



**“THE ROLE OF SOPHIE NEVEU IN THE DA
VINCI CODE: A STUDY OF LIBERAL FEMINISM”**

THESIS

By:

Willis Budiyanto Suretno

20230610001

English Studies

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

**BUDDHI DHARMA UNIVERSITY
TANGERANG**

2025



**“THE ROLE OF SOPHIE NEVEU IN THE DA VINCI CODE:
A STUDY OF LIBERAL FEMINISM”**

THESIS

**Presented as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
bachelor degree in English Studies Program at Faculty of Social
Sciences and Humanities
Buddhi Dharma University**

By:

**Willis Budiyanto Suretno
20230610001**

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

BUDDHI DHARMA UNIVERSITY

TANGERANG

2025



FINAL PROJECT APPROVAL

Name : Willis Budiyanto Suretno
Student Number : 20230610001
Faculty : Social Sciences and Humanities
Study Program : English Studies
Final Project Title : The Role of Sophie Neveu in The Da Vinci Code: A Study of Liberal Feminism

The final project has been approved to be examined as a partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Bachelor Degree

Tangerang July 10th 2025

Approved by,
Supervisor

Hot Saut Halomoan S.Pd., M.Hum
NIDN : 0320046101

Acknowledged by,
Head of Departement

Riris Mutiara P.S., S.Pd., M.Hum
NIDN: 0427068703



**RECOMMENDATION FOR THE ELIGIBILITY OF
FINAL PROJECT EXAMINATION**

The Undersigned

Name : Hot Saut Halomoan S.Pd., M.Hum

Position : Supervisor

Certify

Name : Willis Budiyanto Suretno

Student Number : 20230610001

Faculty : Social Sciences and Humanities

Final Project Title : The Role of Sophie Neveu in The Da Vinci Code: A
Study of Liberal Feminism.

Is has been eligible to take the final project examination

Tangerang July 10th 2025

Approved by,

Supervisor

Hot Saut Halomoan S.Pd., M.Hum

NIDN : 0320046101

Acknowledged by,

Head of Departement

Riris Mutiara P.S., S.Pd., M.Hum

NIDN: 0427068703



THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Name : Willis Budiyanto Suretno
Student Number : 20230610001
Faculty : Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Study Program : English Studies
Title of Final Project : The Role of Sophie Neveu in The Da Vinci Code: A Study of Liberal Feminism.

This thesis has been examined by the board of examiners on 4th August 2025

Examiners

1. Chair : Dr. Irpan Ali Rahman, S.S. M.Pd

NIDN: 04205027807

2. Examiner I : Dr. F.X. Rahyono, S.S., M.Hum

NIDN: 8918350022

3. Examiner II : Adrallisman S.S., M.Hum

NIDN: 0427117501

Acknowledged by,

Dean

Dr. Sonya Ayu Kumala, S. Hum., M. Hum

NIDN: 0418128601

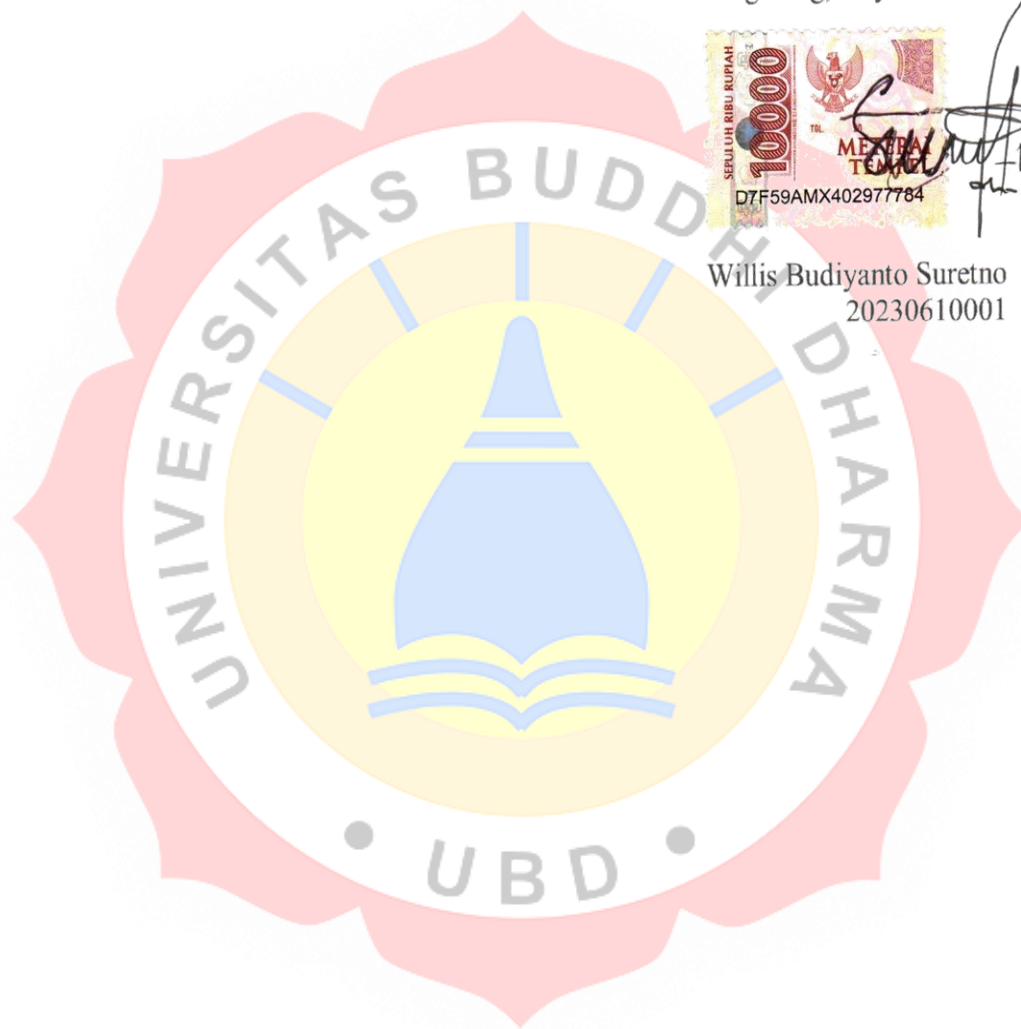
STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I honestly declare that this thesis is my own writing and it is true that I do not take any scholarly ideas or work from others. Those all cited works are quoted in accordance with ethical code of academic writing.

