

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

Liberal feminism focuses on the rights of individuals and argues that women should have equal access to the same opportunities as men. A key principle of liberal feminism is the belief that traditional gender roles should not confine women but should be free to make personal and professional choices based on their abilities and desires, without societal or legal barriers (Tong, 2009:7). Liberal feminism stresses that achieving gender equality requires reforms in law, education, and society, aiming to create a system where women and men have equal opportunities (Tong, 2009:13).

In *Bridgerton* Season 1, the character of Eloise Bridgerton challenges the traditional gender norms of Regency-era society, where a woman's primary purpose was to secure marriage. Eloise, however, resists this expectation, seeking intellectual fulfillment and autonomy instead of conforming to the social pressure to marry. Her resistance to societal norms and her pursuit of education and self-actualization align with the ideals of liberal feminism, which advocates for women's right to define their paths in life, free from restrictive gender roles.

This thesis will analyze Eloise's character in *Bridgerton* Season 1 through the lens of Rosmarie Tong's theory of liberal feminism, focusing on how her actions reflect broader feminist concerns related to autonomy, self-determination, and the rejection of traditional gender roles. According to Tong, liberal feminism

emphasizes the importance of women's access to education, equal opportunities in the workplace, and political participation as fundamental steps toward achieving gender equality (2009:17). By examining Eloise's resistance to societal expectations, the study will highlight how her character embodies Tong's advocacy for women's equality in public and private spheres, particularly through her rejection of marriage as the ultimate goal for women and her pursuit of intellectual and social freedom. Eloise's desire to uncover Lady Whistledown's identity and her refusal to conform to the ton's marriage expectations reflect the liberal feminist ideals of independence and rationality.

Additionally, this thesis will apply cinematography theory by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson to further analyze Eloise's behavior. This theory helps to unpack how visual elements, such as framing, camera angles, and lighting, emphasize her defiance and feminist ideology, offering deeper insight into how her character's actions are portrayed on screen (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004:167). The use of strategic framing and composition often places Eloise on the margins of social gatherings, reinforcing her role as an outsider, challenging societal norms. Meanwhile, the lighting and color grading highlight the contrast between the rigid social expectations and Eloise's independent spirit, symbolizing her rejection of traditional roles.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

There are some research problems associated with writing this thesis, specifically:

1. What is the cause of Eloise Bridgerton to become a feminist in *Bridgerton* Season 1 (2020)?
2. What is the impact of Lady Whistledown's Society Paper shown by Eloise Bridgerton in *Bridgerton* Season 1 (2020)?
3. What movements are represented by Eloise Bridgerton as a liberal feminist in *Bridgerton* Season 1 (2020)?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the background of the study as well as the research problems discussed previously, this study's aims are:

1. To describe the causes that contribute to Eloise Bridgerton adopting a feminist stance in *Bridgerton*.
2. To describe the impact of Lady Whistledown's Society Paper on Eloise Bridgerton's perception of *Bridgerton*.
3. To describe the movement represented by Eloise Bridgerton as a liberal feminist.

### **1.4 Previous Study**

The previous study informs the writer about how similar studies have been conducted in the past with this study. *Bridgerton's* life has many aspects that can be discussed for the final thesis or research. There are several *Bridgerton*-related theses and articles, which can be found here:

First, the study entitled *Feminism Perspective on Bridgerton Drama Series*, written by Suzy Azeharie, Wulan Purnama Sari, and Lydia Irena from Tarumanagara University in 2022, describes the meaning of feminism in *Bridgerton*.

Second, the thesis *The Challenges of Gender Stereotype in the Netflix Series Bridgerton (2020)*, written by Fairuz Yumna Kresnanda in 2022, is about Eloise facing several gender stereotypical challenges because she was a woman, and that gender stereotypical challenges were influenced by her family's strict background regarding social roles.

Next, American Magazine published Simcha Fisher's article, Netflix's 'Bridgerton' is a feminist disaster. But it (almost) redeems itself on January 15, 2021. Fisher's articles will almost certainly include reviews and criticisms of the *Bridgerton* series. She claims that they use a lot of double standards in this series. The writing does not concentrate on a single character but on the overall story.

