groundbreaking innovation capable of providing sustainable energy and preventing further environmental decline. The narrative follows Tally Youngblood, a young woman living in a community that values physical perfection and relies heavily on this engineered energy source. As the story progresses, however, the film challenges the optimistic discourse surrounding technological advancement by revealing the hidden consequences of dependence on the White Tiger Orchid. Rather than functioning solely as a symbol of environmental recovery, the orchid becomes associated with new forms of control, exploitation, and ecological disruption. Through this contradiction, *Uglies* raises critical questions about the meaning of sustainability and the extent to which technological innovations can genuinely address environmental problems without reproducing systems of domination. Consequently, the White Tiger Orchid emerges as a powerful symbol of the irony embedded within the concept of an energy revolution.

To investigate these issues, this study applies Karen J. Warren's transformative ecofeminist framework. Warren argues that patriarchal systems are sustained through interconnected structures of hierarchy, dualism, and domination that privilege men over women and humans over nature (Warren, 1996; 2009). Within this framework, nature and women are positioned as subordinate entities whose value is determined by their usefulness to dominant groups. Ecofeminism challenges this perspective by emphasizing that environmental exploitation and gender oppression originate from the same conceptual structures. Warren (1995) identifies three key mechanisms that sustain these forms of domination: value-hierarchical thinking, value dualism, and the logic of domination. These mechanisms construct and justify unequal relationships by portraying one group as inherently superior to another. Consequently, the exploitation of nature and the subordination of women are not separate forms of oppression but interconnected outcomes of the same patriarchal worldview.

Despite its recent release, *Uglies* (2024) has attracted scholarly attention from various perspectives. Existing studies have primarily focused on linguistic and communication issues, including the use of linguistic features by the protagonist (Amalia, 2025) and the role of politeness strategies in maintaining social hierarchy (Ranti & Mubarak, 2025). Other research has approached the film through posthumanism, examining the influence of digital culture and artificial intelligence on the construction of identity in a dystopian society (Shabbir, 2025). In a broader context, ecofeminist

scholarship has emphasized the significance of women's empowerment in addressing environmental challenges (Azu, 2024) and the need to challenge patriarchal structures as a response to ecological crises (Manan, 2018). However, no previous study has specifically examined *Uglies* (2024) through Karen J. Warren's ecofeminist framework. Consequently, the relationship between environmental exploitation and the subordination of women, particularly through the concepts of value-hierarchical thinking, value dualism, and the logic of domination, remains underexplored. This study addresses that gap by investigating the ecological irony of the White Tiger Orchid and its connection to patriarchal forms of domination represented in the film.

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, which is suitable for exploring and describing phenomena through non-numerical data in a systematic and factual manner (Furida, 2023). The primary data consist of dialogues, scenes, and visual representations related to the White Tiger Orchid and the experiences of Tally Youngblood in *Uglies* (2024). Secondary data are obtained from scholarly sources, including books, journal articles, and previous studies relevant to ecofeminism and environmental criticism. Data collection was conducted through close observation and documentation of relevant textual and visual evidence. The analysis followed four stages: data reduction, data presentation, interpretation based on Karen J. Warren's ecofeminist framework, and conclusion drawing. This study focuses exclusively on the film adaptation and excludes the original novel. Particular attention is given to the intersections of environmental exploitation, technological discourse, and the subordination of women represented in the film.

Drawing on Karen J. Warren's ecofeminist perspective, this study aims to examine the ecological irony of the White Tiger Orchid in *Uglies* (2024) as a symbol of energy revolution that simultaneously reinforces the domination of nature and human bodies. Through the experiences and developing ecological consciousness of Tally Youngblood, the study investigates how technological solutions promoted as sustainable may conceal exploitative practices toward both the environment and women. Specifically, the analysis focuses on three interconnected issues: the representation of the White Tiger Orchid as a pseudo-solution to environmental problems, the relationship between environmental exploitation and bodily control through The Transformation, and the forms of ecofeminist resistance embodied by The Smoke community and Tally Youngblood's

growing awareness. By exploring these issues, the study reveals how the film critiques patriarchal systems of domination and offers an alternative vision of human–nature relations grounded in ecological justice.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Symbolic Representations in *Uglies* (2024)

Before examining the major findings, it is necessary to identify the key symbols that shape the film’s ecofeminist narrative. Warren (1996) argues that ecofeminism emphasizes the historical, symbolic, experiential, and theoretical connections between the exploitation of nature and the oppression of women. In *Uglies* (2024), these connections are expressed through a range of symbols that illustrate how patriarchal systems maintain power through science, technology, social hierarchy, and environmental control. The following table summarizes the principal symbols in the film and their relationship to Warren’s ecofeminist concepts.