Tangerang, July 07th 2025



Willis Budiyanto Suretno
20230610001



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express his gratitude to God Almighty because with His grace, gifts, and guidance, the author was able to complete the scientific work entitled "The Role of Sophie Neveu in The Da Vinci Code: A Study of Liberal Feminism" well. The writing of this work was carried out as one of the requirements to complete the study in the educational program that the author is taking.

This study aims to analyze the representation of female characters in the film The Da Vinci Code (2006) by Ron Howard, especially the character of Sophie Neveu, through the approach of liberal feminism theory put forward by John Stuart Mill. In the process of compiling this work, the author received a lot of help, guidance, and support from various parties who have made valuable contributions.

Therefore, on this occasion the author would like to express his sincere gratitude and appreciation to:

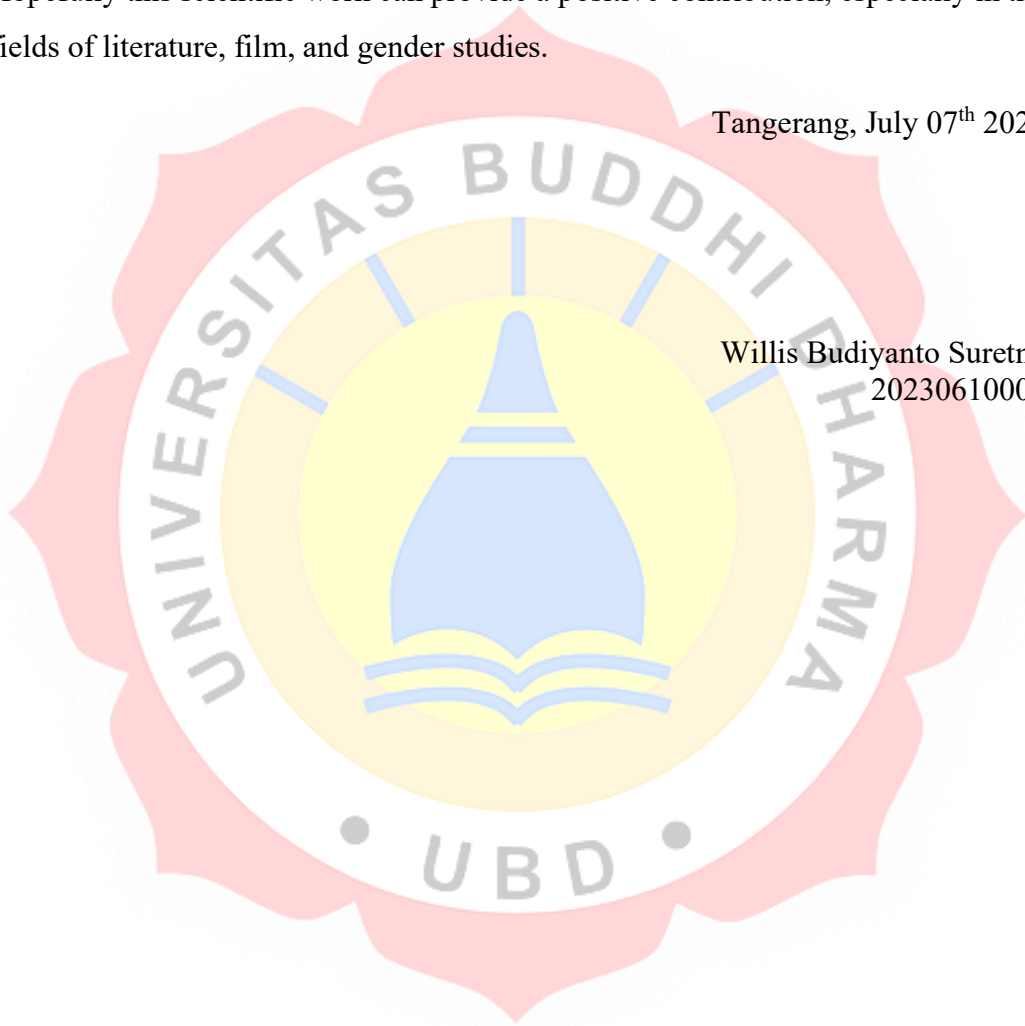
1. Dr. Limajatini, S.E., M.M., B.K.P. as Rector of Buddhi Dharma University, Tangerang
2. Dr. Sonya Ayu Kumala, S. Hum., M.Hum. as Dean of the Faculty of Social and Humanities, University of Buddhi Dharma.
3. Riris M. Paulina Simamora, S.Pd., M.Hum. as Chair of the English Literature Department, Faculty of Social Humanities, University Buddhi Dharma.
4. Hot Saut Halomoan S.Pd., M.Hum as a supervisor. Which has guided and helped my research.
5. My beloved parents, Father Johanis Agustinus Sudarto and Mother Sofia Victori Rettob, who always provide moral support, prayers, and endless encouragement.
6. My brothers and sisters, Blandina Wearbitu, Maria Magdalena Oy, Pascal Eko Ruspiano, Maria Welhelmina Trisnawati, Ana Maria Sri Roswita, Nasarius Florensianus Sudarto, Maxsimus Waerbitu who have given me support and encouragement as well as all the prayers given endlessly.

