

# AN ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERIZATION AND LIBERAL FEMINISM VALUES OF THE MAIN CHARACTER "BELLE" IN THE *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* 2017 MOVIE

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## Abstract

This study analyzes the characterization and liberal feminism values of the main character in the 2017 film *Beauty and The Beast* by Bill Condon. Liberal Feminism is a goal that places a role in which women can enjoy total freedom and individual freedom. The primary source of this study is taken from movie and screenplay and subtitled. The secondary source of this study is taken from relevant books and the internet. The researcher uses feminist analysis, this analysis can be used to examine the type of film title "*Beauty and The Beast* 2017 film" which answers various evidence of a woman's struggle against her rights. The researcher selects research methods in *Beauty and The Beast* 2017 movie through qualitative methods: observation, document study, collection, identifying, and analyzing method used in this study is document study. The researcher explains how the character and characterization of the main character in the film, namely "Belle" is a representation of a woman who is a feminist. She refuses to be treated specially by a man named Gaston. Belle is able to show that she is a girl who can determine the future of her own love journey without depending on any man even though that man has power. After knowing about the character and characterization from the film, we can know the liberal feminist values occur in the film of *Beauty and The Beast* 2017. The researcher concludes that the characterization of Belle such as smart and progressive, independent, brave and decisive can determine the liberal feminist values contained in the 2017 film *Beauty and The Beast*.

**Keywords:** *Beauty and The Beast* 2017, Character and Characterization, Liberal Feminism Values

## INTRODUCTION

Women of the mid-19th century had no such choice. Most of them live in countries where conditions are no better than slavery. They do not have obedient men, because in most cases, men held all the resources and women have no independent means of subsistence. Girls receive less education, are prohibited from entering universities, and can only obtain low-paying jobs. A woman's sole purpose is to marry and reproduce. Most women had no choice but to marry and thus, everything they owned, inherited, and earned automatically belonged to their husbands. Under laws created exclusively by men, women have been reduced to the most abject condition of legal slavery in which a human being can be held.

As the perception of negative stereotypes towards women became more widespread, Disney finally negotiated feminist criticism and finally produced films that contained feminist elements in them. One of them is *Beauty and The Beast* 2017 movie. According to Hollows (2010) generally considers feminism to be a form of politics that has the aim of intervening in unequal relations between men and women. In general, the Disney film *Beauty and The Beast* 1991 and the film *Beauty and The Beast* 2017 are the same, only in the *Beauty and The Beast* 2017 movie, Linda Woolverton, a screenwriter for *Beauty and The Beast* in 1991, inserts the ethos of the women's liberation movement through the script she wrote for making the role of women more advanced.

In the film *Beauty and The Beast* 2017, the value of feminism is expressed in the determination of Belle, the main character in this film, who wants to change her destiny. In the *Beauty and The Beast* 2017 film there is a stream of liberal feminism which is currently one of the streams for feminists. Liberal feminism aims to place female characters who can enjoy overall and individual freedom. One example put forward by Sierra (2020), liberal feminism emerged in Western society from women's struggle for equal rights in all social, economic and institutional spheres, from suppressing labor discrimination to increasing their participation in public life.

Alison Jaggar in her book entitled *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* argues that in liberal thinking, a unique human trait is the ability to use reason. Another definition according to Tong (2010), liberal feminism developed from the 18th century. The feminist movement of this century holds the view that there is no difference between men and women. Women and men have the same right to education. The liberal feminist movement in the 19th century made many efforts to fight for women to have the same civil and economic rights

as men. In the 20th century, liberal feminism was involved in the creation of women's organizations to combat gender discrimination in the political, social, economic, and personal spheres.

This research has found similar research in previous studies. However, previous research has not focused on the values of liberal feminism or analysis of the characters and characterizations of the main characters in the *Beauty and The Beast 2017* film. The aim of this research is to determine the values of liberal feminism from the *Beauty and The Beast 2017* movie. According to Bailey (2016), Feminism Liberalism is a form of feminist theory that has been instrumental in fostering the women's rights movement and significant legal, educational, and policy initiatives that have advanced women's rights in diverse contexts grounded in the political tradition of liberalism. Liberal feminism emerged from the political philosophy of liberalism which centers on humans' capacity for rationality and reason and their nature. Primarily based on the explanation, the researcher was involved to research liberal feminist values in the main character "Belle" contained in a film entitled **"AN ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERIZATION AND LIBERAL FEMINISM VALUES OF THE MAIN CHARACTER "BELLE" IN THE BEAUTY AND THE BEAST 2017 MOVIE"**.