Table 1. Symbolic Representation in *Uglies* (2024)

No	Symbol	Representation in the Movie	Warren’s Concept
1		The collapse of the previous civilization caused by resource exploitation and fossil-fuel dependency	Value-Hierarchical Thinking; Logic of Domination
2	Rusty Ruins		
3	City Scientists	Scientific authority used to develop and legitimize technological control	Value-Hierarchical Thinking; Logic of Domination
4	White Tiger Orchid	A genetically engineered flower promoted as a sustainable energy source	Feminization of Nature; Value Dualism (Culture/Nature)
5	The Transformation	A compulsory procedure that reconstructs bodies according to social ideals	Naturalization of Women; Value Dualism (Mind/Body, Male/Female)
6	Pretty vs <i>Uglies</i>	Binary hierarchy that privileges one identity over another	Value-Hierarchical Thinking; Value Dualism
7	City	A civilization sustained through surveillance, control, and domination	Oppressive Conceptual Framework
	Dr. Nyah Cable	Representative of patriarchal authority and social control	Logic of Domination

8	The Necklace	A technological instrument of surveillance and regulation	Logic of Domination
9	Fire	A symbol of liberation and resistance against domination	Transformative ecofeminism
10	The Smoke	An alternative community based on coexistence with nature	Transformative ecofeminism
11	David	Ecological awareness and resistance to technological domination	Transformative ecofeminism
12	Maddy	Ethical science that respects ecological balance	Transformative ecofeminism
13	Tally	Ecological transformation and resistance to oppressive systems	Transformative ecofeminism

As shown in Table 1, the film constructs a symbolic opposition between domination and resistance. While the City, the White Tiger Orchid, and The Transformation represent the continuation of patriarchal control over nature and human bodies, The Smoke, Fire, David, Maddy, and Tally symbolize the emergence of ecological consciousness and transformative resistance. These symbols provide the foundation for the following analysis of ecological irony and ecofeminist critique in *Uglies* (2024).

### **The Justification of City’s Domination**

In *Uglies* (2024), the City functions as a social structure that legitimizes control over both nature and human beings through the authority of science and technological advancement. Warren (2009) argues that patriarchal conceptual frameworks are sustained by value-hierarchical thinking, value dualism, and the logic of domination, which construct and justify unequal relationships between dominant and subordinate groups. These interconnected mechanisms are reflected in the City’s ideology, where scientific knowledge, rationality, and technological innovation are privileged as the primary means of ensuring social stability and progress. Consequently, the City establishes a system in which control over nature and the human body is presented as necessary, rational, and beneficial for the maintenance of civilization.

### ***Rusty Ruins***

The Rusty Ruins symbolize the collapse of a civilization driven by unsustainable patterns of resource consumption and environmental exploitation. From Warren’s (1995) ecofeminist perspective, this representation reflects value-hierarchical thinking, which

privileges human interests over the integrity of the natural world and legitimizes the treatment of nature as a resource to be controlled and utilized.

**Figure 1**  
**Rusty ruins (In duration 00:00:26)**



*Tally: "Hundreds of years ago, people become overly reliant on fossil fuels. They squandered Earth's natural resources, and the planet quickly descended into chaos and war. We call those people Rusties"*

As shown in Figure 1, the ruined landscape serves as a visual reminder of the consequences of this worldview. The environmental destruction depicted in the film suggests that efforts to dominate and exploit nature ultimately lead to ecological degradation, threatening not only the environment but also the survival of human civilization itself.