7. My girlfriend who be the support sistem to me, from the begining to the completion of this thesis.
8. Friends and all parties who cannot be mentioned one by one, who have helped directly or indirectly in the preparation of this work.

The author realizes that this work is still far from perfect. Therefore, the author is open to all criticism and constructive suggestions for improvement in the future. Hopefully this scientific work can provide a positive contribution, especially in the fields of literature, film, and gender studies.

Tangerang, July 07th 2025

Willis Budiyanto Suretno
20230610001



ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the character of Sophie Neveu in the film *The Da Vinci Code* (2006) by Ron Howard based on the theory of liberal feminism put forward by John Stuart Mill. The main focus of this study is to identify how Sophie's character represents gender equality, rationality, the right to education, the right to choose, and resistance to discrimination. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a film text analysis approach, especially on the dialogue, narrative, and actions of the main female character in the film. The results of the study show that Sophie Neveu is a female character who is depicted as having intelligence, logical thinking skills, and autonomy in decision-making. She is shown several times to have superior intellectual intelligence compared to male characters, such as Robert Langdon, and takes an important role in code-breaking and the storyline. In addition, However, this film also shows how Sophie continues to face gender-based discrimination from the authorities and other male characters. This study concludes that *The Da Vinci Code* through the character of Sophie Neveu indirectly supports the values of liberal feminism, namely that women have the right to obtain equal opportunities in intellectual and social life without discrimination.

Keywords: *Sophie Neveu, Liberal Feminism, Gender Equality, Education, Discrimination.*

TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
ABSTRACT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENT	viii
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2. Problem Statement.....	2
1.3. Research Questions	3
1.4. Goal and Function	3
1.5. Scope and Limitations	3
1.6. Conceptual Framework	4
CHAPTER II	6
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	6
2.1. Previous Studies	6
2.2. Literature	7
2.3. Film.....	8
2.4. John Stuart Mill's Theory	8
2.4.1. Right to Equality.....	8
2.4.2. Women as Rational Creatures.....	9
2.4.3. Education and Women.....	9
2.4.4. Women's Right to Vote.....	10
2.4.5. Discrimination Unfairness	10
2.5. Types of Feminist Theories	11
2.5.1. Liberal Feminists	11
2.5.2. Radical Feminism	11
2.5.3. Socialist/Marxist Feminism	13
2.5.4. Postmodern Feminism	14
2.5.5. Multicultural feminism	15
CHAPTER III	17
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	17
3.1. Topic of the Research.....	17

3.2. Research Materials	17
3.3. Research Approach and Method	18
3.4. Research Procedure	19
3.5. Analytical Framework	20
3.6. Data Analysis Technique.....	21
3.6.1. Identification.....	21
3.6.2. Classification	22
3.6.3. Interpretation.....	22
3.6.4 .Conclusion Drawing.....	23
3.7. Research Significance	23
CHAPTER IV.....	24
DATA ANALYSIS	24
4.1. Equals Rights.....	24
4.2. Women as Rational Beings	28
4.3. Education and Women	31
4.4. Women's Right to Vote	35
4.5. Discrimination and Injustice.....	37
CHAPTER V	43
CONCLUSION.....	43
5.1. Conlusion.....	43
5.2. Sugestion	43
REFERENCES	45
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	1
SUMMARY	2

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Films are not only entertainment but also information media that show history, religion and culture. In addition, films can also be educational media, communication media, reflection and are often used as a tool for criticism. These points are packaged in such a way that they are interesting to watch and observe so that many people know about the information that occurs regarding events in the past.

The film about History and religion is raised specifically in the film The Da Vinci Code, written by Dawn Brown. The film The Da Vinci Code is a mystery thriller film that tells the story of the search for hidden truths in History and religion, which is taken from the discovery of literature from the Catholic Church which states that Jesus or God has descendants.

