

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The *American dream* is an interesting idea that has been around for a long time. The idea was popularized by James Adams Truslow, in his 1931 book *Epic of America*. The *American dream* is the idea that every American has the right to reach their goals no matter what their personal situations.

The American ideal is that of a place where life should be better, richer, and fuller for everyone, with equal opportunity for all regardless of skills or success. As seen at the very beginning of the second paragraph of the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence in 1776. However, the *American dream* is still seen as an idea that is not easy to actualize in America until now. This is evidenced by several cases in America where individuals struggled hard to achieve their aspirations, particularly due to social challenges (1931:148).

The *American Dream* has always been an interesting issue as the topic continues to be debated frequently in many fields. The value is still present in modern American culture and continues to develop over time. Film is one of the many fields that has examined the concept of the *American Dream* from a variety point of view.

According to David Bordwell in his book *Film Art: An introduction*, film is a form of visual art that combines moving images to narrate stories and sounds to portray emotions or ideas (1997:3). A wide variety of components, such as cinematography, sound, editing, and visual effects, are used to construct an appealing and meaningful story.

The *American dream* has been depicted in plenty of films with various points of view and narrative style. *La La Land* (2016) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001) are two of these works, both of which are located in Los Angeles, California. *La La Land* and *Mulholland Drive* portrays the story of the *American Dream*, which may be found in this film.

La La Land (2016) directed by Damien Chazelle, is a notable piece of art. It tells a story about a young actress named Mia Dolan who aspires to be a successful actress in *Hollywood*. The movie portrays the obstacles that Mia encounters in the pursuit of her dream without having any privilege and social status. Along the way, Mia could not reach her dreams without the support of her partner, Seb. The film portrays a not usual romance story in which the character ultimately sacrifices their love to achieve their aspirations.

Meanwhile, *Mulholland Drive* (2001) directed equally brilliant by David Lynch with his exploration and frequently unsettling aspects of human experience. The movie has a similar story line with *La La Land* (2016) but with more ambiguous and disturbing nuance. A young actress named Diane just arrived in Los Angeles full of hopes, but luck was not on her side. The film portrays that an individual could do anything including harmful actions to achieve her goals.

This research compares two movies through the lens of The *American dream* theory to provide a deeper understanding of how they are similar and different. Also, to examine how the films provide commentary on the “evil” of Hollywood and the damage it can do to people.

When comparing *La La Land* (2016) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001), focusing on their shared Los Angeles setting but contrasting time periods. Los Angeles is more than just a backdrop in both films; it serves as a character that embodies the dreams, challenges, and culture of its respective eras. In *La La Land* (2016), the city is vibrant, optimistic, and nostalgic, representing the modern dream of artistic success with a romanticized homage to Hollywood's golden age. Meanwhile, in *Mulholland Drive* (2001), Los Angeles reflecting the complicated and negative aspect of the entertainment business around the beginning of the century which is more mysterious and darker part.

1.2 Research Problems

1. How is *American Dream* depicted in *La La Land* and *Mulholland Drive* movie?
2. How is false consciousness affecting the characters in *La La Land* and *Mulholland Drive* movie?

1.3 Objective of the Study

1. To analyze the depiction of *American Dream* in *La La Land* and *Mulholland Drive*.
2. To analyze the false consciousness affecting the characters in *La La Land* and *Mulholland Drive* movie.

1.4 Scope of the Study

In this study, the writer will compare two different movies with the same topic. The writer aims to analyze the *American dream* at a deeper level by comparing two different movies with the same set and topic in order to find how the *American Dream* is perceived by each movie. The study examines how the *American Dream* is represented in the narrative elements.

The first movie with the title '*La La Land*' (2016) was directed by Damien Sayre Chazelle. While the second movie with the title '*Mulholland Drive*' (2001) was directed by David Lynch. The focus of the research is analyzing intrinsic and extrinsic elements of both movies. Intrinsic factors including themes, plot, characters and characterisation, setting, and conflict. While the extrinsic factors focus on comparing two movies and analyze the cinematography elements.

1.5 Previous Studies

A number of studies are related to this research because of the similarity in topic and object. Here are several studies gathered by the writer:

The first previous study that the researcher collected is L R Arnáiz from Universidad Complutense of Madrid. In the "Here's to the fool who dream:" Hollywood's Illusion of the American Dream in *La La Land* she discussed Hollywood's portrayal of the American dream. The concept of the American Dream has shaped the lives of many people not only within the United States, but also from all around the world, therefore creating an international phenomenon. In such context, *La La Land* addresses the newest conception of the Dream –the "Dream of the Coast"– by providing a glance at the genuine Hollywood lights and shadows

through a nostalgic depiction of the Dream and the actual consequences of chasing it.

The second one is from Tri Yoga Susila from Sebelas Maret University, in the “Representation of American Dream in The Greatest Showman Movie” he examine how the movie represents the American Dream and how this movie romanticizes the idea of the American Dream.

The third one was collected from Yu Melkumyan from Yerevan State University, in the “Evolution of the ‘American Dream’ as a value system and its representation in Hollywood movies” she discussed an exploration of the evolution of the 'American Dream' as a value system and its representation in Hollywood movies. The author discusses whether Hollywood's portrayal aligns with historical changes in the societal concept of the American Dream.

What distinguishes previous research from this research is that this research uses more complex and comparing two different movies with similar plot but different outcomes. In this study, researchers used the indicators of American Dream theory by Cullen.

1.6 Method of the Study

1.6.1 Method of Research

According to George (2008:1), library research is a methodical process that includes obtaining and examining existing information, figuring out what is unknown, speculating, meticulously using logical techniques, verifying, assessing, repeating, and finally interpreting results to increase understanding.

The study uses library research by collecting primary data and secondary data. Primary data is the movie. To support the analysis, the author uses secondary data such as reference books and journal articles in addition to the film, which serves as the main source.

1.6.2 Research of Approach

In this thesis, the objective approach is applied to analyze narrative elements, such as intrinsic aspects. According to Bordwell & Thompson (2020:73), narrative in film shaped by specific components, including narrative structure and cinematography aspects. Bordwell & Thompson also states that narrative can be understood as a sequence of events connected by cause and effect and occurring in time and space (2020:73). Therefore, this thesis will focus on analyzing the characters, settings, and conflict.

Furthermore, the cinematographic aspects will be examined through the lens of Broadwell's theory. Broadwell's theoretical framework is used to understand their impact and contribution to the overall meaning and effect.

To gain a thorough and well-rounded understanding of the subject matter, this research the writer focuses on the analyses mainly on Cullen's (2009: 8) theory of American Dream, specifically the indicators of American Dream. This method encourages a nuanced understanding of the American Dream as a dynamic and multifaceted idea.

1.7 Organization of the Writing

I. Introduction

The first chapter of this study includes the background of the study, scope of the study, research problem, objective of the study, previous studies, and organization of the writing.

II. Intrinsic Theoretical Frameworks

The second chapter of this study consists of the theories that are applied by the writer which are intrinsic aspects, cinematography elements, and extrinsic aspects of the movie. The intrinsic aspects include plot, theme, character and characterization, settings, and conflicts while the cinematography elements include the shots, dialogue, sounds and tone of the film.

III. Extrinsic Theoretical Frameworks

The third chapter of this study consists of the theories that are applied by the writer which are extrinsic aspects are the American Dream and Hollywood as the American Dream.

IV. Discussion

In the fourth chapter, this study includes Method of the Study, Approach of the study, Method of Collecting Data, and Method of Analyzing Data.

V. Conclusion

The last chapter of this study consists of a conclusion of the study.