

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The acceptance of women, especially in America has drastically changed over the centuries. This change of perspective has also influenced the image of women's representation in popular media as society has embraced it. Even in the male-dominated field such as the military, the role of women has been considered and received generally. This representation can be identified in the newest Top Gun movie, *Top Gun: Maverick* directed by Joseph Kosinski. The appearance of some women characters can be considered to have reached gender equality in the movie.

Gender equality that appears in the movie can be seen by one specific character, Natasha 'Phoenix' Trace. Phoenix is an interesting character to discuss. As the writer considers, Phoenix is portrayed as a feminist equalizer in the movie, signifying how women have attained equality with men and as a woman who is viewed as an autonomous individual. The author applies a few theoretical frameworks to explain the equality she has attained. The adoption of the concepts of Kevin McDonald and Simone de Beauvoir led the writer to discuss the character of Phoenix from feminist and film perspectives.

On one hand, to describe Phoenix's character as a pilot, the writer combines Kevin McDonald's feminist film theory perspective and Barsam & Monahan's elements of film notion. As a pilot, Phoenix has certain characteristics that best display her

representation of equality. Her nickname, Phoenix, which is agreed upon by the other pilots is the portrayal of her characteristics. She is a hard worker, brave, talented, and smart pilot. She functions as a protagonist supporting character who still manages to remain a great pilot even though she is a woman. It shows that her gender does not affect anything for her as a pilot.

On the other hand, the writer also discusses the equality that Phoenix achieves as a pilot by drawing on the existentialist feminism of Simone de Beauvoir. The primary topics of discussion surrounding de Beauvoir's feminism are women's subordinate status in society, their lack of access to resources, and their lack of decision-making authority. According to de Beauvoir, women ought to be treated on an equal footing with men and be permitted to work, pursue an education, participate in social reform, and reject being others. Phoenix has attained every equality benchmark set forth by de Beauvoir. She is granted equality in that she can work as a fighter jet pilot, attend Top Gun Academy, express her opinions and make decisions that benefit her surroundings, and reject her otherness by rising to the position of leader or main pilot, and complete the final mission with a man in her backseat.

Based on the correlation between the two results, it can be said that Phoenix promotes gender equality for women. In all of the theories used, women are still seen traditionally, such as inferior, objects, and can be controlled by men, while the image of Phoenix is the antithesis of this. She met all the requirements to be on par with men, making her the movie's image of a feminist equalizer. Every aspect of Phoenix thus

reflects the strength of equality in an equal manner. Each component explains how Phoenix is a feminist equalizer in its own unique way. Phoenix resonates with de Beauvoir's ideal of overcoming old gender categories, and her appearance and performance in "*Top Gun: Maverick*" show how gender equality can be accomplished when individuals are judged by their abilities and contributions rather than their gender.

In addition to having a compelling fictional plot, amazing cinematic effects, and fantastic action sequences, the movie is highly entertaining and serves educational purposes by demonstrating that, despite being a traditionally male-dominated field, women can succeed in and hold positions as fighter jet pilots in the modern era. The writer supposes that this film is intended for general audiences, meaning that anyone can enjoy it, whether they are fans of the first *Top Gun* movie or general movie lovers. This writer believes that there is no age restriction on this movie, even though it has a feminist message. The intimate moments between other characters may warrant the addition of an age restriction, but the delivery of feminism is implicit and cannot be fully understood in a single watching. Rather, Phoenix can be seen as an inspiration to follow because her excellent work and skills have allowed her to achieve a title in the military. In order to expand on the gender equality portrayal that has already been covered, the writer extends an invitation to other writers to explore further themes related to this film or character.