

**THE DEPICTION OF LIBERAL FEMINISM ON
RUTH BADER GINSBURG IN MIMI LEDER'S
ON THE BASIS OF SEX MOVIE**

FINAL PROJECT

**Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
to Obtain the *Sarjana Sastra* Degree in English Literature**



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STATEMENT OF WORK'S ORIGINALITY

Hereby I honestly declare that the undergraduate thesis I wrote does not contain the work or part of the works of other people, except those which were cited in the quotations and the references, as a scientific paper should. If my statement is not valid in the future, I absolutely agree to accept an academic sanction in the form of revocation of my paper and my degree obtained from the paper.

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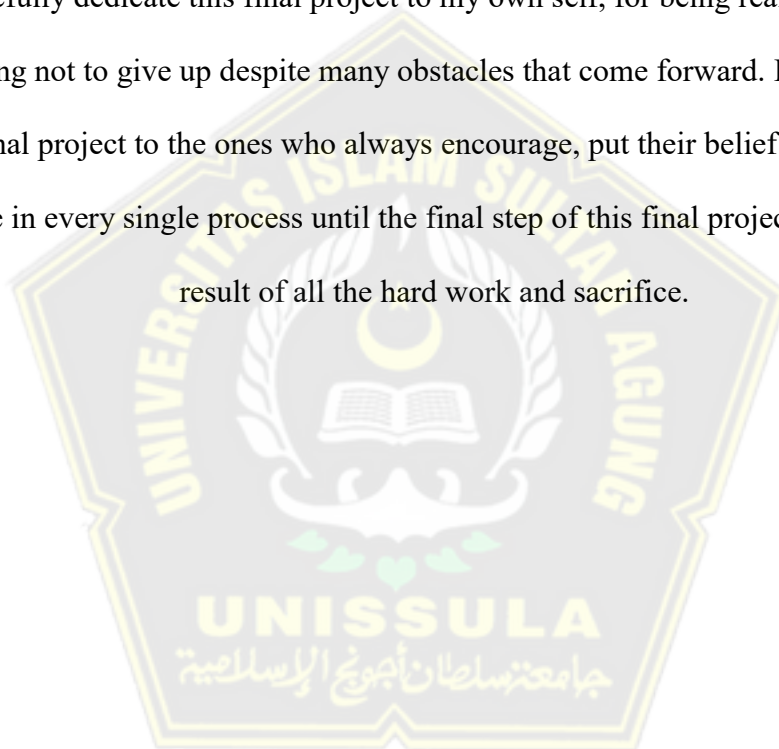
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MOTTO:

“The only person that you have to defeat is yourself; the feeling of spiritless, unmindful, and laziness inside yourself. Those are the real obstacles to your success.”

DEDICATION:

I gratefully dedicate this final project to my own self, for being really tough and choosing not to give up despite many obstacles that come forward. I also dedicate this final project to the ones who always encourage, put their belief and affection on me in every single process until the final step of this final project. This is the result of all the hard work and sacrifice.



ABSTRACT

Indriyanti, Rizki. 30801800040. The Depiction of Liberal Feminism on Ruth Bader Ginsburg in Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie. Final Project of Language and Communication Science Faculty. English Literature Study Program. Sultan Agung Islamic University Semarang. Advisor: Destary Praptawati, S.S., M.Hum.

Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* is considered as one of numerous feminist masterpieces for its original story of a real deal superhero and liberal feminism becomes one of the strong issues in the movie. The purpose of this study is to analyze the characterization of the main character, Ruth Bader Ginsburg as well as to discuss liberal feminism depicted on her. The analysis used several theories of characterization mainly by Christopher Russel Reaske, Joseph M. Boggs, James H. Pickering and Jeffry D. Hoeper. Also, some liberal feminism theories such as the ones from Rosemarie Putnam Tong, Judith Worrell, and Nurul Hanifah et al are used.

The method applied in this study is qualitative descriptive, while data such as dialogue, monologue, and narration are taken from the movie script. Some steps are conducted to collect the data such as watching the movie, reading the screenplay, identifying the data, classifying the data, and reducing the data.

There are two results in this study. First, there are a number of traits found on Ruth Bader Ginsburg as the main character using theories of characterization. Second, the goals of liberal feminism are occurred and depicted on Ruth Bader Ginsburg as the main character.

Keywords: Characterization, Liberal feminism, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, On the Basis of Sex

INTISARI

Indriyanti, Rizki. 30801800040. Penggambaran Feminisme Liberal pada Ruth Bader Ginsburg dalam Film *On the Basis of Sex* Karya Mimi Leder. Skripsi Program Studi Sastra Inggris Fakultas Bahasa dan Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang. Pembimbing: Destary Praptawati, S.S., M.Hum.

On the Basis of Sex karya Mimi Leder dianggap sebagai salah satu dari banyak mahakarya feminis untuk kisah aslinya tentang pahlawan super sungguhan dan feminisme liberal menjadi salah satu isu yang kuat dalam film tersebut. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis penokohan tokoh utama Ruth Bader Ginsburg, serta membahas feminisme liberal yang tergambar pada dirinya. Analisis menggunakan beberapa teori penokohan terutama dari Christopher Russel Reaske, Joseph M. Boggs, James H. Pickering dan Jeffry D. Hoepfer. Selain itu, beberapa teori feminisme liberal seperti dari Rosemarie Putnam Tong, Judith Worrell, dan Nurul Hanifah dkk pun digunakan.

Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif, sedangkan data berupa dialog, monolog, dan narasi diambil dari naskah film. Beberapa langkah dilakukan untuk mengumpulkan data seperti menonton film, membaca skenario, mengidentifikasi data, mengklasifikasi data, dan mengurangi data.

Terdapat dua hasil yang ditemukan dalam penelitian ini. Pertama, ada sejumlah sifat yang ditemukan pada Ruth Bader Ginsburg sebagai tokoh utama dengan menggunakan teori penokohan. Kedua, tujuan feminisme liberal terjadi dan tergambar pada Ruth Bader Ginsburg sebagai tokoh utama.

Kata kunci: Penokohan, Feminisme liberal, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, On the Basis of Sex

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I realize this final project is far from flawless. Hence, any suggestion and criticism will be very meaningful for this final project. Last, I really

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Semarang, June 3, 2022



Rizki Indriyanti



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Literature is the mirror or reflection of a society and also a form of art. It reflects the situation and condition of a place and people at a particular time. Kenneth Burke stated literature as systematic reflections of society and societal behavior; it means all of systematic society and societal behavior can be reflected in literature (Adams 942). Literature pictures society in the way they think, say, and act, the good and wicked, the fortune and misery. “Literature portrays people engaging in social interactions. We can observe our society as it is distilled and reflected in literature” (Keerthika 471). Society and literature are like two sides of a coin, they are correlated. Literature mirrors society and society forms literature. Literature could sometimes portray the culture of a society, life story of particular people, or events that occurred at a particular time. Stories portrayed in literature aim to educate, inform or entertain. Literature also provides corrective mirrors for society so they can take a look at themselves and make improvements. For instance, when we take a look at literature from the Victorian era, most of them are filled with prose, the stories that are portrayed mostly about issues, norms, and customs at that time. Authors tried to convey what they felt and how their society was. Nowadays we can still enjoy those literatures and use them as a lesson. “In reflecting the bad values it makes us to rectify and solve the issues. In reflection of good values in the society it makes us emulate” (Keerthika 471). There are many

forms of literature that people can enjoy, such as poetry, prose, plays, songs, and many more. Today issues presented in literature are also more diverse, starting from social norms, economics, history, politics, and etc.

Study about women is one of the interesting topics to be discussed. For decades, women have been through many challenges and difficulties in their life. Their role and existence remain marginalized. They are seen as second sex, given less opportunity in numerous life aspects so they could not develop themselves as good as men. One main reason for this condition is patriarchy. "Patriarchy is a set of structured and institutionalized social relations in which certain men dominate, oppress, and exploit women" (Walby 20). This idea had existed and remained in society for a long time, which of course complicated women. Patriarchy creates a society in which the men took control of most of all resources, dominated in the public sphere while women stayed at home. Patriarchy that occurs in society leads to gender inequality and discrimination, creating a gap between men and women. Women are always seen as weak creatures, where their roles are considered as no more than just men's companions. They do not have full rights for themselves.

The truth is, women are not naturally inferior or less competitive than men, but patriarchal society shaped them so. As Mary Wollstonecraft argues in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education. When men go to school, society urges women to stay at home, doing household activities. It is not only in education, but society also does not give women other chances of opportunity such as in economics and politics. When men go to work and women also go to work, men

will be fully paid while women could not even get decent wages for the same job. In legal and political rights, women do not have any chance to vote in an election, or raise their voices and ideas. Women become economic property. Their goal is only to marry and reproduce. When they are in a family, they belong to their fathers. When they are married, they belong to their husbands. Women cannot decide something for themselves and have to be obedient to men.