### ***Scientists of City: The Domination of Culture over Nature and the Body***

The City's scientists represent the authority of knowledge and technological expertise within the social order. They are portrayed as the agents responsible for resolving the environmental crisis inherited from the Rusties while simultaneously determining how nature and human bodies should be regulated. From Warren's ecofeminist perspective, this representation reflects value dualism, which privileges culture, reason, and intellectual knowledge over nature, the body, and material existence. By positioning scientific rationality as inherently superior, the film illustrates how authority is concentrated in those who possess specialized knowledge. This hierarchical distinction ultimately reinforces the logic of domination, whereby those regarded as superior are considered justified in controlling and managing those perceived as inferior. As a result, both nature and the human body become objects of regulation within a system that legitimizes control through claims of scientific progress and social improvement.

## The Domination of Culture over Nature: White Tiger Orchid

The White Tiger Orchid serves as a representation of the City's belief that environmental problems can be resolved through scientific innovation and technological intervention.

**Figure 2**  
**Scientist and Technology over Nature (In duration 00:00:34)**



*Tally: "A few of the very best scientists were tasked with salvaging what was left of civilization. And they came up with something revolutionary. A plan for a truly renewable power source"*

The image and dialogue surrounding the orchid reflect Warren's concept of value dualism, in which culture and reason are privileged over nature. Within this framework, natural processes are regarded as passive and controllable, allowing nature to be manipulated according to human interests and technological objectives.

**Figure 3**  
**White Tiger Orchid as a solution (In duration 00:09:29)**



*Tally: "During the time of the Rusties, dependences on fossil fuel decimated in the Earth, poisoning our air, soil, and water supply, which resulted in division, conflict, and their ultimate collapse. But thankfully our team of finest bioengineers created a genetically modified flowers, the White Tiger Orchid. This miraculous plant decorates our countryside and powers our cities"*

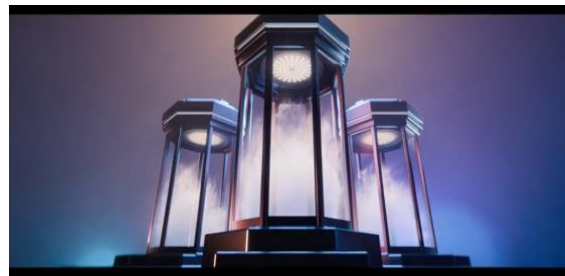
As a genetically engineered plant, the White Tiger Orchid is no longer entirely natural but has become a technological object designed to serve the City system. Within Warren's logic of domination, scientific superiority is used to justify the control and

exploitation of nature, not for environmental preservation, but for the continued existence and prosperity of the City.

### **The Domination of Reason over The Body: The Transformation**

If the White Tiger Orchid represents the domination of nature, The Transformation illustrates how the same logic of domination is extended to the human body.

**Figure 4**  
**Scientific control over human bodies (In duration 00:00:53)**



*Tally: "Human nature. People's differences continued to create classes, clans, countries, which prevented them from their shared humanity. So they came up with radical solution. The Transformation. Everyone on their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, undergoes a life-changing operation to become their most perfect self."*

According to Warren (1995), the domination of nature and the domination of the human body are interconnected forms of oppression rooted in value dualism, which positions culture and reason as superior to nature and the body. In this framework, the human body is treated as a passive entity that must be regulated and reconstructed, as it is perceived as imperfect and in need of correction through compulsory surgical procedures. The Transformation thus reflects how both nature and the human body are subjected to the same logic of domination.

### **Culture (City) over Nature**

The City represents the peak of modern civilization, built upon science and technology as the foundation of social order and survival. Warren (2009) explains that oppressive patriarchal conceptual frameworks position culture as superior while placing nature in an inferior position.

**Figure 5**  
**The City (In duration 00:02:13)**



The City is visually represented through skyscrapers, artificial lighting, and highly structured urban design, which emphasize human control over the environment and reinforce the separation between culture and nature. Within this setting, nature is largely absent and replaced by technological and artificial constructs.

