

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Feminism is the belief that women deserve equal social, economic, and political rights and freedoms. Over the years, feminism has focused on issues like the right to vote, reproductive and sexual freedom, and equal pay. Feminism has also explored racism, gender norms, self-expression, and much more. There are a lot of issues that occur in the movie *Legally Blonde* such as feminism and women's subordination.

In the movie *Legally Blonde*, it tells the story of a woman named Elle who experienced discrimination because her hair was blonde. Where in America there are stereotypes about women that have blonde hair. On the one hand, Elle does not care about opinions or ridicule people who underestimate her. Elle remained focused on her goal to be a student at Harvard Law School. When she was accepted there, Elle remained underestimated by lecturers and people around her. As a woman, the writer is very interested in raising this issue because nowadays, there are still people who consider women inferior, weak, and not worthy of proper education.

The goal of this research is to explore the theme of feminism in *Legally Blonde*, showing how Elle fights against discrimination. This study will examine using feminism and gender domination as the main theoretical frameworks. Using

the theory of feminism and gender domination, this research will develop from the analysis of women's representation in film. This research will pay attention to how women are depicted in film, for example through character codes, conflict codes, action codes, and dialogue codes. Especially how the main character is portrayed in the film, what struggle she endures.

1.2 Limitation of the problem,

The writer will concentrate solely on the subordination experienced by the main character, Elle Woods, in *Legally Blonde*. The focus will be on exploring the stigma and social prejudice she encounters throughout the film. Analysis will be based on character codes, conflict codes, action codes, and dialogue codes. The study aims to highlight the feminist themes reflected in Elle's journey: how she overcomes challenges and discrimination, asserts her independence, and defies stereotypes. Other characters will not be included in the analysis. By examining feminism through Elle's perspective alone, the discussion naturally emphasizes her personal development, academic and professional success, and empowerment.

However, this narrow focus also limits the portrayal of feminism to individual accomplishment. This approach ignores institutions (like law schools, the legal profession, and social norms) that create barriers for many women, especially those who are not white, wealthy, or conventionally attractive like Elle. It also misses the opportunity to explore how feminism works collectively, through solidarity and structural change not just personal victory.

1.3 Research questions

Through the research of feminist film theory, the thesis examines how films like *Legally Blonde* contribute to shaping societal attitudes towards gender roles. From the analysis of the movie, there are some questions that must be solved:

- a) How is women's subordination portrayed by Elle in the film *Legally Blonde*?
- b) What's the impact of women's subordination on Elle's life?

1.4 Objectives of the research

Based on the research questions, here are the objectives of the research. I want to explore themes of gender stereotypes, resilience, and transformation. Its portrayal of women breaking societal expectations and succeeding in traditionally male-dominated fields can be analysed in discussions of feminism, personal identity, and social dynamics. Additionally, its humorous yet critical view of legal and academic institutions provides insight into cultural attitudes toward ambition and intelligence, especially regarding women. Here are some answers I aim to convey from my analysis:

- a) To describe women's subordination portrayed by Elle in the film *Legally blonde*.
- b) To explain the impact of women's subordination in Elle's life in the film *Legally Blonde*.