However, society has undergone many changes in a lot of life aspects including changes which influence women's roles and positions. One influential movement called feminism brings considerable impacts on how society act, think, and treat women. "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (Hooks 8). It becomes a bold and brilliant movement to lift up women's voices and to gain equality between men and women. It focuses on women's experiences in their daily life and explores justice for women and ends all forms of sexism. Among numerous appealing branches of feminism which are liberal, radical, Marxist, post-modern, cultural, and eco-feminism, one branches of feminism that is quite unique to be discussed is liberal feminism. "Liberal feminism is a particular approach to achieving equality between men and women. It emphasizes on the power of an individual person to alter discriminatory practices against women" (Ghorfati and Medini 8). Liberal feminism consists of diverse strings and cognitions of liberty, autonomy, rights, property, economics, social justice, and morality. Liberal feminism becomes an intriguing conversation nowadays as the growth of women's role in many parts of life. It plays a role in encouraging women's rights movements and the significant educational, legal and

policy initiatives which have improved women's rights in numerous contexts based on the political tradition of liberalism.

When men have the right to vote or to join in an election while women do not gain the same rights, liberal feminism emerges to erase that discrimination and gain equality. When women could not get high education as men could, liberal feminism appears to create gender equality. When society makes women as economic property and creates social norms that forces women to get married or obey men as fully as they could, liberal feminism emerges to create liberty and individual rights for women. "Basically, liberal feminism is a view to positioning women by having full freedom and individuality" (Hanifah et al 219). As time goes by, our people get to understand and apply values of liberal feminism in their life. There are many considerable changes that are made by liberal feminism which impact the society. Nowadays, liberal feminism becomes an exceptional trend to raise women's rights liberties.

One example of liberal feminism case that had happened in society, created big impacts and left precious legacies for today's generation is the story of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a mother, student, lawyer and jurist who served as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Her story is well-played by Felicity Jones in a movie named *On the Basis of Sex*. Directed by Mimi Leder, this American biographical legal drama released in December 2018 literally tells the struggle of Ruth Bader Ginsburg in her early career to pursue equality. There are numerous values of liberal feminism that could be seen in this movie. Ruth Bader Ginsburg played as a feminist icon in pursuing equality and

achieving individual rights. Her story can inspire people who watch this movie and motivate women to be independent and stand for what they believe. Therefore this movie will be analyzed with the theory of liberal feminism. The characterization of the main character also supports the liberal feminism values that makes this movie is suitable to be analyzed by theory of characterization.

B. Problem Formulations

Based on the background of the study above, the writer would like to specify the main problems into:

1. What are the characterizations of the main character described in Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie?
2. How does liberal feminism occur through Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie depicted on the main character?

C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem formulations, here are the objectives of the study:

1. To reveal the characterization of the main character, Ruth Bader Ginsburg in Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie.
2. To analyze liberal feminism depicted on Ruth Bader Ginsburg as the main character in Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie.

D. Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on characterization of the main character, Ruth Bader Ginsburg in Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie and liberal feminism occurs through the story that is depicted on Ruth Bader Ginsburg as the main character.

E. Significance of the Study

The result of this research hopefully could be useful:

1. It hopefully could help to educate and inspire people about liberal feminism depicted on the main character on Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie.
2. It hopefully could enrich the references of liberal feminism paper for Faculty of Language and Communication Science students in Sultan Agung Islamic University, especially those who takes the related cases.

F. Outline of the Study

This final project is divided into five chapters. Chapter one consists of the Background of the Study, Problem Formulations, Objectives of the Study, Significances of the Study, and Outline of the Study. Chapter two describes Review of Related Literature that contains the Synopsis of Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie, Theory of Characterization, and Theory of Liberal Feminism. Chapter three explains the Research Method that contains Type of Research, Data Collecting and Analyzing the Data. Chapter four consists of Findings and Discussion, while chapter five includes Conclusion and Suggestion.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Synopsis of Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was one of the nine women who were lucky to occupy the position as law students in Harvard in 1956. At that time, women's opportunities in education, law, social and economics were not as developed as they are now. She was in the first year of law school, following her husband Martin Ginsburg in the second year. Both were studying law while taking care of their little daughter, Jane. Ruth was a smart, tough and diligent woman. Even as a minority in her class, she did not want to be seen as small and weak. Ruth was often being discriminated against because she was a woman. But that did not ruin her ambition and dreams to be a lawyer. She did all her assignments, she wrote everything she was supposed to and attended all the classes. She was a well-prepared student, enthusiastic, and always on top of her class.

In the middle of her journey gaining a law degree, her husband Martin was diagnosed with testicular cancer. This situation forces Ruth to think harder. Then she attended her husband's class in addition to hers. She was also helping her husband to finish his assignments when her husband could only lie in bed. Sixteen months later when Martin recovered from cancer, graduated, and took a job position in New York, Ruth still had to finish her last year of school at Harvard. Ruth realized that Martin's cancer could relapse anytime, so she wanted to accompany her husband wherever he was. Then Ruth begged her advisor, Dean Griswold, to

give her a chance to finish her third year of school and gain a Harvard law degree in Columbia University located in New York, a city where Martin got a job. However, Dean Griswold rejected it, considering that Ruth had no compelling needs. Finally Ruth transferred to Columbia University and gained two major law reviews: Harvard law review and Columbia law review.

After Ruth graduated, she tried to chase her dream: become a lawyer, so she applied to many law firms but found many difficulties in finding a job because she was a woman. Finally she accepted a job as a professor at Rutgers law school, although Martin reminded her that she might try to apply to another law firm but Ruth wanted to try at Rutgers. She taught mainly civil procedure, from 1963 to 1972. One night when Ruth was working in her room and writing her lecture, her husband Martin gave her an unusual case to read. At first, Ruth had no excitement in reading it, as this was a case about tax. But soon after she read more, Ruth got excited.

The case is about an unmarried man who begged for a tax deduction under Section 214 of the United States Constitution for the salary of a nurse he hired to take care of his ailing mother. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS), United States' Revenue Service who has the responsibility to collect taxes and administer the Internal Revenue Code declined the deduction because Moritz was not a woman and never been married. That made him ineligible for the deduction of caregiver. After that, Moritz petitioned the United States Tax Court, asking them to reject the IRS and hold that he had the right for the deduction. But then, the Tax Court denied his petition, saying that he was not covered by the constitution and declining his

case that denial of tax deduction was unconstitutional. Ruth saw this case as sex-based discrimination against a man. As soon as she learned about this case, she wanted to bring it to the court.

Ruth realized that cannot handle this case by herself, since this is about someone's rights and liberties, she needed a constitutional handle here. Then she went to the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) and asked for help from Mel Wulf. Also, because half of this case is about tax, which is her husband's expertise, Ruth planned to represent her client Charles Moritz along with her husband. For many people, this case is ridiculous and unwinnable. Mel Wulf even refused to help Ruth, saying that she was not going to win. He also doubted that Moritz would agree to let Ruth represent him before the court. There were many people arguing the same case, the same issue which is sex-based discrimination, and they all lost. Although Ruth reminded Wulf about the great opportunity this case represented, Wulf still saw more failure this case was going to result in.

After being rejected by Wulf, Ruth made her way to Denver, Colorado to meet Charles Moritz in person. She wanted to convince him that she could appeal his case before the court. She talked to Moritz and asked him to tell her everything he had done to get the tax deduction and why he claimed it. She also asked Moritz to tell more about his story. Ruth became surer about bringing Moritz's case before the court. She believed that the law was wrong and unconstitutional. The 14th Amendments of the United States said that all people must be treated equally under the law, but the truth was, there were some laws that affected men to go to work and women to stay at home, then it must work like that forever. Ruth saw this law

was unconstitutional and she wanted to change it. When Moritz reminded her that he could not afford her, Ruth told him that this was not about money. She agreed to represent Moritz with the pro-bono case. Ruth realized this case was going to be hard, but she believed she could win. She was bold and determined.

Martin also supported Ruth by helping her construct the arguments and some other stuff. On the other hand, Martin's boss could not believe that Martin would do such a silly thing. He strongly prevented Martin from helping Ruth's case. Since Martin was working under his law firm, the failure that he would probably result in will affect the entire firm. He said that everything would be useless in the end but Martin insisted he would help his wife.

Facing the reality that Wulf was not going to help Ruth with her case, Ruth decided to meet Dorothy Kenyon to ask for her solution. Accompanied by her daughter, Jane, Ruth visited Kenyon in her office. Dorothy Kenyon was a senior attorney with many experiences in gender law cases, and meeting her would probably give her insight. At first, Kenyon had no interest at all, saying that Ruth's case would fail, mirroring the previous cases that she had appealed before the court about sex-based discrimination. But when Kenyon realized that Ruth was arguing a case about sex-based discrimination against a man, she considered again helping her.

Ruth started constructing her arguments, working day and night, along with her husband and students. On the other hand, because Kenyon could not help Ruth, she decided to visit Wulf in the ACLU to ask him to help Ruth arguing her case. Finally Wulf agreed to help Ruth with her case. He met Ruth and talked about the

arguments they were going to present. Days and weeks passed, Ruth along with Martin was ready to speak before the court. They have prepared everything. Ruth also had practiced speaking with the help from her former professors, Pauli Murray and Gerry Gunther, since she had no court experience.

