CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This chapter discusses the theories used to analyze the problems stated in Chapter I. The discussion is divided into two sections: intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements.

2.1.1 Intrinsic Element

According to Wellek and Warren, intrinsic elements refer to the interpretation and analysis of literature as a self-contained structure (1956:139). This section defines character and characterization, conflict, and setting.

2.1.1.1 Character and Characterization

Characters play a crucial role in literary works, whether in novels, short stories, or films. According to Wellek and Warren, the term character can mean both a figure in a literary work and the quality of being an individual person (1956:227). They emphasize that characters are fictional constructs, but they are designed to resemble real human beings in terms of personality, behavior, and values. Characters are not only vital for narrative progression, but also serve as mediums to convey moral, philosophical, or ideological concerns. As they assert, a character in literature can embody an idea, a moral attitude, or a social posture (Wellek & Warren, 1956:231).

Characterization, as explained by Wellek and Warren, is the process by which the author creates a character, making the reader aware of the moral and emotional qualities of the figure in the narrative (1956:229). This process can be

done directly, through descriptive passages or narration, and indirectly, through a character's dialogue, actions, and how they are perceived by other characters. Wellek and Warren also highlight that character can be shown through action, speech, and the reaction of others in the story (1956:228–229). These layers help build a multi-dimensional character whose values and beliefs can be analyzed contextually.

Furthermore, they argue that the way characters are shaped is never isolated from the structure of the narrative and the broader thematic framework of the text. As they state, a character in a novel or a drama is not an imitation of a person, but rather a construct within the artistic totality of the work (Wellek & Warren, 1956:231). This perspective is applied to analyze Eloise Bridgerton as not just a fictional figure, but as a symbolic representation of liberal feminist ideas embedded in the Bridgerton narrative.

2.1.1.2 Conflict

According to Wellek and Warren, conflict is a crucial element in narrative structures, as it drives the plot forward and creates tension, which ultimately leads to the climax (1956:217). They state that conflict is the clash of forces in a story, whether between characters or between the character itself and the world (Wellek & Warren, 1956:217). Conflict can be either external, involving a struggle with outside forces, or internal, reflecting a psychological struggle within the character (Wellek & Warren, 1956:217). This type of conflict often revolves around personal doubts, fears, or ethical choices that shape a character's development.

External conflict, on the other hand, involves opposition between a character and an outside force, which can be another character, society, nature, or fate (Barnet et al., 2008:35). This type of conflict creates obstacles that the character must overcome to achieve their goals. External conflicts often reflect broader societal issues, power struggles, or cultural expectations that challenge the protagonist.

2.1.1.3 Setting

According to Wellek and Warren, setting is the environment in which the action takes place, including both physical and cultural surroundings (1956:221). They emphasize that setting is not merely decorative, but becomes an integral part of the narrative, shaping the course of events and reflecting the characters' inner states (Wellek & Warren, 1956:221). In literature, setting includes both the material world—such as place and time—and the social context, which may influence the character's behavior and development.

In this study, the analysis focuses on three types of setting: setting of place, setting of time, and setting of atmosphere. Although Wellek and Warren do not rigidly categorize them, their insights support this analytical breakdown. The setting of place, according to Wellek and Warren, reflects the actual spatial condition which provides the action its environment (1956:221). The setting of time involves the temporal background, whether historical or fictional, which situates the narrative in a specific moment or period (1956:222). Finally, the setting of atmosphere can be interpreted from their statement that setting is not passive; it evokes mood and tone, contributing to the artistic unity of the work (1956:221).

This reinforces how setting serves to immerse the audience emotionally and intellectually in the narrative world.

2.1.2 Extrinsic Element

Extrinsic studies relate literature to the social context and its historical development. In most cases, it serves as an explanation of the causes influencing literature, discussing its background and impact (Wellek and Warren, 1956:73). This section will discuss Feminism Theory, particularly liberal Feminism because Eloise Bridgerton often challenges societal norms and actively seeks equality within the rigid social structure of the Regency era.

Besides that, this section will discuss Cinematography Theory as a supporting framework for analyzing how visual elements contribute to the portrayal of feminist themes in *Bridgerton*. Key cinematic techniques such as Framing and Composition, Camera Angles, Lighting, and Color Grading are examined to highlight Eloise's characterization and her feminist stance. By combining Feminism Theory and Cinematography Theory, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how Eloise Bridgerton's character embodies liberal feminist values and how visual storytelling reinforces these themes.

2.1.2.1 Liberal Feminism

According to Tong, liberal feminism is rooted in the belief that women's inequality stems from legal and institutional barriers that hinder their access to the same rights and opportunities as men. It seeks to achieve gender equality through legal and

political reforms, focusing on areas such as education, employment, and civil rights (2009:11 38).

Tong explains that early liberal feminists, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill, argued that women's subordination was due to a lack of education and economic independence rather than innate inferiority. They advocated for equal educational and professional opportunities as a means of empowering women and ensuring their participation in public life (2009:15).

Tong emphasizes that education and access to knowledge are key factors in raising feminist consciousness. She states that without access to the same quality of education as men, women cannot expect to achieve equal standing in society (Tong, 2009:17). Additionally, Tong notes that exposure to influential feminist figures and networks plays a crucial role in shaping a woman's feminist perspective. Tong explains that women's growing awareness of gender-based oppression often leads to behavioral changes as they seek to assert their agency and independence (2009:22).