## METHODS

This research in this study is qualitative. Sugiyono (2016) explains that qualitative research methods are research methods used to examine the condition of natural objects where the researcher is the key instrument. This method tends to struggle with multiple interpretations. According to Creswell (2009) states that qualitative research is a study to investigate and understand the meaning of individuals or groups assumed to be a social or a human problem. Research should be designed to follow these steps, such as formulating the research problem, deciding the type of information to be presented, deciding on the data collection procedure, deciding on the procedure, data processing, and making research conclusions. *Beauty and The Beast 2017* movie is the subject of research released in 2017. The researcher selects research methods in *Beauty and The Beast 2017* movie through Qualitative methods: observation, document study, collection, identifying, and analyzing method used in this study is document study . The data is then interpreted with books, literature, journals on the internet, and any reference materials related to research. The final written report of this study consists of an introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion.

The focus of the research is a problem that becomes the goal of the research. In this study, the focus of the research is on the character and characterization in the *Beauty and The Beast 2017* movie, which will be analyzed using a liberal feminism approach.

The data source of this research from the *Beauty and The Beast 2017* movie. *Beauty and the Beast* is a 2017 musical fantasy film directed by Bill Condon from a screenplay written by Stephen Chbosky and Evan Spiliotopoulos, and produced by Walt Disney Pictures and Mandeville Films. This film is based on the 1991 Disney animated film of the same name which is an adaptation of the fairy tale by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont.

There are several methods of data collection in the qualitative method, such as interview, observation, collecting data, identify the data , identified the data and analyzes the data found in the movie. In this study, procedure of analyzing the data will do the following steps, they are:

- a. Observing the *Beauty and The Beast 2017* movie.
- b. The writer obtained the data by watching the video to be able to find out the points contained in the *Beauty and The Beast 2017* film. This activity is carried out by recording important things that are useful for research. Can be done several times to get maximum results.
- c. Collecting  
The author collects data by making notes on scenes that contain elements of liberal feminism and taking screenshots in the movie for further analysis.
- d. Identifying  
The writer identified the data found according to the case study.
- e. Analyzing  
The writer analyzes the data to find out the liberal feminism of the main character analysis in the *Beauty and The Beast 2017* movie. The next result will be written as the result of this research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### RESULTS

#### A. Data Description

##### 1. Characterization of Belle as The Main Character

After doing a deep examination, the writer finally finds some characterization of the main character which reflects the qualities to be a personhood. Belle is a smart woman whose thoughts are very brilliant. It is very reasonable if she becomes an inspiration for every woman in the whole world. Those characteristics are smart and progressive, independent, brave, a little decisive.

##### 2. Liberal Feminism Values in *Beauty and The Beast 2017* Movie

The following table gives some information about liberal feminist values in *Beauty and The Beast 2017* movie. Belle's character, who has a strong spirit to save her father, is without the slightest fear. Belle who can determine the future of her own love journey without depending on any man even though that man has power. The decision clarifies that the characteristics of Belle tend to liberal feminist values.

### DISCUSSIONS

#### A. Characterization of Belle as The Main Character

Characterizations are drawn by the author for developing narrative considering the authors' ideology, such as what the story is going to be. So the characters must be displayed clearly and easily understood, because the characters are the main icon to attract the audience's interest. Characterization is what is visible to the naked eye in character, such as a person's physical appearance, acting or character.

##### 1. Smart and Progressive

Belle is the definition of a charming woman in every way. She has progressive thought. Her paradigm is more moderate than the other in general, so it makes her very different at the time. This is proven by the following dialogue when she went to the library which was not far from her house to take one of the books to read. It has become Belle's hobby to read books from the library.



*Library Keeper* : "It is the only bookworm in this town. So, So, where did you running off to this week?"

*Belle* : "Two cities in Northern Italy. I don't want to go back! are you have place to go?"

*Library Keeper* : "I am afraid not. But you maybe re read old books that you like."

