

THE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S PRIVILEGES IN THE "ANGELS AND DEMONS" MOVIE USING THE THEORY OF FEMINISM APPROACH

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Abstract

Penelitian ini berfokus kepada identifikasi masalah Analisis Keistimewaan Perempuan Dalam Film *Angels and Demons*. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan feminisme. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskripsi kualitatif. Metode pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini adalah menonton film dan membuat catatan. Adapun data pada penelitian ini diperoleh dari dua sumber, yakni data primer dan sekunder. Film *Angels and Demons* adalah sumber data utama (primer), sedangkan data sekunder diperoleh dari buku, artikel ilmiah, kisah hidup, film lain yang relevan, dan referensi virtual. Penelitian ini memiliki tujuan untuk mengidentifikasi keistimewaan perempuan dalam cerita. Hasil penelitian yang didapat adalah sebagai berikut: keistimewaan perempuan tampak dari Vittoria Vetra sebagai tokoh di dalam film yang menonjolkan kemampuan intelektual, kekuatan, dan kemandirian. Interaksinya dengan tokoh utama, Robert Langdon, menunjukkan kemitraan yang setara, di mana kontribusinya sangat dihargai dan dihormati.

Kata Kunci: Pendekatan Feminisme, Vittoria Vetra, *Angels and Demons*, Keistimewaan Perempuan.

Abstract

This research focuses on identifying the issues related to the analysis of women's privileges in the *Angels and Demons* movie. The theory applied in this study is the feminist approach. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method. The data collection method involves watching the film and taking notes. The data in this study were obtained from two sources: primary and secondary data. The *Angels and Demons* movie serves as the primary data source, while the secondary data were gathered from books, scholarly articles, biographies, other relevant films, and virtual references. The objective of this research is to identify the privileges of women within the narrative. The findings of the study are as follows: women's distinctiveness is evident in the character of Vittoria Vetra, who stands out for her intellectual abilities, strength, and independence. Her interactions with the main character, Robert Langdon, illustrate an equal partnership, where her contributions are highly valued and respected.

Keywords: Feminist Approach, Vittoria Vetra, *Angels and Demons*, Women's Privileges.

1. INTRODUCTION

The influence of mass media on societal perceptions of gender cannot be overstated. In today's rapidly advancing technological landscape, films serve as a powerful medium for disseminating information and shaping cultural norms. 'Angels & Demons,' directed by Ron Howard, offers a unique opportunity to explore the depiction of women's privileges through a feminist lens. This paper aims to critically analyze these portrayals to understand their implications on gender roles and power dynamics.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

This study explores the representation of feminism in the film *Angels & Demons* through various feminist perspectives. Feminism serves as a broad theoretical framework that critically analyzes gender roles, power dynamics, and the representation of women in media. The framework incorporates several feminist theories, including liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, psychoanalytic and gender feminism, existentialist feminism, postmodern feminism, multicultural and global feminism, and ecofeminism.

1.2 Feminist Theories

1.2.1 Liberal Feminism emphasizes achieving gender equality through legal reforms and policy changes. This perspective focuses on securing equal rights and opportunities for women in public spheres such as education, employment, and politics. Advocates argue that women should have the same legal rights and protections as men, aiming to eliminate gender discrimination within existing social structures (McRobbie, 2008). The theory highlights the importance of individual autonomy and the belief that women should have the freedom to pursue their own happiness without societal restrictions (Kumar Mohajan, 2022).

1.2.2 Radical Feminism aims to tackle the root causes of women's oppression, attributing it to deeply entrenched patriarchal systems that permeate every aspect of society. Radical feminists argue that

societal structures, such as the family and institutions, inherently oppress women by maintaining male dominance. They advocate for a fundamental restructuring of these systems to liberate women from subjugation (Dewi & Medina, 2020). This theory challenges both the symptoms of gender inequality and the foundational ideologies that sustain patriarchal control.

1.2.3 Marxist Feminism explores the intersection of capitalism and patriarchy, asserting that economic exploitation is a significant factor in women's oppression. According to this theory, the capitalist system benefits from and perpetuates gender inequality by exploiting women's labor, both in the domestic sphere and in the workforce. Marxist feminists argue that true gender equality can only be achieved by dismantling capitalist structures that uphold gendered economic disparities (Dewi & Medina, 2020).