The film tells the story of two men and a woman who seek the truth about the existing codes. The female character inspires that women are equalized in gender, which is shown by the role of Sophie Neveu who is independent and has intelligence. Sophie Neveu, a cryptologist whose role is not only important in uncovering the main mystery, but also serves as a turning point against the realm of intellectual and religious authority that is traditionally dominated by men.

Based on John Stuart Mill's theory of Liberal Feminism emphasizes equality of rights and opportunities between men and women, based on the principles of liberalism. Mill argued that gender inequality hinders the progress of society and individuals, and that women should have the freedom to develop their full potential.

This is very much in line with the role played by Sophie Neveu in the film *The Da Vinci Code*, because this film tells the story of the female character taking part in breaking the code and being active in searching for related information, this shows that Neveu is depicted as an independent female character and cannot be limited by Gender Limitations.

Previous research from several figures who discussed gender equality such as Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986) in her work "The Second Sex", focused on the concept that gender is not something natural or innate, but is a social construction. In addition, De Beauvoir rejected the idea that the differences between men and women are only based on biological differences. She argued that gender is the result of a social process that shapes the way women think, act, and behave in society. The author is interested in presenting an in-depth study of the role of Sophie Neveu who discovered gender equality between men and women.

1.2. Problem Statement

Although Sophie Neveu holds a significant position as a central character in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, there remains a critical gap in literary discourse regarding the extent to which her characterization aligns with the principles of liberal feminism. As a character portrayed as intelligent, independent, and instrumental in uncovering the novel's central mystery, questions arise as to whether her role truly reflects women's empowerment from a liberal feminist perspective, or whether she ultimately remains bound by traditional gender norms. This study aims to examine the portrayal of Sophie Neveu through the lens of liberal

feminist theory, analyzing how her agency, autonomy, and character development contribute to the narrative.

1.3. Research Questions

To what extent does the character of Sophie Neveu in *The Da Vinci Code* embody the principles of liberal feminism, and how does her portrayal contribute to or challenge traditional gender roles in the narrative?

1.4. Goal and Function

The main aim of this study is to critically examine the character of Sophie Neveu in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* through the lens of liberal feminism, to determine how her role contributes to feminist discourse, particularly in terms of gender equality, autonomy, and representation in popular literature.

This study serves as a literary and feminist analysis that highlights the representation of women in contemporary fiction. By focusing on Sophie Neveu, this study seeks to: Explore how liberal feminist ideals are reflected or transformed in her characterization. Assess its influence on narrative power dynamics. Contributes to broader feminist literary criticism by offering insights into how mainstream literature depicts female empowerment.

1.5. Scope and Limitations

Scope:

This study focuses exclusively on the character of Sophie Neveu in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, analyzing her role through a liberal feminist theoretical framework. It explores how her character reflects ideals such as personal

autonomy, intellectual equality, and the pursuit of justice, and how she navigates traditionally male-dominated spaces in the narrative. The analysis is primarily literary and theoretical, drawing on feminist criticism, character analysis, and thematic interpretation. It also considers the novel's broader cultural impact in relation to gender representation in popular literature.

Limitations:

1. **Textual Focus:** This study is limited to the main text of *The Da Vinci Code* and does not include an in-depth analysis of the film adaptations or other works by Dan Brown.
2. **Character Centered:** This study focuses on Sophie Neveu and does not provide a detailed analysis of other female characters in the novel, nor male characters except those related to Sophie's development.
3. **Cultural Context:** Although some cultural contexts are discussed, this study does not aim to provide a comprehensive historical or socio-political analysis of feminism at the time the novel was published.

1.6. Conceptual Framework

The character is depicted as a female character who has intelligence, independence and plays an active role in breaking the code in the *Da Vinci Code* film. This shows its conformity with liberal feminist theory which emphasizes gender equality, roles and opportunities for women who are often depicted as weak and marginalized figures (Rigeway 2009).

Sophie Neveu's Role in The Da Vinci Code: A Study of Liberal Feminism



Liberal Feminism Theory



JS mills theory of liberal feminism. Equal rights, Women as rational beings, Education and Women, Women's right to vote, discrimination injustice.



Identification of liberal feminism in the film The Da Vinci Code.



Conclusion

Number1.1 Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Previous Studies

Several academics and researchers have examined feminist themes and the portrayal of female characters in popular literature, including Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. These studies form the theoretical foundation of the present research, particularly regarding how female characters are depicted in contemporary narratives and how these depictions correspond with feminist ideologies.

Amen, Syed Mohammad. (2017). A Feminist Reading of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL)*, 5(3), 43–49. This study analyzes the role of women and the divine feminine in *The Da Vinci Code*, focusing on how the novel subverts traditional religious views. While it explores broad feminist themes, it does not focus on liberal feminism or the character development of Sophie Neveu specifically, which is the main focus of the present study.

Arp, Robert. (2006). *Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code and the Challenge of Critical Thinking*. In *The Philosophy of The Da Vinci Code (Open Court)*. Arp critiques character behavior and gender roles in the novel, emphasizing the lack of consistent feminist agency. His work supports a nuanced interpretation of Sophie Neveu's autonomy and dependency within the story.