*Belle* : "Thank you. Your library makes our small town feel big. Good Bye"

(Duration 06.34 – 06.58, *Beauty and The Beast 2017*, 2017)

That's conversation explain that Belle really likes visiting the library. When leaving the library she also didn't forget to bring a book to read. This shows Belle as a smart person, she really likes reading and looking for new insights. When walking out of the library, many people were strange to see Belle who was always carrying books everywhere. In the Victorian era, almost all women did their household work in the traditional way, such as washing clothes only with their hands, while Belle, with all her intelligence, innovated a clothes laundry machine with the help of a horse to grind her clothes which were placed in a washing barrel/bucket. This shows that there is a dynamic woman who actively runs in the public sphere, but the population is in the domestic sphere.

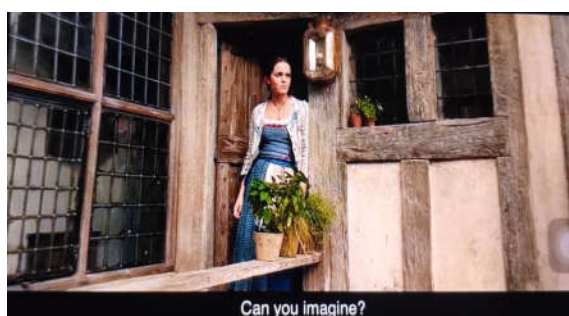
Belle is a smart woman, she also often helps her father with work such as making musical instruments or antiques to sell. When Belle and Maurich are locked up by Gaston in a horse-drawn carriage in a tense

situation, Maurice looks for a way to open the lock with a small and sharp tool. Before Maurice had finished saying this, Belle, with her intelligence, immediately gave him a hair pick/hair clip which had an oval shape, was thin and had a sharp tip. Immediately, Maurice fell silent and felt proud of Belle's attitude, who was smart and always responsive in any situation.

## 2. Independent

In the patriarchal family, a woman does not have the freedom to determine what she wants to choose. Women are entitled to a will of their own, for they must obey their parents in childhood, their husbands when they marry and their children when they grow up. From this illustration, it can be assumed that women under patriarchal culture do not have the authority to determine anything in her life. A daughter must be obedient to her father's will. And a wife must wait on hands and feet to her husband but Belle is a different woman. She shows that she can be an independent woman who can determine her life and choose whatever she wants.

According to patriarchal families and existing customs, a respectable family will provide a good suitor for girls. Generally the consideration received is inheritance and wealth. But unlike Belle, she rejected Gaston to become her husband. Even though Gaston is a former member of the army and his name is already well known in Villeneuve, Belle remains adamant. Belle remains an independent woman. She has her own that she wants to spend the rest of her life with the man who loves her and she loves.



*Belle : "I'm not simple, I'm sorry Gaston."*

*[...]*

*Belle : (singing) "Can you imagine, Me? The wife of that boorish, brainless" (while looking at Gaston)  
(Duration 17.52-17.58, Beauty and The Beast 2017, 2017)*

From those words explain that Belle is an independent woman to decide her life. She always takes her own decisions and does not be influenced by Gaston. Even though Gaston is handsome, famous, rich, and also good at fighting, Belle still chooses her own choices in determining her life and love journey.

## 3. Brave

As an independent, strong and noble-hearted woman. Belle is famous for her attitude of always daring to save anyone. Belle's journey to the Beast's palace to save her father, she passes through a forest which is mostly inhabited by wolves.



*Belle : "Papa, is that you?"*

*Maurice : "Belle, how did you find me?"*

*Belle : "Your hands are ice. We need to get you home."*

*Maurice : "Belle, you must leave me here at once! This castle is alive. Now go before he finds you!"*

*Belle : “who?”  
(The Beast growling)*

(Duration 28.29 – 28.45, *Beauty and The Beast* 2017)

That conversation explains that Belle was very brave to save her father even though on the other hand she was also in a dangerous position.