### **The Subordination of Nature and the Human Body (Women)**

The City enacts two interconnected forms of domination: the control of nature through the White Tiger Orchid and the regulation of the human body through The Transformation. This reflects Warren's argument (as cited in Wulan, 2007) that Western patriarchal thought feminizes nature by associating it with entities that can be dominated, controlled, or exploited, while simultaneously naturalizing women through metaphorical links with animals. Both forms of domination emerge from a worldview that hierarchically privileges culture and reason over nature and the body.

#### ***White Tiger Orchid: The Feminization of Nature***

The White Tiger Orchid illustrates the feminization of nature through its association with attributes such as beauty, fertility, and life, while simultaneously being engineered and reproduced through scientific and technological intervention by the City's scientists. This condition reinforces the logic of domination, as culture, represented by science and technology, is positioned as superior to nature.

**Figure 6**  
**White Tiger Orchid as a Symbol Feminization of Nature (In duration 00:00:42)**



*David: "Those orchids are toxic. They pull all the nutrients from the soil and destroy everything in their path."*  
*Tally: "No. Those are the clean solution to the oil that Rusties used."*  
*David: "That's what they want yo to belive. Those flowers are turning the planet into a wasteland. Killing everything. Forcing everyone to live in the city." (In duration 00:48:04)*

The dialogue reveals how environmental exploitation is framed as progress and consequently accepted as beneficial. Having internalized the City's ideology, Tally initially fails to recognize the destructive consequences associated with the orchid, demonstrating how systems of domination normalize the control of both nature and women.

**Figure 7**  
**Environmental Destruction caused by the White Tiger Orchid (In duration 00:48:49)**



*David: "Those orchids are toxic. They pull all the nutrients from the soil and destroy everything in their path."*

Rather than contributing to environmental restoration, the White Tiger Orchid intensifies ecological degradation while maintaining the appearance of sustainability. This realization leads Tally to understand that the exploitation of nature parallels the control exerted over women. Just as the orchid is engineered to serve the interests of the City, women's bodies and identities are similarly constructed through The Transformation to conform to patriarchal expectations. The film thus represents the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature as mutually reinforcing systems of domination.

### ***The Transformation “The Naturalization of Human Bodies”***

The Transformation represents the naturalization of human bodies through a technological procedure that modifies physical appearance while erasing mental capacities, including memory and personality. Warren and Cheney (1991) argue that within patriarchal conceptual frameworks, women are associated with nature and the physical realm, whereas men are linked to humanity and the mental realm. Because nature and the body are positioned as inferior, women are consequently constructed as subordinate to men. In this context, the female body is framed as defective and requiring regulation through rational systems embodied in science and technology. This reflects the naturalization of women (Warren as cited in Wulan, 2007), whereby women are reduced to biological entities subjected to control and normalization. From this value dualism emerges the logic of domination (Warren, 2009), which legitimizes control on the basis that reason is superior to the body.

The film illustrates how standards of beauty are constructed as biological facts by the City, whereas they are actually products of value-hierarchical thinking.

**Figure 8**  
**Tally’s belief in biological beauty (In duration 00:22:23)**



*Shay: “Symmetry is overrated.”*

*Tally: “No. It’s not. It’s an indication of health. We’re biologically programmed to prefer it.”*

Tally’s statements reveal how beauty ideals are accepted as natural truths, despite being socially and culturally produced. As Warren (1995) explains, such constructions are generated by cultural systems represented by the City’s scientific authority, which defines and evaluates the female body while positioning nature as inferior. What appears to be natural preference is therefore a mechanism that sustains women’s subordination by presenting culturally constructed norms as objective reality.

**Figure 9**  
**Internalization of Beauty (In duration 00:28:44)**



*Tally: "I don't want to be free. I want to be Pretty! I's sick of feeling like I'm less than. I want people to see me."*

Tally's frustration, expressed through her desire to become Pretty rather than remain "Ugly," reflects the internalization of this hierarchy, as dissatisfaction is directed toward her body rather than the system that defines it.

**Figure 10**  
**Value Dualism Pretty vs Ugliers (In duration 00:01:07)**



*Tally: "When everyone is perfect, conflict melts away. Everyone is healthy, happy, Pretty. But then there are the rest of us, awaiting our operation. Until then, we're less than. Ignored. People call us Ugliers."*

The binary opposition between Pretty and Ugly further reinforces this structure, where Pretty is associated with superiority, culture, and reason, while Ugly is linked to inferiority, nature, and the body. Tally's self-perception as "less than" and "ignored" demonstrates how natural bodies are constructed as deficient within this system.