In the courtroom, Ruth delivered her arguments before Judge Holloway, Brown, and Daugherty. Ruth stated Moritz's case in detail and correlated it to law that differentiated people on the basis of sex. Brave and bold, she urged the court to correct that law and set the new ones. Ruth believed, by maintaining the laws that did not give equality to caregivers, it will lead to sex-based discrimination, which is contrary to the United States constitution that said the country will treat all people equally. Ruth spoke as if she had been in a courtroom her whole life. The judges, Wulf, Martin and all the people in the gallery were mesmerized by Ruth's ingenuity in her arguments. At the end, she finished her arguments and left the gallery while the judges considered her case. But from the judges' faces, they seemed to agree with Ruth's arguments.

B. Related Literature

B.1 Theory of Characterization

Bennet and Royle in *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* stated, "Characters are the objects of our curiosity and fascination, affection and dislike, admiration and condemnation" (60). Characters are the results of characterization. The type of conversation that they have, acts that they do and the appearance are some ways that author has selected to characterize her or his character. M. H. Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* explained characters as

“persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral, dispositional, and emotional qualities that are expressed in what they say and what they do,” (23). While characterization is how writers introduce and reveal the characters in the story. “Characterization can be defined as any action by the author or taking place within a work that is used to give a description of a character” (Reams 4). There are several ways to analyze the characterization of characters in literary works.

B.1.1 Characterization by appearance

Physical appearance gives clues about characterization in literary works. Reaske stated in *How to Analyze Drama* “the mere appearance of the character, we locate our first understanding of him” (46). The reader will be able to know the characterization of a character by seeing their appearance. Authors usually give clues in their writings. “The author gives clues about the characterization of the character in the story from the character dresses, how he looks, and other details of appearance” (Pickering and Hoepfer 28). What clothes the characters are wearing and how they groom gives understanding about their character. When the writer wants to give a clue that a character is scary, gentle, ruthless, or nerdy, he/she will write the appearance that matches those characteristics.

B.1.2 Characterization through dialogue

Besides the appearance, the characterization of a character can be known by their dialogue. The characterization of a character in a literary work can be seen through their speech with other characters. “Speaking to others also sheds a great deal of light on a character's personality” (Reaske 46). The way a character speaks

to another character describes his/her personality. It can be seen from the intonation, expression, and tone. When a character is described as vicious or arrogant, he/she will speak with a high tone and a wicked expression. When a character is kind and gentle, he/she will speak with a low tone, and a gracious expression. “When the characters speak, they may show their characterization by themselves or what they said gives clues about their characterization to who they speak” (Pickering and Hoepfer 28). Words and sentences that are uttered by the characters could give clues about their characterization.

B.1.3 Characterization through language

Kinds of languages used by the characters to utter their conversation in a story could tell their personality. “The personality of a character is described through the use of language and expressions when he or she talks to another character” (Reaske 48). The word choice plays a role in determining whether a character is educated, naive, cruel or polite. “How the character says what she says can also reveal her characterization” (Boggs 44). For instance when the writer wants to describe that a character is educated, they will insert certain dialogues consisting of certain languages that give clues a character is educated.

B.1.4 Characterization through action

The action taken by the characters provides some clues about their characterization. “Perhaps the best reflection of character can be found in a person’s actions” (Boggs 44). Usually the character of a hero will be depicted by the act of saving someone or fixing something, and the character of a villain will be delivered by portraying some actions such as causing problems and harming many people.

“Personal qualities of character can reveal from what he does to himself, others and his surroundings” (Pickering and Hoepfer 28). The action and reaction towards something in the environment that is taken by the character could actually reveal his/her characterization. Their actions establish their personalities.

B.1.5 Characterization by the authors

The characterization could also be delivered by the author implicitly in their literary works. “The author characterizes his characters implicitly by using certain words that show the personal traits clearly” (Pickering and Hoepfer 28). This is also the common way to provide information to the reader about a character’s personality.

B.2. Feminism

Society has been through some significant changes in numerous aspects of life. Previously, there were traditions inherited by society such as norms, customs, and values that do not always bring a good impact for their generation. Our previous society believed that men are the ones who have the control of everything. They own all life sources and have power over everything while women are placed one or even a few steps behind men. Women’s voices and actions are seen as not as important as men’s. This is one of the ideas of patriarchy. “Patriarchy is social arrangements that privilege males where men as a group dominate women as a group, both structurally and ideologically” (Hunnicut 78). This principle is held by society for many centuries which leads to some issues for their next generation. Walby stated that patriarchy is a set of structured and institutionalized social relations in which certain men dominate, oppress, and exploit women (20). Men’s

domination in public spheres like education, economics, politics, and etc. leads to gender oppression and discrimination. Women's roles become marginalized, their voices are muted, their rights are oppressed and there comes the inequality between men and women.

As a consequence, feminism appears to end all practices of patriarchy. For the past few years feminism has gathered some notable attention. Feminism emerges to bring equality for women so they can gain their rights. "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (Hooks 8). It is an intellectual commitment, political or social movement which focuses on women's experiences in their daily life. Feminism explores justice for women and aims to achieve equality between women and men, lift up women's voices, and improve their status. "Feminism is a movement against patriarchal culture to struggle for gender equality and eradicate gender domination in society" (Selden et al 115). It attempts to achieve gender equality between men and women. "Feminism is a collection of movements and ideologies that share a common goal to define, establish, and achieve equal political, economic, cultural, personal, and social rights for women" (Suaidi et al 86). Women should be given the same rights and opportunity as men, and feminism is the real action to defend women's roles and rights in society. When society gives equality for women, then women will achieve the same position in many aspects of life.

B.3. Liberal Feminism

As Tong stated in *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction Third Edition* that liberal feminism is not about women who can do anything that

men can do, but it is more about some women who can do anything that they want (18). Ghorfati and Medini define liberal feminism as a particular approach to achieving equality between men and women. It emphasizes on the power of an individual person to alter discriminatory practices against women (8). Women often became objects or possessions of men. That phenomenon means women are seen as less than men. They cannot stand by themselves, not because they are not able to do so but because of the oppression from society. Women's voices are muted. Women are not given the same opportunity as men in education, economics, and other fields so they could not develop themselves. They do not get their rights to choose something for themselves and decide something for their life because society does not let them. These reasons trigger liberal feminism movement. "Liberal feminism targets the elimination of inequality between women and men in legal, political, social, and educational settings (Worrell 430).

Liberal feminism first emerged in 17th century with several pioneers and demanding several changes. The first one was Mary Wollstonecraft with her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* that gives significant change. In her book she states that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education. She suggests that men and women should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason. Women are often given less opportunity in education, so they are less competent than men. This makes them marginalized in society. Men and women have to be given the same education. For women, by getting education, they can be better partners for their husband not only in domestic sphere like household activities, but also in making income. If society

gives education to women like the way they give to men, then women could be as competent as men in many life matters. Previous generations had women working in the domestic sphere because society held tight to patriarchal values; keeping men take control of everything and let women follow them. By giving women the education means creating educated women. Educated women will be the main contributor to the society's prosperity. By giving the same opportunity in education, society will achieve gender equality for men and women.

In the 19 century, liberal feminism fought to get a chance in the civil service and economic field. The important figures are John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor. Associated with Wollstonecraft's, they stated that to reach gender equality, society must give political rights and economic opportunity towards women, as well as education. As stated by Tong that, if the society is to achieve sexual equality, or gender justice, then society must provide women with the same political rights and economic opportunities as well as the same education that men enjoy (16). Many decades ago, women were placed only in the domestic sphere such as doing household activities and not given any chances to grow their competence. Men are always the ones who make money while women stay at home and take care of the children. This inequality triggers liberal feminism movement. "In order to be partners rather than servants of their husbands, wives must earn an income outside the home" (Tong 18). Liberal feminism intends for persons to use their competence and the democratic process in helping men and women to become equivalent in the aspect of law and society. It fights to release women from dictatorial gender roles.

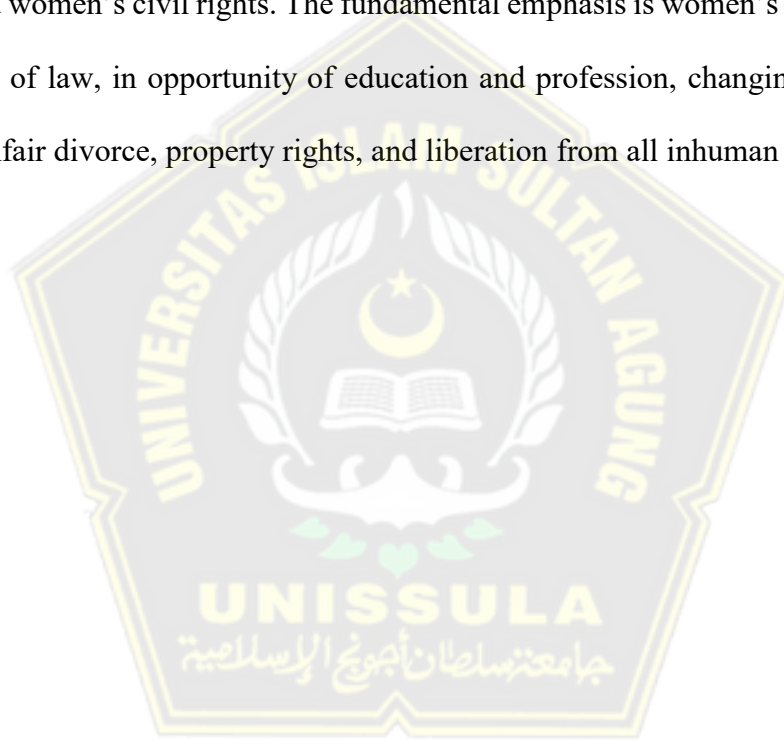
A role that is utilized as social defense to make women inferior and don't give them opportunity in economy, education, or other aspects.