An unyielding and brave attitude is also shown in the film *Beauty and The Beast*, which begins when Belle is expelled by the Beast because she was caught entering an area she shouldn't have entered, namely the Beast's room. Belle, taking her horse, decided to go home, but on the way there was a group of wolves trying to pounce on Belle. Maurice is a father who loves and is proud of his daughter. Maurice and Belle have spent so much time because they are the only two living together, making Maurice really know the figure of his only daughter. When Belle and Maurice try to get out of the place of confinement, with intelligence Belle helps her father open the lock using a hairpin. They both managed to get out and it wasn't long before the guards realized that Maurice and Belle had actually managed to get out. At that time, the guard was silent as he watched Belle leave the village on horseback. At that time, Maurice firmly said that his daughter was a brave and strong woman.

#### 4. Decisive

Decisive is a capability to determine something quickly and with confident. In the patriarchal culture, an authority to settle on something is not for woman. Belle also shows that woman does not need to think too much but woman can decide quickly and effectively. She proves that not only man who can improve their logical reasoning but woman also can do it.



*Belle : “What happen? Where is papa? Take me to him!” (make conversation with horse)  
(Duration 26.30 – 26.37, *Beauty and The Beast* 2017, 2017)*

Belle was quick and responsive when she found out that her father was in danger after finding out that her father had not returned home with her father's favorite horse. Her decision to save her father who was locked up by the Beast for stealing a rose was a realization of her decisive nature.

Belle returns to her hometown to save her father who is imprisoned by Gaston and the local residents with the permission of the Beast. At that time, Belle's decisive attitude was seen again when she bravely defended the Beast because Gaston and the local residents claimed that the Beast was an evil monster and had to be destroyed.

Having been locked up for a long time with her father, Belle and Maurice were finally able to get out of the place where she and her father had been locked up. Belle quickly and responsively ran to save the Beast from Gaston's attack.

#### **B. Liberal Feminism Values in *Beauty and The Beast* Movie**

Liberal feminism values of the main character in the film *Beauty and The Beast* 2017 such as taking part in the public sphere, little androgyny, commits to marry with man and it will be explained in the following analysis.

##### 1. Taking Part In Public Sphere

The setting of the 2017 film *Beauty and The Beast* is France. Related to the momentum of the French Revolution in 1789; ideas to eliminate injustice in society began to emerge. The ideas include criticism of the elimination of differences in class, race, gender, etc. In the 19th century, feminism had become a movement that received much attention from white women in Europe. Feminism criticizes women's work in

the domestic sphere as irrational, emotional and tyrannical so that women can take part in the public sphere. Criticism of tyranny appears sporadically. Despite these changes, throughout the nineteenth century, most married women remained at home. Women of the mid-19th century had no such choice. Almost in Europe Family are under of patriarchal culture. A daughter must obey all her father's orders, a wife only has to obey her husband, and so women at that time did not have many choices to achieve their freedom to determine their own destiny.

At the time, people often looked down on women who decided not to get married. People thought unmarried women couldn't do more than attend tea parties and smile at boring conversations. Good women are those who obey their parents, especially their father, a good wife is someone who can do all the household work well. they have to handle all aspects of family life but that does not mean that they do it alone. Middle to upper class families usually have several housemaids to do the housework. Those women must take care of her body in order to keep her physique stays good looking. They should not be exposed to direct sunlight to keep their skin white and awake. They also have to always dress up to keep their appearance beautiful and charming.

At that time, it was very difficult for women to get a decent education because at that time women were not at the same level as men. In contrast to Belle with her intelligence she still tries to find new insights and new inspiration through the books she always takes from the library in her village. At the time, Belle is an iconic woman who is capable of thinking progressively, elegantly and smartly.



*The girls in the village : “Look there she goes A girls’s who’s strange but special. A most peculiar mademoiselle. It’s a pity and a sin. She does ’not quite fit in. But she is really funny girl, a beauty but a funny girl. She really a funny girl. That Belle” (while looking at Belle)*

*Belle : (Belle continued walking while reading her book)  
(Duration 09.47 - 10.08, Beauty and The Beast 2017, 2017)*

Even though many neighbors felt strange about her behavior because she liked reading books rather than selling or doing anything like other girls, this didn't make Belle feel angry or annoyed. She kept going and did whatever she wanted.

