

ABSTRACT

Raihana Putri Saumi. 1215030191. The Male Gaze in Robert Lucetic's *Legally Blonde* (2001): A Critical Examination of Patriarchal Structures. An Undergraduate Thesis. English Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati. Advisors: 1. Ice Sariyati, S.S., M.pd. 2. Yoga Sudarisman, M.A

The male gaze refers to the act of depicting women from a masculine and heterosexual perspective, placing them as passive objects in accordance with patriarchal structures. This concept remains present even in films that are categorized as feminist or promote female empowerment. This ongoing issue became the main trigger for conducting this research, which aimed to analyze and uncover how the male gaze interpolated and how the patriarchal structures reinforced by the male gaze in Robert Luketic's *Legally Blonde* (2001). This research used Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze and applied a qualitative interpretative method to examine the film. The data were collected through close observation and documentation of various scenes, dialogues, camera work, and narrative elements that represented gendered perspectives throughout the film. The analysis showed that the male gaze was interpolated in the film through several aspects, including explicit and implicit visuals, character dialogue, visual construction, and the overall narrative structure. Meanwhile, patriarchal structures were reinforced by the male gaze by creating and portraying women through a form of false empowerment, which maintained ideal feminine beauty and aesthetics aligned with patriarchal expectations. From the findings, the conclusion was drawn that *Legally Blonde* (2001), although packaged as a feminist and empowering film, still embeds and promotes patriarchal values through subtle cinematic strategies that continue to support the presence of the male gaze.

Keywords: Male Gaze, Patriarchy, Feminism, Film Study, Visual Representation