1.2.4 Psychoanalytic and Gender Feminism delve into the psychological and cultural construction of gender. This perspective examines how unconscious processes and early childhood experiences shape gender identity and roles. Psychoanalytic feminists explore the ways in which patriarchal culture influences the formation of gendered identities, often focusing on the internalization of gender norms and the psychological impact of gendered socialization (Zhou et al., 2023).

1.2.5 Existentialist Feminism emphasizes individual autonomy and the importance of personal choice in overcoming gender oppression. This perspective argues that women must assert their agency and reject societal expectations that limit their potential. Existentialist feminists focus on the need for women to define themselves rather than being defined by traditional gender roles imposed by society (Irshad & Yasmin, 2022).

1.2.6 Postmodern Feminism critiques the notion of a universal female experience, emphasizing the diversity of women's experiences across

different cultures, classes, and identities. Postmodern feminists argue that gender is not a fixed category but a fluid and socially constructed concept. They challenge essentialist views of gender and advocate for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of women's experiences (Irshad & Yasmin, 2022).

1.2.7 Multicultural and Global Feminism highlight the importance of considering race, ethnicity, and cultural context in feminist analysis. These perspectives recognize that women's experiences are shaped by multiple intersecting identities, including race, class, and nationality. Multicultural and global feminists advocate for an intersectional approach to gender analysis that takes into account the different ways in which various forms of oppression intersect and reinforce each other (Irshad & Yasmin, 2022).

1.2.8 Ecofeminism connects the exploitation of women with the degradation of the environment, arguing that both are products of patriarchal systems that prioritize domination and control. Ecofeminists advocate for a holistic approach to social justice that includes both gender equality and environmental sustainability. This perspective highlights the interconnectedness of all forms of oppression and calls for a radical rethinking of human relationships with nature and with each other (Irshad & Yasmin, 2022).

1.3 Application to *Angels & Demons*

The film *Angels & Demons* serves as a rich text for feminist analysis due to its complex portrayal of female characters and the interplay of power dynamics within its narrative. By applying these feminist theories, the study aims to uncover how the film constructs gender roles, represents women's privileges, and either reinforces or challenges patriarchal norms.

1.3.1 Character Analysis: The film's female characters are analyzed in terms of their agency, power, and independence. The study investigates whether these characters embody feminist ideals, such as gender equality and empowerment, or whether they are confined

to traditional gender roles. For example, the character of Vittoria Vetra in *Angels & Demons* can be examined through the lens of liberal feminism, which focuses on her autonomy and professional competence in a male-dominated field (Tong, 2010).

1.3.2 Narrative Structure: The research examines the film's storyline to determine how women's privileges are framed within the broader narrative. It explores how feminist themes are woven into the plot and whether the film advocates for or against gender equality. For instance, the film's portrayal of Vittoria as both a scientific expert and a partner in the male protagonist's journey may reflect elements of radical feminism, where traditional gender roles are challenged by showcasing women in positions of intellectual and physical authority (Dewi & Medina, 2020).

1.3.3 Cinematic Elements: The use of visual and thematic elements is analyzed to see how they contribute to the feminist critique. This includes the portrayal of women through cinematography, mise-en-scène, and dialogue, assessing how these elements support or undermine feminist perspectives. For example, the film's visual portrayal of Vittoria might be scrutinized for how it reinforces or subverts the male gaze, a concept frequently analyzed in feminist film theory (Zhou et al., 2023).

This theoretical framework provides a comprehensive approach to analyzing *Angels & Demons* from multiple feminist perspectives. By examining the film through these varied lenses, the study aims to reveal the complexities of gender representation and the extent to which the film aligns with or diverges from feminist ideals. The combination of different feminist theories allows for a nuanced critique of the film's portrayal of women, offering insights into how media can both challenge and perpetuate existing gender norms.

2 METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach using a descriptive method to explore the depiction of women's privileges in the film "Angels & Demons." By focusing on the social and symbolic representations within the film, the research delves into the nuances of character roles, interactions, and overarching themes that relate to feminist theory. The qualitative approach is particularly suited for examining complex social phenomena like gender roles, as it allows for the collection of rich narrative data, providing deep insights into the subject matter.