“Basically, liberal feminism is a view to positioning women by having full freedom and individuality” (Hanifah et al 219). It underlines the freedom that women can get. It means women are free to do anything that they want, without any pressure from culture or society. Women can express themselves in society without limitation. Since women and men are equal, they have to be given the same right and opportunity. “Liberal feminism is equality of opportunity, which would undoubtedly require and lead to both” (Wendell 66). Women should not be controlled by men or society to act and to be something that they do not want. The common goal of liberal feminism is creating a society that is proper and attentive to the freedom of self-improvement so both women and men can make themselves better. Women and men have the same potential of rationality. By the existence of liberal feminism, women and men are expected to be equal in many life matters.

Equal opportunity is always related to liberal feminism, as stated by Tong, “committed to major economic re-organization and considerable redistribution of wealth, since one of the modern political goals most closely associated with liberal feminism is equality of opportunity” (12). People have the right to choose what they want without any interventions from others. In this case men and women as individuals are free to decide something that has to do with their lives without any disturbances or pressure from other people. As long as it doesn't disturb anyone, they are free to do that. It means they have the same opportunity. In other aspects of life like politics and economy, both men and women should have the same

opportunity. Feminism exists to erase patriarchal values that are applied in society and oppressed women.

Liberal feminism explicitly argues a statement that there is gender inequality constructed by social and culture. The main encouragement of liberal feminism is that a woman must freely be able to decide her social role, just like men do. Therefore, feminism obligated erasing the patriarchal historic structure that refused women's civil rights. The fundamental emphasis is women's equality in the aspects of law, in opportunity of education and profession, changing of marriage law, unfair divorce, property rights, and liberation from all inhuman powers.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

A. Type of Research

The research type of this study is qualitative which concentrates on collecting non-numeric data such as phrases or sentences, monologues, prologues, and dialogues. Qualitative research was conducted to analyze and explicate phenomena, occurrences, behavior, principle, faith, and insights of a person or people against something. The data studied in this study was interpreted using a descriptive method. The analysis was addressed to the finding of the content, meaning, form, as well as discourse of a text.

B. Data Collecting

B.1 Data Collecting Method

Below are the steps of collecting the data of the study:

B.1.1 Watching the Movie and Reading the Movie Script

The first step of the data collecting method was watching the movie and reading its script a few times, consisting of three stages. The first one was quick watching and reading. It aimed to gain common knowledge of the movie, such as the characters, plot, conflict, settings, and etc. The second one was pleasure watching and reading. The purpose of this stage was to enjoy the author's style, get to know the emotion, and understand the appealing issues or values of the movie. Finally, close watching and reading was conducted to build a connection between

the movie and its background, as well as to show a point of view that is more objective.

B.1.2 Identifying the Data

Identifying the potential data in a sequential way was an important step in this study after watching and reading the movie script for a few times. This step especially focused on expositions, dialogues, and descriptions connected to the research questions. Sentences suspected as potential data were underlined to ease the identification of later stage's data. The goal of this step was splitting up the data and non-data. Obviously, only the potential data connected to the two research questions was examined in this process.

B.1.3 Classifying the Data

Data classification was the upcoming step of the data collecting method. This step was conducted by arranging the data based on suitable problem formulations. After arranging the data, listing it into a table is the next step. Since there are two problem formulations focused on this study, then there are also two tables of classified data. The table is also known as an appendix which consists of columns of numbers, quotes gotten from the movie script, page, type of analysis and data, comment, and reference.

B.1.4 Reducing the Data

The last step of the data collecting method was reducing the data which attempt to finish classified data through elimination and selection methods. Similar data was removed to screen and simplify the data. The data that used to answer the problem formulations were only the strongest and most suitable ones. The final data

that suit each problem formulation were placed in a table of finalized data. Those were used to reinforce the analysis in chapter IV.

B.2 Type of the Data

The data of this study are split into:

1. The primary data which is taken from the movie script of Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex*.
2. The secondary data which is obtained from books, journals, articles that are related to this study.

C. Analyzing the Data

The last step of this study was analyzing finalized data using qualitative descriptive analysis as the method. This study used several theories of characterization and liberal feminism in analyzing the data. Dialogues, monologues, and narratives were taken from the movie as the data. Analysis and findings were reported in chapter IV: Findings and Discussions.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the findings of the two problem formulations that have been mentioned in chapter one. It presents the characterizations of the main character described in Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie, and liberal feminism occurs through Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie depicted on the main character.

A. The Characterizations of the Main Character Described in Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie

Characterization is how writers introduce and reveal the characters in the story. There are several ways to analyze the characterization of characters in literary works. Those are characterization through appearance, dialogue, language, action, and authors. From several ways mentioned above, below are the findings of the characterization of the main character in the story.

A.1. Characterization by appearance

“In the mere appearance of the character, we locate our first understanding of him” (Reaske 46). Ruth's appearance reveals her personality. Clothes or dress that she wears and the way she grooms herself portray her character. As the main character, Ruth is very smart, and that can be seen from the following narration.

EXT. GINSBURG APARTMENT (1959) - DAY

A brownstone on a quiet side street. **Ruth comes out in smart suit. Determined and bold.** (*On the Basis of Sex* 00:26:02 – 00:26:07)

Ruth covers herself with a smart suit, representing her intelligence and personality, also her ability to mix and match the outfits. The way she dresses and grooms give clues about her personality. From her appearance, it can be known that she has such a smart personality.

A.2. Characterization through dialogue

Ruth's personality is also revealed through the dialogue that she conducts. According to Pickering and Hoepfer, when the characters speak, they may show their characterization by themselves or what they said gives clues about their characterization to who they speak (28). From the following dialogues, Ruth's trait is portrayed.

GRISWOLD : “That’s-“

RUTH : “I’ve been here two years. **I’m first in my class.**” (*On the Basis of Sex* 00:24:20 – 00:24:22)

From the conversation between Ruth and Dean Griswold, Ruth stated that she is first in her class, means that she is smart. Ruth has always been smart since the first time she entered the class. Being a female law student in a class full of men is not an easy thing, and Ruth keeps maintaining her performance in class so she is

always on top. Below is another example of dialogue that represents her smart personality.

INT. RUTGERS LAW SCHOOL - RUTH'S OFFICE -
DAY

MILLICENT : “Do you want ‘Theories in Public
Taxation’ with you in Denver?”

RUTH : “Who needs a tax reference? I have
Marty.” (*On the Basis of Sex* 01:21:38 – 01:21:43)

Ruth will argue a case before the court and half of her case is about tax. When a co-worker asks her whether Ruth needs tax reference or not when she is in Denver, she answers it brilliantly by saying that she has Marty, her husband. Ruth realizes that she will deliver the arguments along with Martin, so she does not need tax reference anymore. Martin is the expert in tax laws. From the dialogue that she conducts with her co-worker, it can be known that Ruth is smart and a fast thinker. She could be taking tax references with her in Denver but that would be a bit complicated and a waste of time since she has limited time to deliver her arguments. By relying Martin as her tax reference would save time, since Martin could also deliver his arguments regarding tax. In the dialogue above, the way Ruth speaks depicts her ability to think fast and get ideas. Not only that, other characters also admit that Ruth is smart. It can be seen from the dialogue below.

RUTH : “I couldn’t just ignore it! But the way he looked at me. Now he’ll never take me seriously”

MARTIN : **“You’re smarter than everyone here.** (*On the Basis of Sex* 00:08:34 – 00:08:44)

Ruth’s husband, Martin, admits that her wife is smart, even smarter than everyone in her class. As a person who lives and studies with her under the same rooftop, Martin admits that his wife is a smart woman. “Speaking to others also sheds a great deal of light on a character’s personality” (Reaske 46). When Martin speaks to Ruth, he states that Ruth is smart.

Besides smart, Ruth is also critical. She is a type of person who always uses her full mind before speaking or taking an action. She always considers anything that has possibilities to affect the way things work. She is a thinker. She thinks far ahead to make every matter work in the way she wants. The way Ruth thinks critically can be seen from the following dialogues.

MARTIN : “It was an asinine question.”

RUTH : **“I couldn’t just ignore it! But the way he looked at me. Now he’ll never take me seriously.”** (*On the Basis of Sex* 0:08:25 – 0:08:36)

When Ruth unfortunately could not make a good impression to the dean in his soiree, she keeps thinking about how bad her journey on that campus will be. Dean Griswold’s face is plain, representing dislike. Although it was just the way

the dean looked at Ruth, she still could not get away with that. She feels like being underestimated. She is afraid that the dean will never take her seriously in his classes. Another proof about Ruth's critical behavior can be seen from the dialogue below.