2.1.2.2 Cinematography Theory

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson define cinematography as the art and technique of capturing visual images on film or digital media to convey meaning, emotion, and narrative structure (2017:120-145). Their approach to cinematography emphasizes the interplay of framing, lighting, camera movement, and composition in shaping a film's visual storytelling.

One of the essential aspects of cinematography discussed by Bordwell and Thompson is framing and composition. The placement of characters within the frame directs audience attention and establishes relationships between them. For instance, deep focus cinematography keeps all elements sharp, allowing multiple layers of meaning in a scene, while shallow focus isolates a subject to highlight emotional or narrative significance (2017:140). Similarly, camera angles influence how a character is perceived—low angles make them appear dominant or determined, while high angles can make them seem vulnerable or powerless (Bordwell & Thompson, 2017:145).

Lighting and color are also key cinematographic tools. High-key lighting, often used in comedies and lighthearted dramas, creates a bright and optimistic tone, while low-key lighting, common in film noir, intensifies dramatic moments. Additionally, color grading helps convey emotion, with warm tones evoking comfort or nostalgia, while cooler tones suggest tension or isolation (Bordwell & Thompson, 2017:150).

2.1.2.2.1 Framing & Composition

Framing and composition are essential elements in cinematography that influence how a character is visually presented and perceived by the audience. According to Bordwell and Thompson (2004:190-193), framing refers to how the borders of the image define the spatial relationship between the subject and the surrounding environment.

Figure 1. Framming & Composition Low-angle shot (*Bridgerton* S1E1, 00:06:11)

The position of characters within the frame can convey social hierarchy, emotional distance, or power dynamics. Composition involves the arrangement of visual elements within the frame, including the balance between characters, objects, and background elements. A balanced composition can create a sense of harmony, while an unbalanced composition can emphasize conflict or isolation. Framing and composition help to direct the audience's focus and reinforce thematic elements within a narrative.

2.1.2.2.2 Camera Angles

Camera angles shape how a character is perceived by the audience and can reflect power dynamics within a scene. Bordwell and Thompson (2004:242-244) explain that a low-angle shot (positioning the camera below the character) makes the subject appear larger and more dominant, reinforcing their strength or authority.

Figure 2. Low-angle shot
(*Bridgerton* S1E3, 00:36:20)

Figure 3. High-angle shot
(*Bridgerton* S1E3, 00:36:34)

Conversely, a high-angle shot (positioning the camera above the character) makes the subject appear smaller and weaker, highlighting vulnerability or submission. A straight-on angle (placing the camera at the character's eye level) creates a sense of neutrality and equality. The deliberate choice of camera angles can reflect the psychological state of a character and their position within the social hierarchy.

2.1.2.2.3 Lighting & Color Grading

Lighting and color grading establish the mood and tone of a scene, influencing how the audience emotionally responds to the narrative. Bordwell and Thompson (2004:128-130) state that high-key lighting (bright and even illumination) creates an atmosphere of openness and clarity, often used in light-hearted or public settings.

Figure 4. Light and color grading (*Bridgerton* S1E2, 00:52:43)

In contrast, low-key lighting (with strong contrasts and deep shadows) generates a sense of mystery or tension, often associated with private or emotionally charged moments. Color grading involves adjusting the color palette of a scene to reinforce specific emotions or thematic contrasts. Warm tones (e.g., gold, red, and orange) create a feeling of comfort and intimacy, while cool tones (e.g., blue, green, and gray) evoke detachment and emotional distance.

2.2 Research Method

This chapter explains the research method used in this study. It consists of three sections: data and data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis methods.

2.2.1 Data and Data Source

Data refers to factual information that forms the foundation for forming opinions, statements, or research materials. It provides evidence that helps the writer solve the research problem. Data sources are classified into primary and secondary sources. According to Ary et al. (2014:472), a document written by someone with firsthand experience of the phenomenon under study is considered a primary source.

The primary data source for this study is the Netflix series *Bridgerton*, a British period drama set in the early 19th century. The series, produced by Chris Van Dusen, Shonda Rhimes, and Betsy Beers, is based on Julia Quinn's novels and premiered on December 25, 2020. Secondary sources include Rosemarie Tong's books on feminism, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's cinematography theory, literature studies by René Wellek and Austin Warren, and academic journals and websites.

2.2.2 Method of Collecting Data

This study employs the library research method, as the data sources include books, journals, and online materials. The writer accesses *Bridgerton* on Netflix and carefully watches the series multiple times to ensure accurate data collection for analysis. According to Creswell, library research involves collecting data from

various published sources such as books, academic journals, and credible online platforms to support a systematic investigation (2014:185). Relevant theoretical sources, including Rosemarie Tong's *Feminist Thought* (2009) and Bordwell and Thompson's *Film Art: An Introduction* (2004), are identified and gathered to support the primary data analysis. All collected data were compiled and examined using the selected analytical method.

2.2.3 Method of Analyzing Data

After collecting all the data, the writer follows the contextual method, which interprets data based on situational and cultural contexts. According to Given, the contextual method examines how social and historical settings influence the subject of study (2008:120). This study examines and describes feminist themes in *Bridgerton*, particularly Eloise Bridgerton's representation of liberal feminism. The analysis involves identifying relevant data related to Eloise's feminist movement, classifying data that aligns with the research focus, and applying relevant feminist theories to analyze the classified data. Finally, the findings are summarized and concluded based on the analysis. By structuring the research method concisely, this study ensures a clear and systematic approach to analyzing feminist representation in *Bridgerton*.