Next, on January 26, 2021, Mira S. Alpers's writing was published in the Harvard Crimson, entitled *We Deserve More Than Eloise Bridgerton*. Her article concerns Eloise Bridgerton, the second lead. She describes Eloise's characteristics and states that she wanted to wait for the next chapter of her life because it was time for her to debut.

Anna Wurm, a journalism student at Texas A&M University, wrote an article in 2021 titled *'Bridgerton' Uses A Feminist Lens On The Past To Comment On The Present*. In it, Wurm describes the entire *Bridgerton* series, focusing on the main character, Daphne Bridgerton.

Yuana Hanif Firdau, the sixth, from the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, published *A Pragmatic Study: The Expression of Refusal Found in Bridgerton TV Series* in 2021. It explains pragmatically that there are different types of rejection and different rejection strategies. Firdaus also explains the various expressions in *Bridgerton*.

The seventh previous study is a thesis compiled by Nadia Khairani Nazar of Sebelas Maret University Surakarta in 2021 titled *Women's Rights in Patriarchal Culture in Bridgerton Film Series*. The study describes how women were featured in texts and images in fulfilling women's rights in patriarchal culture in *Bridgerton*.

A Journal of Language and Literature written in 2021 by Rizqi Auliawati Putri, Nur Saktiningrum of Gadjah Mada University, the eighth previous study, entitled *Symbolic Annihilation Against Women's Existence in Bridgerton Series*. The journal revealed that the existence of women in the series was present as party victimization, omissions, and condemnation.

The next study, the ninth, is the thesis written by Rifka Kaisachuri Maulani of STBA-JIA titled *The Representation of Romanticism in Bridgerton Series 2020 Season 1* in 2022 analyzed and interpreted the elements and types of romance in all characters, events, and dialogues in the *Bridgerton Series*.

The last previous study, A Critical Analysis entitled *Hegemonic Masculinity and Gender Performance in Van Dusen's Bridgerton* in 2020 by Maruan Afras Naseh from Universitat de les Illes Balears. It talked about the character of Simon Bassett to illustrate gender performance's ambivalence and complexity.

The difference between previous studies and this study is that most of the existing studies analyze feminism in *Bridgerton* in general or focus on different characters, such as Daphne or Simon. In contrast, this study specifically focuses on Eloise Bridgerton. Secondly, none of the previous studies apply Rosemarie Tong's liberal feminism theory to analyze Eloise's character, whereas this study highlights how Eloise reflects liberal feminist values throughout *Bridgerton* Season 1. Third, although some studies mention gender issues or stereotypes, they do not analyze the causes that lead Eloise to adopt a feminist stance or the impact of Lady Whistledown's Society Papers on her perception of society, which are both central to this study. Lastly, this study incorporates cinematography analysis, which previous studies have not discussed. Therefore, while the previous studies provide valuable insights into feminism, gender performance, and female representation in *Bridgerton*, this research presents a more focused and unique contribution by combining liberal feminist theory and visual analysis to examine how Eloise Bridgerton embodies feminist values and challenges societal norms in the series.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

Based on the structure of this study, the analysis centers on Eloise Bridgerton, a supporting character in *Bridgerton* Season 1, and examines her characterization through the lens of liberal feminist theory, as constituted by Rosemarie Tong and further developed by other theorists. This analysis seeks to address three main research questions. By investigating these questions, this study aims to offer a new perspective on Eloise's character, exploring her feminist values and how they challenge societal norms within the series.

## **1.6 Writing Organization**

There are five chapters in this thesis proposal. Each of them will then be further divided into sub-chapters. The chapters are as follows:

1. **Chapter I: INTRODUCTION.** This chapter clarifies the background of the study, the research problems, the objectives, the previous studies, the scope of the study, and the organization of the thesis proposal.

2. **Chapter II: THEORY AND METHOD.** This chapter consists of theories and the methods used to analyze the novel.

3. **Chapter III: RESULT AND DISCUSSION.** This chapter discusses the novel's intrinsic and extrinsic elements, which are used as the object of study to answer the research problems.

4. **Chapter IV: CONCLUSION.** This chapter presents the conclusions of the analysis in the preceding chapter.

## **REFERENCES**