Simons, Margaret A. (1999). *Liberal Feminism and Its Critics*. In *Feminist Interpretations of Simone de Beauvoir*. Although Simons does not directly discuss

The Da Vinci Code, her critique of liberal feminism provides an important theoretical framework for analyzing Sophie Neveu's character.

Stein, Rachel. (2004). *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and Activism*. Although Stein primarily focuses on environmental justice, she discusses feminist representations in media and popular culture, providing relevant context for analyzing Sophie's symbolic and cultural role in the narrative.

Brown, Dan. (2003). *The Da Vinci Code*. Doubleday. As the primary source, the novel itself serves as the direct material for character and thematic analysis in relation to liberal feminist ideals.

2.2. Literature

Literature refers to written or oral works possessing artistic, imaginative, and expressive qualities, conveying human experiences, ideas, emotions, and values through beautiful and meaningful language. Literature, particularly in the form of novels and poetry, is widely recognized as an art form. According to Eagleton (1983), "Literature is imaginative writing in the sense of fiction writing which is not literally true."

In this study, the concept of literature also includes film, emphasizing the narrative connection between literary works and cinematic adaptations. Both film and literature serve as narrative media, presenting stories, characters, conflicts, and themes though using different techniques. While literature employs written language, film utilizes images, sound, and visual dialogue to engage audiences. Robert Stam (2005) asserts that although film is a distinct art form, it shares a close

relationship with literature, particularly in narrative structure and thematic expression.

2.3. Film

Film is a medium used to record, produce, and display moving images, and it also refers to the final product a combination of visuals, sound, and text that creates a narrative or documentary. Films are typically shown in theaters, on television, or via digital platforms.

Filmmaking integrates storytelling techniques such as acting, cinematography, directing, editing, and sound design. Films span various genres including drama, comedy, action, horror, documentary, and animation.

Beyond entertainment, films function as mediums of information and education, often depicting history, religion, and culture. They can also serve as tools for communication, reflection, and criticism. Through narrative storytelling, films inform audiences about past events and societal issues in a compelling and accessible way.

2.4. John Stuart Mill's Theory

2.4.1. Right to Equality

In his work "The Subjection of Women" (1869), John Stuart Mill argued that equality between men and women is an essential condition for the progress of society. He criticized the social and legal system that made women second-class citizens. We can see that all humans have the same rights in the eyes of the law and society. In addition to men who must be considered to have a higher status, women

must also be considered to have the same status as men. According to Hobbes (1947) based on the actual condition of humans. The fact of physical and intellectual abilities is the reason why every individual is seen as equal.

2.4.2. Women as Rational Creatures.

JS Mill also argued that women are the most rational creatures, this can be seen from his quote which says "The only thing which can justify the use of force against any member of a civilized community is self-protection. As long as a woman is not a danger to others, she should be free as men are." The thing that distinguishes women and men in terms of intellectual is not because of nature but because of cultural and social oppression that views women as unable to do something, Lack of education is something that limits women in education and Not being given the opportunity to develop freely where women are held back to be people who must always work at home.

2.4.3. Education and Women

Education for women is very important because it has a positive impact on various aspects of life, including self-development, economy, health, and gender equality. Education empowers women, improves their quality of life, and makes a significant contribution to community development.

John argues that if women are given proper education, it is possible that women will be free from oppression. "The minds of women are capable of the same intellectual development as those of men." It is not because of biological nature that women are often oppressed but because they are not given the opportunity to learn and develop.

2.4.4. Women's Right to Vote

In reality, women are often not given the right to vote, they are often asked to follow the wishes of people, such as parents or husbands. John as one of the members of the British parliament rejected this, he said that women also have the same rights as men in choosing something, there is no logical basis that women should not vote. "The interests of all are the interests of each; and no one is a good citizen who does not wish for equal rights to all other citizens."

2.4.5. Discrimination Unfairness

Discrimination and injustice against women is a complex global problem, encompassing various forms of unequal and detrimental treatment experienced by women in various aspects of life. This discrimination can occur in various areas, including education, employment, health, and within the family environment, which is often rooted in patriarchal social and cultural norms.

Women often experience discrimination and injustice both in the family and in public forums. It is often found that many women do not get justice when a problem occurs, they will be ridiculed because of their treatment and so they will be discriminated against by many parties. According to John S. Mill, it is a form of moral injustice that is very detrimental to women so he strongly rejects discrimination against women. "The legal subordination of one sex to the other is wrong in itself."

2.5. Types of Feminist Theories

2.5.1. Liberal Feminists

Liberal feminism is a school of feminism that focuses on achieving gender equality through political and legal reform. This theory believes that gender equality can be achieved by providing equal rights and opportunities to all genders, both men and women, regardless of background in various fields.

Some figures who discuss this liberal feminist theory include Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), a woman who is considered a pioneer of liberal feminism in her book entitled "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792), this work criticizes the traditional view that considers men superior to women and advocates educational rights for women and men.

As for John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), is the figure the author uses to discuss this article. John was an English philosopher known for his writings on feminism, especially in his book entitled "The Subjection of Women" (1869), he criticized and voiced women's rights, especially in terms of suffrage. John stated that women also have the right to vote like men. Other figures such as Harriet Taylor (1807-1858) Harriet was the wife of John Stuart Mill, she was also one of John's collaborators in supporting women's suffrage. Harriet also agreed with John's views that voiced liberal feminism, she also helped John in writing about women's rights and gender equality.