MARTIN : "But that's not your fault. You've never even done this before"

RUTH : "**Is that what I'm supposed to tell our client when I blow it in court?**" (*On the Basis of Sex* 0:21:28 – 0:21:33)

When her husband Martin tries to defend her from Wulf's argument, saying that she has never done that before, Ruth does not want to just agree with that. Ruth thinks critically and rationally. Just because she has no courtroom experience that does not mean it is okay to blow the argument in court. That is absolutely not professional and embarrassing. It will also cause disappointment to her client, Charles Moritz. Ruth realizes that she could not give up with her less experience in court. She wants to be professional and satisfy her client. Below is another proof that Ruth thinks far ahead.

RUTH : (rising) "**A correction, Professor Brown. McGee did not simply promise to fix George Hawkins's hand. He promised, quote: a one hundred-percent good hand.**"

FITZPATRICK : "That's the same thing."

BROWN : “Is it? What say you, Mrs. Ginsburg?”

RUTH : “It is not. **Words matter.** (*On the Basis of Sex* 00:11:24 – 00:11:40)

When Ruth is in class and discussing a case, she thinks critically as if she is an actual lawyer. For Ruth, being a lawyer means being critical and precise. She realizes that words could affect the argument of a case and that should not be taken easily. Ruth thinks critically by paying attention to the small details, even just words.

INT. DOJ - BROWN'S OFFICE - DAY

GRISWOLD : (as they shake hands) “Mrs. Ginsburg. I’m pleased you found a use for your Harvard Education”

RUTH : “Oh, no. What I’m doing, I learned at Columbia”

BROWN : “**Ruth was always my most thoroughly prepared student. So much to prove.**” (*On the Basis of Sex* 01:30:07 – 01:30:25)

Ruth always gets prepared for anything that might happen. She thinks far ahead, when all possibilities might occur. During her study in university, Ruth becomes such a critical student by preparing everything to make everything perfect. She arranges her study so she will be comfortable and ready for exams, quizzes and

other projects. When she meets her former professor named Brown from her latest university which is Columbia, he admits that Ruth is his most thoroughly prepared student. Another proof that Ruth is critical can be seen from the dialogue below.

MEL : “You think judges will be sympathetic because they all have prostates? Men and women eat at the same lunch counters. We drink at the same fountains. We go to the same schools.”

RUTH : “Women can’t attend Dartmouth.”

MEL : “Men can’t go to Smith.”

RUTH : “Women police officers can’t patrol New York City streets. We have to get credit cards in our husbands’ names.” (*On the Basis of Sex* 00:45:21 – 00:45:42)

Even in a small and simple argument, Ruth always uses her critical thinking. In one argument when she is attacked by Mel Wulf, saying men and women already had equal rights in many aspects of life, Ruth has her own proof and explanations. She does not want to be defeated. When Mel is throwing a sentence saying that men and women go to the same schools, Ruth also has her counterattack sentence stating women cannot attend Dartmouth. The way Ruth thinks critically also can be seen from the way she thinks about women in that era. She sees women do not have the same opportunity as men in society and she wants to change it. She views women do not have the same right at work and economics. Ruth considers if systems like

that last forever and no one is aware of that, then it will vex women and prevent them from developing.

MORITZ : “If it’s not for the money, then why are you here?”

RUTH : “The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution says all people must be treated equally under the law. And yet, there are... I don’t know how many laws - - like the caregiver deduction -- that say, **in effect, women stay home, and men go to work, and that it should stay that way forever. ... I want to convince the federal courts that those laws are unconstitutional**”. (*On the Basis of Sex* 0:51:13 – 0:51:35)

Ruth always thinks critically from a simple matter to the big ones. When she is convincing Charles Moritz to let her represent him before the court, Ruth delivers a smart reason, proving that she is a visionary thinker. Ruth is bothered by the law that states women belong at home while men go to work, and it will stay that way forever. She realizes that society could not live that way for the rest of their life. Society is developing, and so how they think. There will be a time when those laws are finally outdated, and Ruth is such a critical person for thinking that way when nobody is. She does not want those laws to affect and limit the next generation, especially women. Therefore she has the ambition to convince the federal court that those laws are unconstitutional.

It is not easy for woman to fight for her rights in that era, but Ruth Bader Ginsburg is tough. She cannot be easily defeated by people or situations. She is such a woman who sticks up to her stance and goals. She is tough, tenacious, and never lets anyone else ruin her goals. She is the kind of person who has strong ambition and not easily giving up. It can be seen from the dialogues below.

MARTIN : “I’m sorry”

RUTH : **“We’re never giving up. Keep working. Keep studying.** Jane will have her father. And you will be a lawyer. I am spending my life with you, Martin Ginsburg”

(On the Basis of Sex 00:18:32 – 00:18:52)

When Ruth is faced with the reality that her husband Martin is diagnosed with testicular cancer, she stays strong and tough. She realizes that there is a giant obstacle in front of her eyes and is ready to prevent her from reaching her dreams, but she chooses to not give up. Ruth supports Martin and ensures him that they can make it. She will continue her study and work in any conditions. She also convinces Martin to not give up, and that they will pursue their dreams and live their life together. Another proof that Ruth has tough behavior can be seen from the following dialogue.

ROEMER : “You really think you can change all these laws?”

RUTH : “That’s the plan” ” (*On the Basis of Sex*
1:12:25 – 1:12:28)

Ruth is resolute, persevering, and determined. When one of her students Roemer asks her whether she can really change those laws or not, Ruth says that she planned to do that. She has a huge ambition to change the laws. The idea to change the law is not something any people would think of. When Ruth has an ambition, she will fight for that. She would never let anyone else distract or underestimate her. She is truly a tough woman. That also can be seen from the dialogue below.

RUTH : “You think I can’t be persuasive”

MEL : “Ruth, I’ve never been more certain of anything in my life”

RUTH : “**You don’t get to tell me when to quit**” (*On the Basis of Sex* 1:24:55 – 1:25:01)

Ruth is being underestimated by someone who is way smarter and has more experience than her. Mel is really sure that Ruth will lose and all her efforts will cost nothing. But that does not ruin Ruth’s faith and ambition. She sticks up to her goals and all her efforts. Ruth is persevering. She has her principles. She doesn’t want to be controlled and let anyone else decide whether she should continue or quit, lose or win. She is the one who knows herself. She knows when to begin or quit.

Ruth has been a hard working person for a long time. Although she is a woman and often seen small and weak, Ruth works harder even than other people. She always makes sure that she finishes all her tasks correctly and punctually. No matter whether it is college assignments or household activities, Ruth always gets it done in earnest. She always brings her best efforts to something that she does so she can gain the result that she wants. As a result of her hard work, some people even praise her. The dialogue below is the proof.

GREENE : **“Graduating top of your class. Law Review at Harvard AND COLUMBIA?! I didn’t even know that was possible”**

RUTH : **‘Thank you, Mr. Greene. I’ve worked hard’** (*On the Basis of Sex 0:26:38 – 0:26:47*)

Being a woman and a minority in her class, discriminated against, and underestimated, Ruth proved that she is dreadfully brilliant and a hardworking person by graduating top of her class and having two law reviews. That achievement is not something that not all people could reach. She is a passionate hard worker. Greene praises Ruth for her intelligent and hard work. He does not even know those achievements are possibly done by a person. Ruth also admits that she has worked really hard to be the best of herself. It can be seen from the following dialogue.

RUTH : **“Mr. Greene. I want to be a lawyer. I want to represent clients before the court in pursuit of justice. You can see I worked hard through school. I did everything I**

was supposed to, and I excelled. I swear it: I'll do the same for you”

GREENE : “Thing is... We're a close-knit firm. Almost like family. And well-- the wives, they get jealous” (*On the Basis of Sex* 01:52:25 – 01:53:02)

In one interview with Greene, Ruth admits that she works really hard to achieve something that she is passionate about. Ruth is such a woman who has great ambition. To pursue her dream, she works really hard through school. She does everything she is supposed to until she excels.

Besides hard worker, Ruth is also attentive. Ruth pays attention to many things, even the small details about a thing. She is the type of person who considers everything before taking an action or choosing something. Not only is she critical, but also attentive. She minds the things she is in. She observes the situation, condition, and environment. Ruth cares about trivial things that other people might have opinions about her. It can be seen from the dialogue below.

RUTH : “**Which one makes me look more like a Harvard man?**”

MARTIN : “I'm thrilled you look nothing like a Harvard man.

RUTH : “Seriously, you know how I am at these things. **It’s the dean’s dinner, Marty. I need to make a good impression.**” (*On the Basis of Sex* 0:04:23 – 0:04:44)

Being at the dean’s dinner is something important to Ruth, and she does not want to ruin it. She prepares everything so she can make a good impression. She thinks about every small detail that probably could affect the way people see her and the environment treat her. In this case, she is confused by the choices of the dresses. She really wants to dress properly, neatly, and a Harvard-man like. Ruth is afraid if she chooses the wrong dress then it would make her look bad, so she decided to ask her husband Martin.

As a woman who has a loving and responsible husband who could provide anything to her, Ruth is never dependent on her husband. Ruth is a very independent woman who takes care of everything by herself. She earns money by herself. She has a day job. In her job, she is also responsible and independent. She does not rely on anyone else. She handles her stuff by herself, including the case that she takes to court. That could be seen from the following dialogue.