According to *A Vindication of the Right of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft in the Encyclopedia of Feminism says that equality of right and opportunities should be extended to woman in all areas of life. Another explanation is that women should have opportunities in all sectors such as economics, politics and social life. Liberal feminism frequently criticizes family institutions which symbolizes patriarchal culture but they prefer living with marriage. In the film *Beauty and The Beast 2017*, the characteristics of Belle are reflected liberal feminist values very much. Belle shows that could be a pioneer for women to come up from the tyranny of family.

## 2. Little Androgyny

Liberal feminism in the twenty century explains that women are supposed to make some variations between good masculine values and good feminine values. Woman can lead her life up to the better quality by the variation. Belle was successful in applying the little androgyny. She combines her masculine side with her feminine side so she is impressed as a woman who is beautiful, classy, but she can decide something firmly.

The good feminine values such as gentleness, kind hearted, confident, etc. reflect in the characteristics of Belle. However, in her characterization also reflects good masculine values such as independent, brave, firm, rational thought, decisive, etc. By combining those values, Belle can achieve towards the needs fulfillment of both public and domestic spheres. She fairly considers the domestic sphere as something which can be handled quickly and efficiently. And she also considers the public sphere as a part of her life but not his whole life.



*Belle : “Papa, is that you?”*

*Maurice : “Belle, how did you find me?”*

*Belle : “Your hands are ice. We need to get you home.”*

*Maurice : “Belle, you must leave me here at once! This castle is alive. Now go before he finds you!”*

*Belle : “who?”*

*(The Beast growling)*

*(Duration 28.29 – 28.45, Beauty and The Beast 2017)*

This scene explains that Belle has an androgynous side to her, namely the courage that men have in her. Belle tries to save her father even though his life is threatened.

The qualities of her characteristics show the perfect arrangement between the good values of feminine and good values of masculine. In the previous analysis there are 4 characteristics of her such as smart and progressive, independent, brave, and also decisive. These characteristics can be hardly found in the stereotype of women of the time. Her polite behavior impresses many people in her surroundings. Logical thinking can be successful in the public sphere. Belle can show that she can be a confident woman, take part in social life, and have a kind heart which enables her to achieve self-fulfillment not only in the public sphere but also in the domestic sphere.

According to (1992) Dagum in his book *Masculine dan Feminine* describes the differences of both characteristics. Those differentiations can be studied in the table below.

No	Women	Man
1	Have no freedom	Freedom
2	Emotional	Unemotional
3	Indecisive	Decisive
4	Unconfident	Confident
5	Illogical thinking	Logical thinking
6	Talkative	Reticent
7	Polite	Rude
8	Like literature and fiction etc	Do not like literature and fiction

From the table, there are obvious differences between the good values of feminine and the good values of masculine. Belle has the good values of masculine such as points 1,2,3,4,5 and 6. Belle also has the good values of feminine such as polite and like literature and fiction. From the explanation draws that Belle succeeds applying a little androgyny. The style of androgyny gives her wide opportunities so she can achieve her needs in the public sphere and in the domestic sphere.

### 3. Commits to Marry With Man

From the beginning of the story, it has been explained that Belle lives in a village where most women prefer men. In European society, it was often thought that women were always below men and that women would be nothing if there were no men. However, this does not apply to Belle that women have an equal level of intelligence or can even be superior to men. Belle was able to innovate a laundry machine with the help of pets. This is a very smart idea but not all villagers are able to do it. Liberal feminism states that there is gender injustice which is constructed by both social and cultural. Belle, from the beginning of the story, has shown her dislike for a man who likes her. The man's name was Gaston, who was very famous, rich, good at fighting, and also brave. Different from Belle that She firmly rejects Gaston's proposal and says she is not interested in Gaston. At the time, in the patriarchal family, a woman does not have the freedom to

determine what she wants to choose. Women are entitled to a will of their own, for they must obey their parents in childhood, their husbands when they marry and their children when they grow up. From this illustration, it can be assumed that women under patriarchal culture do not have the authority to determine anything in her life. In the 2017 film *Beauty and The Beast*, the figure of Belle is not included in the patriarchal family. She is able to find and determine her own life and love.