2.5.2. Radical Feminism

Unlike liberal feminists, radical feminists discuss more about patriarchy that often occurs in society. This theory believes that the root of the problem of women's

oppression is the patriarchal system that has a close relationship with society and social structure. This theory not only focuses on women's rights or gender equality in liberal feminist theory, but also focuses on changing social and cultural structures that still adhere to the patriarchal system.

Radical feminism opposes traditional gender roles that limit women and men, and considers these roles as social constructs created to maintain patriarchal power. Some issues that radical feminism focuses on include reproductive rights (including abortion), freedom from sexual violence, and opposition to the objectification of women.

Some figures who voice radical feminism such as Shulamith Firestone, in her book entitled "The Dialectic of Sex". She strongly criticized biological reproduction as a source of oppression against women. Firestone argues that women's liberation can only be achieved through the elimination of reproductive class differences, including the use of alternative reproductive technologies.

Other figures such as Kate Millett, a writer who analyzes patriarchal power that is still applied in culture and politics, wrote in her book entitled "Sexual Politics". Millet responded that gender is a social and political construct used to oppress and intimidate women.

Another view comes from Ti-Grace Atkinson, who is a critic who criticizes the institution of marriage and family. Ti-Grace touches sharply on the issue of marriage, because according to her, marriage is one of the causes of oppression against women, because many women are always oppressed, such as domestic

violence, differences of opinion, and equality which are the main points of oppression.

2.5.3. Socialist/Marxist Feminism

The following theory argues that oppression of women is not only caused by patriarchy, but also by the capitalist system and related social structures. According to this theory, women will be free if there is social change that can address both aspects. Marxist feminism emphasizes the importance of economic and material aspects in understanding oppression of women, this is because domestic violence often occurs due to economic problems.

Marxist feminism also highlights how women are exploited in the capitalist system, including in terms of unpaid housework and low wages for work outside the home. Men often demand that women can also get the same wages, but in reality women always get pressure related to work, this is also a form of oppression of women.

According to the views of several figures such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, their views on capitalism and class became the basis for socialist feminism. They argue that capitalism creates oppression of women through the exploitation of labor and patriarchal social structures.

No less than Karl Marx, his daughter, Eleanor Marx, also expressed many opinions about this theory, she became one of the pioneers of Marxist feminism in England in the 19th century. Eleanor voiced capitalism which always oppresses women.

Capitalism itself is a benefit through mechanisms, this often occurs in families and society, exploiting others for personal gain. This is what makes some figures argue that marriage is the main source of oppression against women.

2.5.4. Postmodern Feminism

Feminism that occurred in the modern era took a reaction from the traditional era and emphasized that women are diverse and fragmented, not singular and universal. This theory questions the concepts of gender, identity, and power that are considered traditional, emphasizing that these concepts are socially constructed and fluid.

In this modern era, many things prohibit women's activities, such as rejecting the universality of women, or the assumption that women's experiences are singular and universal, and instead emphasize the diversity and differences in women's experiences based on race, class, sexuality, and culture.

Some figures who have views on this theory such as Judith Butler, she is a philosopher and feminist theorist with her concept of "gender performativity". Butler argues that gender is not something natural or fixed, but something that is done and repeated through everyday actions and speech.

Meanwhile, Luce Irigaray, she argues that patriarchal language has shaped women's understanding and that women must find their own language to express themselves. She got it after criticizing Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis for its masculine bias. Luce is a postmodern psychoanalyst.