RUTH : “If we’re going to appeal, the court needs to agree there’s a constitutional handle here.”

MEL : “**How did you even convince this guy to let you represent him?**”

RUTH : “**I’ll take care of that.** Alone, the judges...” (*On the Basis of Sex* 00:44:57 – 00:45:07)

The first case that Ruth takes is not something ordinary. She needs to collaborate with a constitutional institution and acquire the agreement from the client she will represent. With all of that stuff, she manages to handle the client on her own. She does that based on her aim and intention. Because she wants to appeal, she needs to get the agreement from her client, so she will handle that. As a woman, Ruth is very independent. She would take any risk and put the effort into the case she is in. Another trait that is pictured through Ruth's speech is confident. The way she speaks to other character portrays her confidence. That can be seen from the dialogue below.

RUTH : "What? ... What is it?"

MARTIN : "No. Nothing. I'm just thrilled by your sudden enthusiasm for tax law."

RUTH : "Marty. We need to take this case." (On the Basis of Sex 00:42:28 – 00:42:41)

Moritz vs Commissioner is the very first case that Ruth takes as a lawyer concerning tax and gender inequality. In her whole life, this will be the first time she represents her client before the court. Without any experience, she is confident in taking the case. She does not think about the risk or obstacle. She does not hesitate to come into her mind. She just goes on and keeps her confidence.

A.3. Characterization through language

Based on Reaske, the personality of a character is described through the use of language and expressions when he or she talks to another character (48). Ruth's personality is pictured through the language that she uses when she is speaking. That can be seen from the dialogue below.

RUTH : **“Protests are important. But changing the culture means nothing, if the law doesn't change. As a lawyer, you must believe that”**

KENYON : **“Let me guess: you're a professor, aren't you?”** (*On the Basis of Sex* 00:58:10 – 00:58:22)

To speak using those words and language, Ruth must have been through so much research and experiences. The way she speaks is picturing such a very educated person until Kenyon can guess that Ruth is a professor. Ruth chooses her words and languages very well. She arranges her sentences so other people can quickly conclude that she is a very educated person.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg is a very smart woman in any role she has, whether it is a mother, wife, college student, lawyer, or professor. She has wide knowledge particularly regarding her job. It can be seen from the way talks. When she becomes a law professor in university teaching sex discrimination, she always arranges her words properly so her students would understand her. Sex discrimination is not a common lesson at that time. There were only several people who learned about it, especially women. Ruth observes and learns many things about law and sex

discrimination before she becomes a professor. She reads tons of books, does numerous researches, and gains a lot of experiences so she can develop her thoughts and ideas. Ruth is also a very educated and intelligent person as she speaks in the way educated people do.

A.4. Characterization through action

Another way to reveal the character of a person is through their action. It is based on Boggs statement that the best reflection of character can be found in a person's actions (44). Ruth's character is revealed through her action and reaction towards things happened in her environment. That can be seen from the narration below.

Ruth frowns. **She knows Fitzpatrick's not quite right. But notices that no one else seems bothered by it.** Ruth can't let it lie. She decides to raise her hand. (*On the Basis of Sex* 0:11:15 – 0:11:19)

In one discussion when the class is talking about a law case, Ruth realizes that there is something wrong with the explanation being addressed by a classmate. Then Ruth braves herself to take action. She raises her hand in the class full of men, and says her opinion. Ruth is also a precise and critical person to remember small details about a case. Previously, Ruth is noticing no one speaks for the correction. She does not want everyone in the class to drown into a discussion that is not fully correct, so she speaks up. Another proof showing that Ruth is critical is on the following narration.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Concealer, lipstick, mascara on the counter. RUTH BADER GINSBURG (36) is applying blush. When she's finished, she considers her reflection. She puts on A GOLD, SUNBURST PIN. **And tries a smile. But it looks forced. She drops it. A breath. And she tries again. A different smile. And...**

RUTH: "May it please the court"

Not right yet. A smile. And...

RUTH : "Your honors and may it please the court..."

That's not it either...

RUTH : "May it please the court"

She looks herself in the eye one more time. (On the Basis of Sex 1:32:01-1:32:32)

Ruth pays attention even to small things before she goes to court. For her, to speak before the judges is a thing that she has never done before, so she has to make it good. In the first time in her life, Ruth will speak in court and represent someone, and she does not want to ruin it. She minds every small detail of her appearance and sentences that she will utter. She keeps practicing to make it perfect.

She puts effort into making herself look good because she wants to make a good impression in court.

Another character pictured through Ruth's action is confident. Someone who is confident will not hesitate about things they want to do. They do not think much about the risk, result or consequences. Ruth is a woman who has her confidence. She never hesitates that she will make things right or wrong. She believes that what she does is right. This can be seen from the actions that she takes throughout the story. As a wife, mother, college student, professor, and lawyer, she always gains her confidence.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

Ruth sits in the first row. Surrounded by men. A textbook on the desk: Introduction to Contracts. At nine-thirty precisely, PROF. ERNEST BROWN (50) enters. And begins lecturing.

BROWN: "I'm Professor Brown. This is Introduction to Contracts. Hawkins versus McGee."

Ruth's hand flies up. Along with several others. (*On the Basis of Sex 0:19:22 – 0:19: 59*)

As a minority in her class, Ruth does never feel small or diffident. She is always confident. She chooses to sit in the first row along with the men. When Professor Brown begins the lecture, Ruth bravely raises her hands along with many

others. She never hesitates in throwing ideas or opinions to other people. She prioritizes her bravery to speak and take actions rather than the result, and that is confidence she has. Another proof that she is confident can be seen from the following dialogue and narration.

INT. LECTURE HALL TWO - DAY

The door CREAKS. And Ruth enters. As Freund continues lecturing, he watches her find a seat in back.

FREUND : “Which also provides the first examples of circumstances where precedents may be overturned. Judges are bound... **Excuse me. May I help you?**”

She rises tentatively.

RUTH : “I’m Martin Ginsburg’s wife. I’ll be attending his classes for him.”

Freund seems surprised by it. His students are impressed.

FREUND : “In addition to your own?”

The look in her eye leaves no room for negotiation.

Freund is moved. He resumes his lecture without further objection... (On the Basis of Sex 00:42:28 – 00:42:41)

Ruth is substituting Martin's attendance in class for him, because Martin is sick and could not attend on his own. When Ruth enters the room to attend Professor Freund's class, she has no clue whether he will allow her to substitute Martin's class or not, but Ruth is confident. She does not think about whether she will make things right or wrong. She does not hesitate when she is entering the class and takes the seat. Ruth is confident enough so Freund and the other classmates do not have any negotiation for that.

A.5. Characterization by authors

The last way to reveal character of a person is by the authors. As the main character, Ruth Bader Ginsburg's characterization is introduced by the author. "The author characterizes his characters implicitly by using certain words that show the personal traits clearly" (Pickering and Hooper 28). Ruth has a confident personality and that can be seen from the following narration.

She climbs the Supreme Court steps. NOT with wide-eyed
awe this time. **WITH CONFIDENCE. Ruth is a woman
who knows exactly where she's going. She's determined.
Resolute. And unafraid. (On the Basis of Sex 01:52:25 –
01:53:02)**

After all the obstacles that she has been through, Ruth is now excelled. She is a confident, brave and determined woman. She does not hesitate or be afraid. She is the type of woman who is sure about things she takes. She is confident with herself, her job, her duty. She does not let anyone else ruin or fade her confidence.

The most way author introduce and reveal Ruth's character in the story is through the dialogue. Ruth's personality which are smart, critical, tough, confident, independent, hardworking, and attentive are pictured most from the dialogue or speech that she conducted with other characters. That is proven by the data as above.

B. Liberal Feminism Occurs through Mimi Leder's On the Basis of Sex

Movie Depicted on the Main Character

In the previous discussion, there are explanations and claims about Ruth's characterization. By using theories of characterization and providing several pieces of evidence, Ruth's characterizations are smart, critical, persevering, hardworking, and confident. Those five characterizations are related to feminist perspective. The following explanations will explain the second problem formulation, which is about liberal feminism depicted on Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Several theories of liberal feminism will be used.

According to theories of liberal feminism, there are two main goals of liberal feminism. First is liberty, freedom, and individuality; and the second is equal rights and opportunity in numerous life aspects such as economic, education, legal, social, and politics. Theories that support the first goal are Tong's and Hanifah et al's. Tong stated that liberal feminism is not about women who can do anything that men can do, but it is more about some women who can do anything that they want" (18). "Basically, liberal feminism is a view to positioning women by having full freedom and individuality" (Hanifah et al 219).

Also, several theories that support the second goal are Worrell's and Tong's. According to Worrell, liberal feminism targets the elimination of inequality between women and men in legal, political, social, and educational settings (430). "If the society is to achieve sexual equality, or gender justice, then society must provide women with the same political rights and economic opportunities as well as the same education that men enjoy" (Tong 16).