The situation that makes Belle have to live with the Beast in a magnificent palace makes the love between the two of them grow without realizing it, the Beast realizes that he is just an ugly man who might have difficulty finding a woman who sincerely loves him. They met every day until one day Belle was forced to be thrown out of the palace by the Beast because she was caught entering the Beast's room without permission. Belle was confronted by a group of wolves who wanted to pounce on Belle and Belle tried to protect herself by fighting the wolves as best she could, until when Belle was about to be attacked by a wolf, the Beast came to save Belle from the wolves. The wolf was so hungry that the Beast's back shoulder was scratched. Since that incident, the two of them have become closer and without realizing it, love has grown between them.

The day the Beast was shot multiple times and killed by Gaston witnessed the love story of Belle and the Beast.



*Belle: "Come back, please don't leave me, I love you." (Looking at The Beast)  
The Beast: (looks lifeless in Belle's lap)  
(Duration 01.52.10- 01.52.18, Beauty and The Beast 2017, 2017)*

Belle, who declares her love for the Beast, allows the Beast to come back to life and become a handsome prince again. This explains that Belle was able to commit to marry with a man, by convincing herself to love the man of her choice and confessing her love first to the man, namely Beast.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### A. Conclusion

Liberal feminism can be seen in various literary media, one of which is films. Based on the results of the study found, the main character in the film can determine the liberal feminist genre contained in a film. Feminism Liberalism is a form of feminist theory that has been instrumental in fostering the women's rights movement and significant legal, educational, and policy initiatives that have advanced women's rights in diverse contexts grounded in the political tradition of liberalism. The result of this discussion is that the main character has a feminist spirit within her. Where the characterization of the main character can determine the value of liberal feminism. the data used in the analysis is taken from *Beauty and The Beast 2017* movie. These are the several findings in this analysis.

The answer to the first question is about the characterization of the main character "Belle" based on the film was smart and progressive, independent, brave, and decisive. Belle is the definition of a charming woman in every way. She has progressive thought. Belle really likes reading and even always goes to the library near her house. Belle was cleverly able to make a clothes washing machine with the help of animals (sheep) to make her job easier. Belle is a different woman, she shows that she can be an independent woman who can determine her life and choose whatever she wants. She rejects Gaston's love and prefers to determine her own love story. As an independent, strong and noble-hearted woman. Belle is famous for her attitude of always being online to save anyone. In the patriarchal culture, the authority to settle on something is not for women. Belle also shows that woman does not need to think too much but woman can



decide quickly and effectively. She proves that not only men can improve their logical reasoning but women can also do it.

The answer to the second question, the researcher found out liberal feminist values of the main character "Belle" is taking part of the public sphere, little androgyny, and commitments to marry with man. Belle is an iconic woman who is capable of thinking progressively, elegantly and smartly. Even though many neighbors felt strange about her behavior because she liked reading books rather than selling or doing anything like other girls, this didn't make Belle feel angry or annoyed. She kept going and did whatever she wanted. Belle always teaches small children to read books, helps her father with his work, namely making unique crafts to sell at the market. Woman can lead her life up to the better quality by the variation. Belle was successful in applying the little androgyny. She combines her masculine side with her feminine side so she is impressed as a woman who is beautiful, classy, but she can decide something firmly. The style of androgyny gives her wide opportunities so she can achieve her needs in the public sphere and in the domestic sphere. Women under patriarchal culture do not have the authority to determine anything in their lives. In the 2017 film *Beauty and The Beast*, the figure of Belle is not included in the patriarchal family. She is able to find and determine her own life and love. Belle is not tempted by Gaston's advances in wanting to make her his wife. Belle is not tempted by Gaston's wealth, greatness or even arrogance. Belle was able to commit to marry with a man, by convincing herself to love the man of her choice and confessing her first love to the man, namely Beast.

From the analysis is the above, the researcher concludes that the characterization of Belle such as smart and progressive, independent, brave and decisive can determine the liberal feminist values contained in the 2017 film *Beauty and The Beast*.

#### **B. Suggestion**

This research, the researcher uses feminist analysis. The researcher found out the characterization of the main character then we can know liberal feminist values occur in the film *Beauty and The Beast 2017*. Therefore, the researcher hopes that this research gives the benefit and insight others who are interested in *Beauty and The Beast 2017* move, also interested in analyzing liberal feminist values. In addition, the researcher hopes the next can provide better elaboration and explanations. So, the researcher hopes this research gives many lessons and becomes a reference for other researchers about liberal feminist values.

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