2.5.5. Multicultural feminism

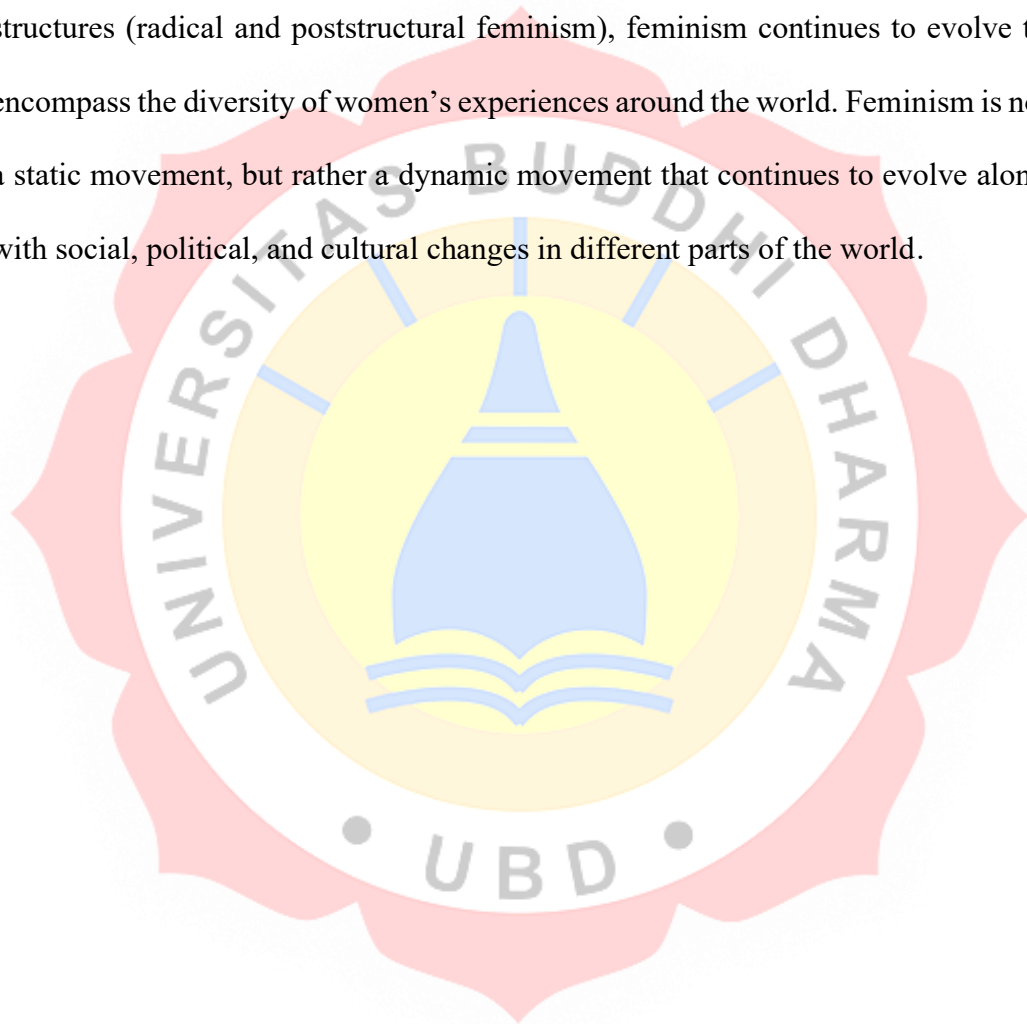
A theory that recognizes and appreciates the differences in women's experiences from various cultural, racial, and social class backgrounds. Multicultural feminism seeks to understand and address the various forms of oppression experienced by women from various different groups. Because there is often a denial of women's rights in society. Multicultural feminism emerged as a critique of second-wave feminism which was considered too focused on the experiences of white and middle-class women in Western countries. Multicultural feminism argues that the experiences of women of color, women from developing countries, and women from other minority groups are often different and require different approaches to pursuing equality.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her book *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, she critiques Western feminism that tends to view Third World women as passive and homogenous victims. Mohanty emphasizes the importance of understanding women in their own social, political, and cultural contexts, rather than through the lens of Western feminism. She also highlights the importance of “decolonizing feminism,” and of championing cross-cultural solidarity while respecting difference.

Gloria Anzaldúa in her book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, brings the perspectives of women of color, queer, and immigrant women into feminism. She discusses the identities of women living between two cultures (Mexico and the US), and the impact of racism, sexism, and homophobia. She also

develops the concept of “mestiza consciousness,” the hybrid consciousness of individuals who are at the crossroads of culture and identity.

The journey of feminism is not monolithic, and each type of feminism brings a unique perspective to the issue of gender equality. From the fight for more equal legal rights (liberal feminism) to the challenge of deeper social and cultural structures (radical and poststructural feminism), feminism continues to evolve to encompass the diversity of women’s experiences around the world. Feminism is not a static movement, but rather a dynamic movement that continues to evolve along with social, political, and cultural changes in different parts of the world.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Topic of the Research

This study is entitled “The Role of Sophie Neveu as a Reflection of Women’s Equality in *The Da Vinci Code*”, and it aims to analyze how the character Sophie Neveu represents the values of liberal feminism. The focus lies in examining how Sophie challenges traditional gender norms by demonstrating intelligence, independence, and strength traits historically associated with masculinity.

The researchers draw inspiration from the journal article by Rahayu Rini, Pepi Siti Paturohmah, and Ujang Suyatman published in the CALL journal, which investigates gender equality through Sophie Neveu’s character. The present study adopts a similar feminist lens John Stuart Mill’s liberal feminism to explore how Sophie functions not only as a female protagonist but also as a representation of women’s intellectual and social equality in a male-dominated environment.

3.2. Research Materials

The primary material analyzed in this study is drawn from the film *The Da Vinci Code* (2006), directed by Ron Howard, which adapts Dan Brown’s novel of the same title. The film spans multiple genres, including historical, cultural, and religious thriller, and offers significant commentary on gender roles and the position of women in religious narratives. The central figure in this analysis, Sophie Neveu, is portrayed as a cryptologist and a descendant of a historically influential female lineage.

Additional supporting materials include:

- Academic journals and articles on liberal feminism and film analysis,
- Books that explore feminist literary theory and gender in film,
- Online resources including interviews, film reviews, and scholarly blogs,
- The original novel by Dan Brown as a secondary source for comparative reference.

These materials assist the researcher in collecting data related to the dialogues, character development, setting, and events that reflect feminist values within the film.

3.3. Research Approach and Method

This research employs a qualitative textual analysis, which, according to Lexy J. Moleong (2000:17), is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior. This method allows the researcher to interpret the underlying meanings, character traits, and social messages embedded in the narrative of the film.