2.1 Data Sources

The research draws on both primary and secondary data sources:

2.1.1 Primary Data: The primary data were derived directly from the film "Angels & Demons." This involved a close examination of the film's narrative, character interactions, dialogues, and visual elements that contribute to the portrayal of women's roles and privileges. Multiple viewings of the film were conducted to ensure a comprehensive analysis, with significant scenes, dialogues, and character dynamics meticulously noted.

2.1.2 Secondary Data: Secondary data were gathered through a literature review, including books, academic journals, research papers, and scholarly articles that discuss feminist theory, gender representation in media, and the specific themes presented in "Angels & Demons." This provided a theoretical framework for the analysis, grounding the research findings in established feminist theories and supporting the interpretation of the primary data.

2.2 Data Collection Method

The data collection employed qualitative research techniques, including:

2.2.1 Film Analysis: A detailed analysis of "Angels & Demons" was conducted, focusing on specific scenes and dialogues that depict the roles and privileges of women. The researcher identified key moments that illustrate feminist themes through multiple viewings of the film.

2.2.2 Documentation: Significant scenes, character interactions, and dialogues relevant to the study were documented. This documentation helped track and analyze how women's privileges were portrayed throughout the film.

2.2.3 Literature Review: A comprehensive literature review was conducted alongside the film analysis to gather secondary data. This included reviewing relevant feminist theory, gender studies, and media representation of women, providing context for the film's portrayal of women within broader feminist discourses.

2.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis process consisted of several steps to ensure a thorough examination of the film's content:

2.3.1 Data Reduction: The researcher selected and focused on the most relevant data, simplifying and organizing the information to highlight key themes related to women's privileges. This involved filtering out less relevant details and concentrating on scenes and dialogues that best represented the feminist themes under investigation.

2.3.2 Data Display: The data were then organized and presented in a way that facilitated further analysis. This included creating matrices and charts to visually represent relationships between different elements of the film, such as character interactions and symbolic imagery.

2.3.3 Conclusion Drawing and Verification: The researcher drew conclusions from the analyzed data, verifying them through cross-referencing with the theoretical framework and existing literature on feminist theory and gender representation in media. This step ensured that the findings were valid and reliable, grounded in a systematic analysis of the film.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

In the findings, we will analyze: (1) The Privileges of Women in *Angels & Demons*: This includes examining pivotal scenes that illustrate Vittoria Vetra's significant professional authority and influence. Key moments, such as her introduction at CERN and her decisive leadership during the laboratory explosion, underscore her privileged status within a male-dominated field. These scenes showcase how the film positions women with equal opportunities and respect as men. Vittoria's ability to assert her expertise, take decisive actions, and lead effectively in a crisis highlights the film's portrayal of women as equally competent and influential in professional roles. This representation aligns with feminist principles by demonstrating that women can hold authoritative positions and exercise significant impact in their professional environments, thereby challenging traditional gender disparities.

(2) Reflection of Women's Privileges Through Feminist Analysis: This involves examining how Vittoria's character embodies women's privileges through her professional achievements and emotional resilience. Her partnership with Robert Langdon reflects mutual respect and collaboration, portraying her as an equal in their professional relationship. Additionally, her confrontations with church officials highlight her resistance to patriarchal authority and assertive knowledge, reinforcing feminist ideals. These interactions illustrate the film's alignment with feminist themes by portraying Vittoria as a capable and empowered figure who navigates and challenges patriarchal structures. Her character's ability to manage complex social hierarchies and assert her expertise in a male-dominated context serves as a testament to her privileged status, supporting themes of gender equality and resistance against traditional gender norms.

3.2 Discussions

The analysis of Vittoria Vetra's character in "*Angels and Demons*" offers profound insights into the film's alignment with and challenges to various feminist frameworks. This examination explores her portrayal

through the lenses of second-wave, third-wave, and radical feminism, highlighting the cultural and social implications and offering recommendations for future media representations.