B.1. Freedom and Individuality

To be free is the right of every human. When someone has freedom, he can do anything that he wants. He has full rights to himself. He is not under anyone's control. It is based on Tong statement, "Liberal feminism is not about women who can do anything that men can do, but it is more about some women who can do anything that they want" (18). That statement signifies the freedom that women have, that they are free to do anything they want, without any oppression from anyone else. "Basically, liberal feminism is a view to positioning women by having full freedom and individuality" (Hanifah et al 219). Individuality means when someone relies on himself, and not anyone else. He has the absolute right to choose or do something for himself and accept the consequences. "Individuality is the consequence of self-determination, self-reliance and self-assertiveness" (Wortham). Having full individuality means that women are free to decide or do something based on them and be independent. They have full rights to depend only on themselves and face the consequences. In liberal feminism, women fight for liberty because in many cases they are limited by society in doing or expressing themselves. As a result, they still have to obey society or social rules. Women do

not have full freedom to choose or be what they want. Liberal feminism emerges to strive for women's liberty. It is not about women having a higher position than men, but to equalize women to gain the same liberty as men.

Freedom and individuality are reflected by the main character throughout the story. As a woman and a wife, Ruth has freedom to study law at Harvard just like her husband Martin. In many cases women are forced to just stay at home and bury their dreams, ambitions, and desire to be active in the public sphere. But Ruth has freedom to express herself without any oppression from her husband or society. She is free to do what she wants. She chooses to work, become a professor, and lawyer based on her desire. Although Ruth is Martin's wife, she has her own privacy. She has time and space to work and make income, out of her status as a wife. This can be seen from the following narration.

INT. GINSBURG APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Ruth sits at the table that was once in their kitchen in Cambridge. **She's writing lesson plans, sipping coffee. She ignores a KNOCK on the door.** Martin enters anyway. And drops, right onto her papers, a small, yellow booklet -- the TAX COURT ADVANCE SHEETS (TCAS). (*On the Basis of Sex* 00:41:08 – 00:41:15)

When Ruth is working, she does not want to be disturbed. She has her own time and space. She does what she wants without any intervention from others, including her own husband. Space and time to focus on her dream and activity are

things that she gets as a woman and a wife. That can be seen from the narration below.

INT. GINSBURG APARTMENT - NIGHT

Martin, in his usual golf shirt and French apron, is cooking IN THE KITCHEN. James is drawing dinosaurs on THE COUNTER BETWEEN THE KITCHEN AND DINING ROOM.

IN THE DINING ROOM: Ruth paces. Notes in hand.

Practicing...

RUTH : (to herself) “Sex and race are both unalterable biological traits...”

She’s forgetting something. She checks her notes: Of course.

(On the Basis of Sex 1:14:48 – 1:14:52)

Ruth has freedom to do what she wants wherever she is. When she is at home, she still could do her tasks as a professor and lawyer. She is not attached to social norms or family rules that suggest women do household activities and serve their family. Here, Ruth is free to practice her oral arguments while her husband Martin is the one who cooks for the family. She also is not forced by her husband to cook or do household tasks. While another freedom that Ruth gets can be seen from the narration below.

**INT. GINSBURG APARTMENT - DINING ROOM –
LATER**

Ruth is at the typewriter, still working. Martin enters. Takes one of her reference books. And joins her. Ruth looks up and watches him. ... Until he notices. (*On the Basis of Sex* 00:56:24 – 00:56:30)

Ruth has freedom to finish or do her job at home. When she is doing her job, her husband never limits or forces her. Ruth is absolutely free to do what she wants, in any kinds of aspects. Since one of the goals of liberal feminism is individuality, Ruth gains hers by having freedom and individuality at home. She is able to do what she wants to. She is not controlled by her husband or anyone else. Below is the proof that Ruth could not be controlled by anyone else.

RUTH : “You think I can’t be persuasive”

MEL : “Ruth, I’ve never been more certain of anything in my life”

RUTH : “**You don’t get to tell me when to quit**” (*On the Basis of Sex* 1:24:55 – 1:25:01)

Liberal feminism aims for women’s freedom in many life aspects. When Ruth has the ambition to appeal in court, one her colleague tells her that she will never win the case. But that does not ruin her goal and ambition. She is a woman who has liberty. She does not want anyone else to control her or decide whether she

will win or lose in something, not even a person who has more experiences than her. She has full freedom to do what she wants and does not want to be controlled. The following dialogue is another proof.

ROEMER : “You really think you can change all these laws?”

RUTH : “That’s the plan” (*On the Basis of Sex* 1:12:25 – 1:12:28)

Demanding to change the law is something crucial and not everyone would think of it. There are many obstacles and steps to do that. With all the complexities, Ruth is persistent and resolute. When she has an ambition, she will do anything to pursue that. She is a woman who has a dream to change the law so it could be more suitable for the next generation. Ruth is aiming for freedom to do what she wants to, without any interventions from others, and she wants to change the laws.

B.2. Equal Rights and Opportunity in Education

Equal opportunity means there is no distinction between men and women in any chances. Equal means men and women have the same right and opportunity, and this case is education. As stated by Tong, “If the society is to achieve sexual equality, or gender justice, then society must provide women with the same political rights and economic opportunities as well as the same education that men enjoy” (16). That means men and women should have the same right and opportunity in society. “Liberal feminism targets the elimination of inequality between women and men in legal, political, social, and educational settings” (Worrell 430).

Through the story, equal rights and opportunity in educational settings are portrayed by both characters Ruth and Martin Ginsburg. As a woman, Ruth gets the same chance as her husband to study at Harvard. She has the same chance to attend the class and gain her law degree. She has the same chance to obtain higher education. Ruth has the same right and opportunity in education just like her husband. This can be seen from the narrations below.

EXT. AUSTIN HALL - DAY

Well groomed white MEN (20s) march through a quad.

Into an impressive building with columned arches.

But amidst the pants and loafers -- GLIMPSE: a pair of high-heeled shoes, a skirt swaying, shoulder-length brown hair. (On the Basis of Sex 00:00:43 – 00:02:22)

Among hundreds of men filling Harvard, Ruth becomes one of nine female students who are lucky to get the chance to study law. Those women get the same education as the men do. This is based on the goals of liberal feminism that there must be equality in education for men and women. Ruth is one of the women who get the same right and opportunity to gain higher education in university. This following narration is the proof.

There are over five hundred people in this grand room.

Most of them are white. Only nine of them are women.

(On the Basis of Sex 00:03:47 – 00:03:57)

Although being a minority in her university, the fact that Ruth is one of nine female students in Harvard. It is an example that society gives the same chance for women to study and get a degree just like men. As a woman, Ruth has already got the same opportunity in educational settings so she, along with other female students could attend law school that is filled with men. Another proof that Ruth gets her equality in education can be seen from the dialogue below.

RUTH : “I’m Ruth Ginsburg, from Brooklyn”

GRISWOLD : “And why are you here Miss Ginsburg?”

RUTH : “**Mrs. Ginsburg, actually. My husband Marty is in the second-year class. I’m at Harvard to learn about his work.** *(On the Basis of Sex 00:07:59 – 00:08:20)*

Ruth is a woman who always has the courage to learn something. Even as a wife, she has the passion and eagerness to study law so she could be equal to her husband. Martin is in the second-year-class and Ruth follows him on the next year. She tries to equalize her husband’s education. She attends Harvard so she could learn the same thing. She has the same opportunity as her husband in gaining higher education. In fact, her passion for learning makes her become a professor. It can be seen from the following narration.

Professor Ruth Bader Ginsburg (36 now) approaches the throng. This isn’t “Occupy” anything. It’s Tahrir Square...
(On the Basis of Sex 00:32:00 – 00:32:25)

When Ruth is 36 years old, she becomes a law professor. After all the education she has been through, she proves that women also could become professors. It is equality in educational settings between men and women. Women are not forced to stay at home and bury their dreams. But they also could go to school, obtain a degree and be a professor. As a woman and a wife, Ruth has the same rights and opportunity as her husband.

B.3. Equal Rights and Opportunity in Economy

Equal rights and opportunity as reflection of liberal feminism are found in Ruth's daily life. When Martin goes to work and makes income, Ruth also does the same thing. Martin has the position in his office, and Ruth also has a position as a law professor at work. Both of them have a daily job and earn money. Although Ruth is a woman and a wife, she gets her right to be active in economic fields, in this case she gets a job and earns money. She has the same opportunity as her husband in making money. It can be seen from this following dialogue.

MARTIN : “You got the job! Are they giving you a corner office, or will they make you jump through hoops first?”

RUTH : “It's not at Bibler and Greene. I wasn't what they were looking for”

MARTIN : “I don't-- Then what's the firm?”

RUTH : “**Clyde Ferguson left his professorship at Rutgers**”

MARTIN : “Kiki”

RUTH : “They haven’t found another black man to replace him, so someone decided a woman would be the next best thing” (*On the Basis of Sex* 00:29:47 – 00:30:47)

Ruth has always dreamed of being a lawyer so she applied to many law firms to realize her dream. But when she could not make it, she decided to take the opportunity to teach at Rutgers Law School to replace the other professor. As a wife, Ruth chooses to work and earn money rather than be a servant for the family. She would take any jobs so she could earn money, just like Martin. Ruth has the same opportunity in economic fields, which is to have a job and makes income.

B.4. Equal Rights and Opportunity in Legal Settings

The reflection of equal rights and opportunity in legal settings can be seen from the way Ruth gets the opportunity to participate in numerous legal worlds. When she becomes a lawyer and argues a case in court, she has the right and opportunity to speak in front of the judges. She has the same right as men to appeal in court. As a woman, Ruth gains her right to utter her ideas and arguments in front of people. The proof is in the following narration.