The study also adopts a literary criticism approach through the lens of liberal feminism, focusing on John Stuart Mill's concepts. Liberal feminism emphasizes the importance of individual freedom, equal opportunities, and rational capabilities for women in achieving social equality. This approach is particularly suited for analyzing Sophie Neveu's role as a woman who navigates a traditionally male space while maintaining her autonomy and dignity.

Through this approach, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- How does Sophie Neveu reflect liberal feminist values?

- In what ways does her character resist traditional gender norms?
- What is the significance of her role in the context of religion, knowledge, and history as portrayed in the film?

3.4. Research Procedure

The research procedure includes several steps:

1. Topic Selection

The researcher initially reviewed multiple films containing themes related to gender and feminism. After careful consideration, *The Da Vinci Code* was selected due to its complex portrayal of female identity and empowerment within a patriarchal religious context.

2. Data Collection

To obtain the data required for this research, the author used both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data were obtained directly from the film *The Da Vinci Code* (2006) by watching it repeatedly in order to gain an in-depth understanding of its storyline, character development, and narrative structure. During the viewing process, important scenes and dialogues involving the central character, Sophie Neveu, were carefully identified, documented, and transcribed for further analysis in Chapter Four.

The secondary data were obtained from scholarly sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and theoretical works related to liberal feminism. Additional supporting materials were accessed

through reputable online databases to enrich the theoretical framework and provide a stronger foundation for interpreting the primary data.

3. Analysis

Using a qualitative textual analysis, the researcher examined the film to identify key moments where Sophie Neveu's actions, thoughts, and relationships reflect the principles of liberal feminism.

The researcher paid particular attention to:

- Sophie's problem-solving skills and intellectual capacity;
- Her rejection of traditional authority and religious patriarchy;
- Her moral and emotional independence;
- Her symbolic and literal identity as a descendant of Mary Magdalene.

4. Interpretation

The findings were interpreted using John Stuart Mill's liberal feminist framework, allowing the researcher to draw conclusions about the broader implications of Sophie's character for feminist representation in mainstream media.

3.5. Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of this study is rooted in John Stuart Mill's liberal feminism, particularly his work *The Subjection of Women* (1869), where he argues for women's right to education, employment, and political participation on equal terms with men. Mill believed that gender roles were socially constructed and that

women should be granted the same freedoms and rights as men to realize their potential as rational individuals.

Key concepts from Mill used in this study include:

- Equality in intellectual and moral capacity;
- Freedom of choice and autonomy;
- Criticism of societal restrictions placed on women.

This framework is instrumental in highlighting how Sophie Neveu, through her character arc, embodies Mill's ideas of gender equality—not through confrontation or radical opposition, but through competence, rationality, and independence.

3.6. Data Analysis Technique

3.6.1. Identification

At this initial stage, the researcher systematically examined the film *The Da Vinci Code* (2006) to locate and select scenes, dialogues, and narrative moments in which Sophie Neveu plays a significant role. The focus was on instances that potentially illustrate feminist themes, such as moments showcasing her intellectual competence, personal agency, or resistance to patriarchal authority. This process involved multiple viewings of the film, allowing the researcher to ensure that no relevant material was overlooked. Scene timestamps and dialogue transcripts were recorded to facilitate accuracy in subsequent stages of analysis.

3.6.2. Classification

Once relevant data were identified, they were organized into thematic categories that aligned with the objectives of the study. These categories included:

- Intellectual Equality scenes demonstrating Sophie's cognitive skills and problem-solving abilities equal to or surpassing her male counterparts.
- Gender Role Resistance moments where Sophie challenges or subverts traditional expectations of women within the narrative.
- Female Autonomy instances where Sophie makes independent decisions that drive the plot forward, free from male influence.
- Religious Symbolism depictions of Sophie's connection to historical and religious narratives, particularly those that highlight female representation within religious traditions. This classification step ensured that the data were systematically organized, making it easier to apply the theoretical framework in the next stage.

3.6.3. Interpretation

In this stage, the classified data were analyzed through the lens of liberal feminist theory. Each category was examined to determine how Sophie Neveu's actions, dialogue, and narrative arc either reflect or challenge the principles of liberal feminism, such as equality of opportunity, personal freedom, and dismantling of gender-based barriers. The analysis also considered the broader socio-cultural and religious context of the film, exploring whether Sophie's

portrayal represents genuine empowerment or if it is ultimately constrained by traditional gender norms embedded in the storyline.

3.6.4 .Conclusion Drawing

The final stage involved synthesizing the analytical findings to answer the research questions. This process required comparing the evidence from the film with the core concepts of liberal feminism to determine the extent to which *The Da Vinci Code* supports or undermines feminist ideology. The conclusions drawn not only address Sophie Neveu's role in advancing feminist representation but also highlight the nuances and contradictions in her characterization. These findings form the basis for the discussion and implications presented in the concluding chapter of the study.

3.7. Research Significance

This study contributes to literary and film criticism by providing a gender-focused analysis of a popular film. It highlights how mainstream media can convey progressive feminist messages through strong, intelligent female characters like Sophie Neveu. Additionally, this research reinforces the relevance of liberal feminism in contemporary narratives and encourages a more inclusive understanding of women's roles in religious, intellectual, and historical contexts.