**Figure 11**  
**Dr. Nyah Cable as District Governor (In duration 00:05:52)**



*Cable: "You'll be beautiful and free from hatred and discrimination based on the way that you look."*

Dr. Nyah Cable reinforces this hierarchy by presenting the transformation procedure as a path toward beauty, freedom, and social acceptance. However, this promise of equality functions as a mechanism of control, since inclusion is conditioned upon conformity to imposed standards. The consequences of this logic are evident in the identity loss experienced by Shay and Peris. Similar to the White Tiger Orchid, which is transformed into a technological object serving the City's interests, human identity is also reconstructed and stripped of autonomy to align with systemic ideals of perfection.

**Figure 12**  
**Shay as a victim of becoming Pretty (In duration 01:20:34)**



*Shay: "It is the most...incredible feeling, looking this way."*

Shay's transformation reflects the internalization of the logic of domination, as she comes to perceive bodily modification as improvement, resulting in diminished critical awareness.

**Figure 13**  
**The Scar on Peris's Palm (In duration 01;24;35)**



*Tally: "Squint and Nose. Forever. Do you remember that? Come on. I know you're still in there."*

Likewise, Peris experiences the erasure of selfhood, where the scar on his palm signifies bodily regulation, while memory loss indicates the domination of personal experience by systemic control. Together, these cases illustrate how the logic of domination operates by reshaping bodies, memories, and identities in accordance with the interests of the system.

### **Dr. Cable as An Agent of Patriarchy**

As the district governor, Dr. Cable functions as an agent of patriarchal power who enforces the domination of both nature and women through the White Tiger Orchid and The Transformation. Warren (1995) argues that within patriarchal frameworks, women are associated with nature and the physical realm, while men are aligned with humanity and the mental realm. In this context, Cable consistently positions culture as superior to nature, thereby legitimizing the control and exploitation of both as part of a broader system of domination.

### ***The Necklace: Patriarchal Surveillance Technology***

**Figure 14**  
**Cable assigns Tally as a spy and gives her the necklace (In duration 00;37:06)**



*Cable: "They've decided their way of living is more worthy than ours. I need you to find The Smoke. Save us all."*

The necklace given to Tally represents the use of technology as a mechanism for monitoring and regulating human bodies, particularly female bodies. Rather than functioning solely as a communication device, it operates as an extension of patriarchal surveillance. Through this device, Cable constructs a binary opposition in which the City (culture) is positioned as superior to The Smoke (nature), thereby justifying the regulation of Tally's body as a form of protection for civilization. Consequently, the necklace functions as a surveillance instrument that extends the City's control while revealing that Tally's perceived freedom remains constrained within a system governed by the logic of domination.

### ***Brain Lesions: Masculine Reason***

The brain lesions symbolize a form of "masculine reason," namely a controlled rationality that functions in accordance with the system and does not challenge the domination of culture over nature. Within Warren's concept of value dualism, reason is positioned as superior to the body; however, the film shows that this hierarchy is artificially constructed through bodily intervention. Only forms of rationality that support the logic of domination are permitted, while critical thinking that disrupts the established order is considered deviant and must be eliminated.

**Figure 15**  
**The cost of control: Cable's crime (At 01;04:57)**



*Az: "These lesions in the frontal cortex, they dull you. You don't care about anything. You can't think clearly. You're sedated into a false sense of happiness."*

*David: "They erase who you are."*

*Maddy: "They were the purpose."*

*Az: "To control us."*

This scene illustrates that individuality based on freedom of thought is subordinated in order to maintain systemic stability. Dr. Cable does not seek critical individuals, but rather complete obedience in which the body conforms to a regulated and system-aligned form of reason.

### ***Violence in Maintaining Domination***

When the internalization of beauty ideals fails to secure voluntary compliance, the system turns to explicit forms of violence. A similar mechanism applies to feminized nature: when technological control is insufficient, ecosystems that resist adaptation are forcibly destroyed. Within Warren’s framework of the logic of domination, assertions of cultural and rational superiority are employed to legitimize coercion when obedience cannot be achieved through consent.