Martin rises and approaches Ruth. **Gently. Supportive. An excellent teacher, he talks just to her...** Jane’s watching. **Martin’s “teaching” Ruth, but without condescension.**

Wanting only her success. (*On the Basis of Sex* 01:19:16 – 01:19:39)

Martin is a successful lawyer and he could do absolutely perfect arguments in front of his clients. While for Ruth, arguing a case is something new for her because she has never become a lawyer before. When doing the practice, she makes a lot of mistakes. Seeing this, Martin wants to help Ruth. Martin wants Ruth to be succeeded, in this case, being a lawyer. Martin wants Ruth to have the same success as him. He wants Ruth to be succeeded in court. He teaches Ruth without condescension, although he is in the higher position and the expert in law but he gives the opportunity to Ruth to grow and develop, so Ruth could be a successful lawyer just like him. Another proof that Ruth gets her right in legal settings can be seen from the dialogue below.

MEL : “Marty. You should do the oral argument”

MARTIN : “No. No way. I was just... Ruth is the expert in gender law”

GUNTHER : “At least half this case is tax”

MEL : “The most important thing is that Charles Moritz wins”

MARTIN : “I said no. Drop it, Mel” (*On the Basis of Sex* 1:19:41 – 01:19:53)

Martin has a good ability to speak in front of the judges and he absolutely possibly does the oral arguments. Mel and Gunther recommend Martin to do it rather than Ruth, since the opportunity of winning the case is bigger, but Martin refuses it. He could have done it well and easily since the goal of this case is that Charles Moritz wins, but he gives this opportunity to Ruth. Although Martin knows that Ruth has no experience in the courtroom, he wants Ruth to do it instead. Martin considered that Ruth is the one who has the idea to take this case to court and she is also the expert in gender law. In this case, Ruth as a woman has the same right and opportunity to appeal and speak in court just like men. Martin and Ruth are equal in legal settings. Another example is in the following monologue.

RUTH (CONT'D): “Sixty-five years ago, it would have been unimaginable that my daughter would aspire to a career. **And a hundred years ago. I would not have had the right to stand before you**” (*On the Basis of Sex* 01:47:05 – 01:47:21)

Women do not have any chances to speak before the judges in a courtroom before. It is amazing to Ruth now that she, a woman, a mother, a professor, and a lawyer, has the opportunity to speak in front of the judges to argue a case. It is the reflection of liberal feminism that brings rights and opportunity for women to be equal as men. Ruth becomes one of women who gain that right to stand in a courtroom and throw her arguments. Not only men who could do that, but Ruth also has the opportunity to appeal and represent her client.

Ruth grabs Martin's arm. He looks down at her. An enduring glance, as she tightens her grip and pulls him back down. IN THE GALLERY: Mel sees it. And knows they're screwed.

JUDGE HOLLOWAY (O.S.) (CONT'D) Counsel for the appellant?

Martin considers Ruth's intensity... And grins. THIS is the woman he married. He settles into his chair. Gives a nod... (*On the Basis of Sex* 01:44:31 – 01:44:42)

During the last minutes in the courtroom, Martin and Ruth are screwed up and about to lose. One session is left and that will determine whether Ruth will lose or win. Judge Holloway gives permission to counsel for the appellant to speak and Martin is the one who is about to rise. He has much more experience in the courtroom than Ruth, and he could handle everything, including preventing Ruth from failing, so he gets up from his chair, but then Ruth holds him. Bold and determined, Ruth is sure that she could deliver her arguments well and win the case. This is her very last chance to deliver her arguments. Ruth's expression and gesture convince Martin that she could do it. Martin gives way and opportunity to her wife for this time. Ruth is again getting his right to speak before the judges. She has the same opportunity to speak as her husband. Also, Martin always gives permission to Ruth to use her right and opportunity, even in the most difficult and impossible times.

B.5. Equal Rights and Opportunity in Politics

Ruth Bader Ginsburg also gains her right in politics as a woman. To be equal in politics means there is no difference between men and women. In political fields, Ruth has the opportunity to participate. Ruth gains the position that usually belongs to men. It is proof that women can also get positions in politics. As a woman, Ruth is seen as a real person where her existence and capability are respected. That can be known from the following dialogues and narrations.

THE REAL RUTH BADER GINSBURG (84), Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Taking her younger self's place, in a matching, contemporary outfit, she ascends the final steps. Fully the woman she set out to be. (*On the Basis of Sex* 01:53:09 – 01:53:27)

Often being underestimated by many institutions, Ruth proves that women could become something for society. Ruth is now the Associate Justice of the U.S Supreme Court. She becomes one real example that women can also be participate in the political sphere. She gets the same political rights as men, and she could achieve something that usually belongs to men. Ruth has the same opportunity to join in politics as men. This is proof that society allows women to be active in the public sphere. Society gives permission to women so they can join themselves in politics.

On June 14, 1993, **President Bill Clinton nominated Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the U.S. Supreme Court.** The Senate

confirmed her nomination: 96-3. (*On the Basis of Sex* 01:54:15 – 01:54:30)

After the all the efforts that Ruth made, she is finally nominated by U.S President Bill Clinton to the Supreme Court, the positions that are usually attempted by men. In this case, society gives women the same chance in politics as they give to men. Ruth becomes an icon in society. She has the same opportunity to gain the position in politics, something that usually happens to men.

B.6. Equal Rights and Opportunity in Social

“Liberal feminism targets the elimination of inequality between women and men in legal, political, social, and educational settings” (Worrell 430). As a woman in society, Ruth has contributed a lot of effort and significant results. Ruth has been fighting for gender rights and equality. She gains her rights to appeal in court and utter her ideas in front of the judges. Those efforts bring significant results that are beneficial for society. Therefore, Ruth gets a position in society due to her service. That can be seen from the following narration.

As Director of the ACLU’s Women’s Rights Project, **Ruth Bader Ginsburg became the leading gender rights lawyer of her generation, winning several landmark cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.** (*On the Basis of Sex* 01:53:33 – 01:53:44)

Ruth becomes the director of the ACLU Women’s Rights Project and leading gender rights lawyer of her generation. She also wins several landmark

cases in the U.S Supreme Court. That is proof that as a woman she brings good impact for people around her, in this context, means she is also participating in the social world. Society is giving women places so they can develop themselves and they could be useful for people around them. Women's capability could be seen as equal to men, and Ruth is one of those women.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

This study describes the characterization of the main character in Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie using characterization theories such as Christopher Russel Reaske's, Joseph M. Boggs's, as well as James H. Pickering and Jeffry D. Hoeper's. The result of the analysis found that Ruth is smart, critical, tough, hard worker, confident, attentive, and independent. The dialogue, appearance, and language reveal Ruth's characterization, which is smart. She speaks brilliantly, in good, arranged words and language. The way she dresses also depicts her intelligence. Ruth is also a critical person that can be proved by the dialogue and action she has done through the story. She thinks far ahead and responds the arguments as if she does not want to be defeated.

Moreover, she is also a tough woman. The way she speaks with other characters about not giving up or that she is at her full will depict her characterization. As a woman, Ruth is also hardworking. She studies really hard and achieves two law reviews both in Harvard and Columbia. Also, Ruth is confident, attentive, and independent. She never hesitates to do something because she believes in herself. She minds every little detail about a case and never misses a thing. Being a woman does not make her dependent on men. She is an independent woman who could do anything by herself.

Also, this study analyzes the liberal feminism that occurs through Mimi Leder's *On the Basis of Sex* Movie depicted on Ruth Bader Ginsburg as the main character using certain theories of liberal feminism such as ones from Rosemarie Putnam Tong, Judith Worrell, and Nurul Hanifah et al. Based on their respective, it can be concluded that the goals of liberal feminism are freedom and individuality as well as equal rights and opportunity in education, economy, legal, politics, and social settings. Ruth Bader Ginsburg gains freedom and individuality in her life. She has freedom to choose and do something that she likes without any oppression and control from society.

She also has her right and opportunity as a woman in numerous aspects of life. For instance Ruth gets the same opportunity as men to gain higher education in Harvard law school. In economic fields, Ruth has the same chance as men to earn her own money. She has a daily job and gets a position at work. Furthermore, in legal settings Ruth has the same right to appeal, represent her client, and speak in front of judges in court. She was also nominated by United States President Bill Clinton to the U.S. Supreme Court until she becomes the Associate Justice, are proof that Ruth has gained the opportunity to participate in politics. Last, Ruth becomes the leading gender rights lawyer of her generation and wins numerous landmark cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. That means she brings a good impact for people around her. She has a role in society.

B. Suggestion

There are several suggestions that can be given to the readers based on this study. First, liberal feminism theory by Rosemarie Putnam Tong could be applied

to other movies such as *Suffragette* (2015) by Sarah Gavron. Second, *On the Basis of Sex* (2018) by Mimi Leder also can be analyzed using another theory such as gender discrimination. Last, *On the Basis of Sex* movie can be used as an object of analysis by discussing other branch of feminism depicted on Jane Ginsburg who is frequently seen during the movie.



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