Vittoria Vetra's character strongly aligns with the principles of second-wave feminism, which emphasizes gender equality in professional settings and the dismantling of systemic barriers that prevent women from reaching their full potential. Her role as a leading scientist in antimatter research is a clear representation of this feminist ideology. A pivotal moment in the film, where she takes decisive action during a laboratory explosion (Minute: 0:25:00), demonstrates her professional competence and leadership. Her command, "Everyone get out now! It's going to blow!" is not just a response to an emergency but a testament to her ability to lead under pressure. This portrayal reflects second-wave feminism's focus on recognizing women's capabilities in traditionally male-dominated professions.

Third-wave feminism, which addresses the diverse and intersectional experiences of women, is also reflected in Vittoria's character. Her emotional depth, particularly in response to her father's death (Minute: 0:18:00), adds a layer of complexity to her character. She expresses both grief and determination to continue her father's work, stating, "He was everything to me. This work, it's his legacy. I have to see it through." This moment captures the intersection of her personal and professional identities, aligning with intersectional feminist theories that emphasize the multifaceted nature of women's experiences. The film thus portrays her as a character whose strength is derived from both her intellectual prowess and emotional resilience, embodying the principles of third-wave feminism.

Moreover, the film challenges patriarchal structures, a central tenet of radical feminism. This is evident in Vittoria's confrontations with church officials, where she asserts her scientific knowledge against patriarchal authority (Minute: 1:30:00). Her statement, "With all due

respect, Father, this isn't just about faith. It's about science, and I know what I'm talking about," is a direct challenge to the traditional power dynamics that radical feminism seeks to dismantle. Vittoria's refusal to be marginalized highlights the film's engagement with feminist discourse on the need to confront and challenge patriarchal authority.

The cultural and social context of the film is also significant. Vittoria's role as a leading scientist reflects broader societal changes advocating for gender equality in traditionally male-dominated fields, particularly in STEM. Her partnership with Robert Langdon, characterized by mutual respect and collaboration (Minute: 0:20:00), further challenges traditional gender norms. However, the film also illustrates the persistent barriers women face in navigating patriarchal structures, as seen in Vittoria's interactions with church officials. This tension between progressive ideals and entrenched traditional power dynamics reflects the complex reality of women's experiences in contemporary society, demonstrating both the advancements and ongoing challenges in gender equality.

This research contributes to feminist discourse by offering a nuanced analysis of how mainstream films represent women. While Vittoria's character is portrayed with depth and complexity, there is a tendency in the film to position female characters in supporting roles to male protagonists. This insight underscores the need for media creators to develop narratives that place women at the forefront, showcasing them as leaders and primary agents of change. The film's depiction of Vittoria's resistance to patriarchal structures is a powerful example of how media can address and challenge traditional power dynamics, contributing to the broader feminist discourse on empowerment and equality.

To improve the representation of women in media, filmmakers and media creators should consider several recommendations. First, it is essential to highlight professional competence by depicting women in diverse roles that emphasize their expertise and contributions. Second,

ensuring equal partnerships in narratives where women and men collaborate as equals is crucial. This approach not only challenges traditional gender norms but also promotes gender equality. Third, filmmakers should incorporate storylines that allow female characters to challenge and navigate traditional power dynamics, reflecting the principles of radical feminism. Fourth, it is important to emphasize the emotional depth of female characters, showcasing the multifaceted nature of their experiences. Finally, promoting diverse representations that reflect the intersectionality of women's experiences is essential. This includes ensuring that portrayals in media reflect the diverse identities and challenges faced by women in different cultural and social contexts.

In conclusion, the portrayal of Vittoria Vetra in "Angels and Demons" offers valuable insights into feminist theories and the representation of women in media. While the film makes positive strides in portraying women as competent and equal partners, there is still a need for more narratives that place women at the center of the story. By continuing to challenge traditional gender norms and promote diverse representations, filmmakers can contribute to a more balanced and empowering portrayal of women in media.

4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that 'Angels & Demons' offers a nuanced depiction of women's privileges, blending elements of empowerment with traditional gender stereotypes. The film's portrayal of women reflects broader cultural tensions between the persistence of patriarchal norms and the push for gender equality. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics across different media and cultural contexts.

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