**Figure 16**  
**Domination Cable over human beings (At 01;12:15) and (At 01:13:48)**



*Cable orders Peris to kill Az to comply the system domination and The Smoke community is captured and forced to undergo the operation.*

This scene indicates that human bodies are no longer perceived as expressions of individual identity, but as entities subject to regulation, alteration, and elimination.

**Figure 17**  
**Cable justifies the logic of domination over nature and women (At 01;14:30) and (At 01:23:28)**



*Cable: “Free thinking is cancer, Tally. Leave people to choose for themselves ad they’ll destroy the world. Humanity needs to be led.”*  
*Tally: “But I won’t be me.”*  
*Cable: No. But you sure will be Pretty.”*

The destruction of The Smoke and its surrounding forest further shows that domination is directed not only at resisting individuals but also at the ecological environment that supports them. Dr. Cable’s reference to the world that “almost ended” functions as a discursive strategy to justify total control. Rather than addressing ecological

crisis, this narrative is used to sustain power by transforming both nature and human beings, particularly women, into objects of systemic regulation.

### The Parallel Irony of White Tiger Orchid and The Transformation

Wilson and Sperber (2012) define irony as a discrepancy between what is stated and what actually occurs in reality. This concept is reflected in *Uglies* (2024) through the White Tiger Orchid and The Transformation, both of which are presented as solutions yet operate as mechanisms of domination rooted in value dualism. The White Tiger Orchid is constructed as a form of renewable energy innovation, while in practice it enables the exploitation of nature. Similarly, The Transformation is framed as a means of achieving happiness and equality, but functions through the regulation of human bodies and consciousness. This contradiction highlights that the solutions promoted by the City ultimately function as instruments of control that generate ecological damage, identity loss, and the suppression of individual autonomy.

Table 2. The Irony of the White Tiger Orchid and The Transformation

Aspects	Domination over Nature (White Tiger Orchid)	Domination over Humans (The Transformation)
System Claims	Renewable energy revolution	Solutions for happiness and equality
Reality	Destroying ecosystems and soil depletion	Regulation of body and mind through lesions
Mechanism	Genetic engineering	Compulsory medical surgery
Impact	Ecological degradation	Loss of identity and critical consciousness
Irony	“Energy solution” causes environmental destruction	“Solution for happiness” results in oppression

### The Smoke “An Ecofeminist Space of Resistance”

In *Uglies* (2024), The Smoke functions as an ecofeminist space of resistance that offers an alternative way of living outside the City’s value-hierarchical thinking, value dualism, and logic of domination. Within this community, technology is not employed as a tool of control but is instead used in ethical and restorative ways. As a form of resistance, The Smoke challenges patriarchal structures by rejecting imposed beauty standards, refusing the exploitation of nature, and promoting more egalitarian relations between humans and the environment. This perspective aligns with ecofeminism, which advocates an inclusivist and anti-reductionist approach while opposing the use of technology as an

instrument of domination and supporting ecological practices that sustain the Earth (Warren & Cheney, 1991).

**Figure 17**  
**The Smoke**



*Shay: "Nobody judges you for how you look. It's about who you are on the inside." (At 00:27:22)*  
*Shay: "We grow our own food. Everyone has to work, even our elders. We don't have money, so we share things and trade. Everyone is here because they choose to be here. It's exhilarating." (At 00:54:51)*

Shay's statement illustrates how The Smoke rejects value-hierarchical thinking that privileges Pretty bodies over natural bodies. Within this community, individual worth is determined by character and identity rather than physical appearance. In addition, The Smoke establishes an ethical relationship with nature grounded in sustainability, cooperation, and mutual support, offering an alternative to the hierarchical and exploitative system enforced by the City.

### ***David "Ecological Consciousness"***

**Figure 18**  
**David**



*David: "Move a muscle, change a thought. Your culture, they trapped you in front of screens. You never move" (At 00:55:18)*  
*David: "Where we believe in preserving what's natural, they believe in manipulation. They make us feel so alone and so insecure that we don't have time for things that actually matter. Thinking, reading, learning, dreaming. Choosing who you become." (At 00:56:42)*

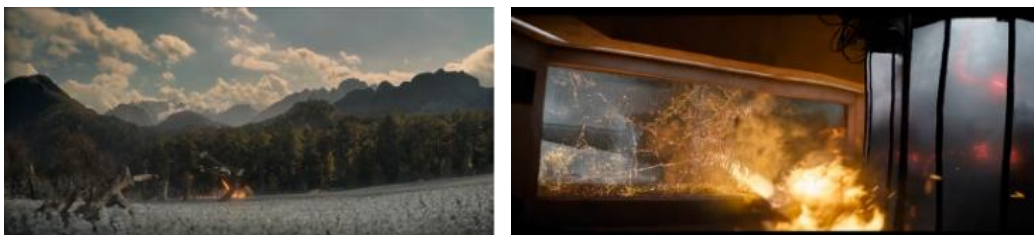
David represents ecological consciousness, a perspective that seeks to reconnect human beings with their bodies and the natural environment. He criticizes the City's

culture for isolating individuals behind technological interfaces, which contributes to a disconnection from both bodily experience and the natural world. According to him, the system sustains social control by exploiting insecurity about physical appearance, thereby limiting individuals' capacity for critical awareness. David further recognizes that the oppression of humans and the exploitation of nature originate from the same structural system, which reflects Warren's concept of transformative ecofeminism.

***Fire “An Instrument of Liberation from Domination”***

**Figure 19**

**Fire liberates nature and human bodies from domination (At 00:49:21) and (At 01:23:56)**



Fire functions as a symbol of resistance employed by The Smoke to challenge systems of domination. In contrast to the City's technologies, which are designed to sustain control, fire operates by destroying the instruments that uphold such authority. Shay's act of burning the White Tiger Orchid represents a refusal of a system that maintains its power through the exploitation of nature. In addition, fire is used to prevent The Transformation from being carried out on Tally, David, and Maddy, thereby disrupting the mechanism through which culture asserts authority over both nature and the human body.

### ***Maddy “An Ethical Scientist”***

**Figure 20**  
**Maddy as an ethical scientist (At 01:06:22)**



*Maddy: “We stopped getting the surgeries and decided to age naturally. Offering free thought and self-acceptance as an alternative. And dedicating the rest of our lives to recreate the cure.”*

Maddy represents ethical science through her use of scientific knowledge for healing rather than domination. She challenges the value dualism that positions young and beautiful bodies as superior while marginalizing aging and natural bodies as inferior. In contrast to the City’s system, which applies science as a means of controlling individuals, Maddy employs knowledge to support and restore based on voluntary choice. This reflects Warren’s concept of a form of technology that functions to sustain and preserve the Earth rather than to dominate it.

### ***“The Smoke Lives” as a Symbol of Patriarchal Resistance***

**Figure 21**  
**“The Smoke Lives” appears in the city sky**



This symbol reflects the interconnected relationship between the oppression of human beings and the exploitation of nature. The film illustrates that resistance to patriarchal systems can emerge in multiple forms, including Shay’s direct opposition, Tally’s gradual development of critical awareness, and Maddy’s practice of ethical science. Ultimately, The Smoke functions as a space that prioritizes individual choice, critical consciousness, and more egalitarian relations between humans, their bodies, and the natural world.

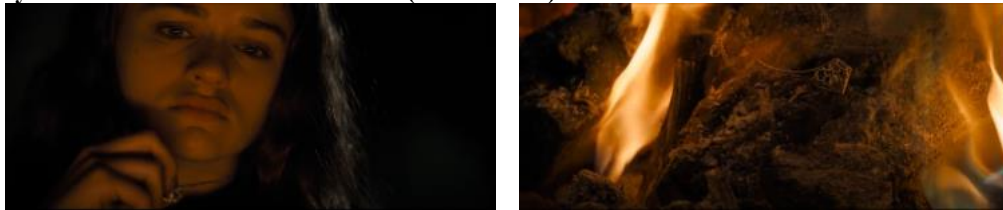
### **Tally “An Ecofeminist Agent of Transformation”**

Tally represents an ecofeminist agent of transformation as she comes to recognize that both the White Tiger Orchid and The Transformation originate from the same system of domination. Initially, she accepts Warren’s value dualism, which positions culture and reason above nature and the body; however, she gradually becomes aware of the interconnected nature of these forms of oppression after witnessing their consequences. This awareness leads her to reject the logic of domination and to actively participate in efforts of resistance and liberation.

#### ***Rejecting the Naturalization of Women***

**Figure 22**

**Tally removes and burns the necklace (At 01:07:36)**



Tally’s action of removing and burning the necklace given by Cable signifies her rejection of the naturalization of women, a condition in which women are positioned as objects that are monitored and controlled. The necklace itself operates as a form of patriarchal surveillance technology. This act marks the initial stage of her transformation in consciousness, as she shifts from an uncritical acceptance of the City’s narrative toward a developing awareness of the gap between systemic claims and lived reality.

### *Recognizing Subordination (Rejecting the Logic of Domination)*

**Figure 23**  
**Tally Realizes Her Subordination (At 01:15:41)**



*Tally: "I never knew that there was a way that you could live, and be yourself, and that would be enough, or that the cost of becoming Pretty was you mind. I would die before I'd let them turn me now." "*

Tally gradually comes to understand that beauty standards and The Transformation are not intended to liberate individuals, but rather to regulate their bodies and minds. The dialogue represents the peak of her transformation. She no longer perceives Pretty as superior, but instead recognizes it as a mechanism of control that erases freedom and identity. She rejects the hierarchy that positions Pretty bodies above natural bodies and shows resistance toward a system that oppresses both human beings and the natural world.

### *Volunteering as a Test Subject*

**Figure 24**  
**Tally volunteers (At 01:27:38)**



*Maddy: "We are not gonna perform medical experiments on an unwilling subject. That's the difference between us and them."*

*Tally: "I'll do it. Shay can't choose anymore, but I can. You have the cure. And if it works, then maybe we could convince Shay, and maybe we convince everybody else. That's how we change the world. It's worth it."*

In contrast to the City system, which operates through coercion, The Smoke upholds individual consent. Tally's decision to risk herself for the liberation of others reflects a form of collective solidarity against patriarchal control. At this stage, her

identity is no longer defined solely by her own consciousness and choices.

### *Tally's Scar as a Symbol Transformative Resistance*

**Figure 24**  
Tally's scar (At 01:30:51)



The scar that Tally deliberately retains after undergoing The Transformation symbolizes her rejection of the subordination of women's bodies. Although she acknowledges that she likes her new appearance as a Pretty, she chooses to keep the scar as an act of resistance. The scar functions as a marker that preserves her identity, memories, and critical consciousness despite the system's attempts at social control. Her body is no longer positioned as an object of domination, but instead becomes a site of resistance. If the White Tiger Orchid represents nature exploited for the benefit of the system, Tally's body reflects an effort to reclaim autonomy from that form of domination.

## CONCLUSION

This study finds that the White Tiger Orchid in *Uglies* (2024) operates as a form of ecological irony rather than a genuine energy revolution. Although it is framed as a sustainable solution to environmental problems, it ultimately reinforces patriarchal domination by exploiting nature to maintain the City's system. The analysis also shows that the domination of nature is closely connected to the control of human bodies, particularly women's bodies, as represented through The Transformation. Both the White Tiger Orchid and The Transformation function within value-hierarchical thinking, value dualism, and the logic of domination, which legitimize the subordination of nature and women in the name of progress, perfection, and social stability.

Simultaneously, *Uglies* presents an ecofeminist alternative through The Smoke and Tally Youngblood's transformation of consciousness. By recognizing the interconnection between environmental exploitation and bodily control, Tally rejects the system's oppressive framework and reclaims her autonomy. Her resistance reflects the

principles of transformative ecofeminism, which challenge hierarchical domination and advocate more egalitarian relations between humans, their bodies, and the natural world. Ultimately, the film critiques forms of technological progress that are detached from ecological ethics and suggests that genuine sustainability can only be achieved through the dismantling of domination over both nature and human beings.

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