

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Patriarchal culture refers to systems where men hold the ultimate power and women's freedoms and independence are suppressed. The systems may vary, but rely on the same foundational control of men. The United States, particularly in the 1950s and 1970s, relied on these systems, even with the existence of feminist movements. Women were expected to do the house work while men had the power and made the most important decisions. This environment is where Sofia Coppola's 2023 film, *Priscilla*, sits. The film focuses on Elvis and Priscilla Presley's relationship and highlights the de facto function of that 'natural order.' Who decided, who adjusted, and the price a young woman paid to organize her life around someone else's wants and public representation.

The main focus of this research is *Priscilla Presley* to analyze how female identity is formed in the context of such oppressive patriarchal systems and how Presley's role represents this dynamic. In the film, Priscilla definitely positions herself in the orbit of the public gaze while situated in the Environment of Elvis Presley's dominant masculinity and social pressure. This challenges the position of Priscilla Presley as she attempts to remain her true self while being sucked into the media gaze. This also represents and speaks to the struggles women faced during the 1960s and 1970s in their fight to define themselves.

Each character in *Priscilla* (2023) is under social, media, and cultural pressures in distinctly patriarchal ways. Gender dominance is not a peripheral motif in the film; rather, the film uses the gap in relationships, the choices, and the silences to build the theme of patriarchal culture. This is especially true of Priscilla Presley. The film demonstrates that Priscilla is Elvis' wife, which means that almost every aspect of Priscilla's life is defined by her relationship with Elvis. This analysis uses that idea to investigate how media shows the workings of patriarchal culture, and how, living in a patriarchal society, gender inequality shapes Priscilla's personhood.

This research focuses on Priscilla's and Elvis's lives and divorces the romanticized idea of a love story from the reality of relationships marred by enormous, skewed power imbalances. Elvis wanted to be the boss, and during much of the time Priscilla was with Elvis, Priscilla had basically no power to create anything. What the film makes clear is how that kind of dynamic leaves a mark, not just on a woman's daily life but on how Elvis and Priscilla perceive themselves and what they believe they deserve and how much of their identities they are permitted to claim. Patriarchy does not always announce itself loudly. Rather, it can run insidiously by the weight of one person knowing best.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How does the film *Priscilla* (2023) portray the evolution of Priscilla Presley's identity, from her early years to her relationship with Elvis Presley?

2. What mechanisms of control does Elvis Presley use over Priscilla Presley in the film *Priscilla* (2023)?
3. How does the film *Priscilla* (2023) reflect the gender dynamics and feminist issues of the 1960s and 1970s?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To understand how the evolution of Priscilla Presley's identity, from her early years to her relationship with Elvis Presley.
2. To analyze the mechanisms of control used by Elvis Presley over Priscilla Presley in the film *Priscilla* (2023).
3. To understand how the film *Priscilla* (2023) reflects the gender dynamics and feminist issues of the 1960s and 1970s.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study discusses how female identity is formed in a relationship governed by patriarchy, as seen in the character of Priscilla Presley in the film *Priscilla* (2023). This study will focus on intrinsic elements, such as the theme, Priscilla's character and development, important scenes that show Elvis' control and influence, and the film's setting, which depicts the social and cultural pressures of patriarchy. Intrinsically, this study uses Simone de Beauvoir's feminist theory to examine how patriarchy and gender norms can influence women's identity and freedom.

1.5 Previous Studies

To demonstrate that the topic remains of great concern to researchers, the author provides a number of examples of previous research on the topic

Of the studies referenced in this section, the first is by Áine Cassidy (2024), *Commodification, the Commodity, and Femininity*. In this work, she studies Kassel (2006) and *Priscilla* (2023) from the perspective of gender, consumerism, and the performative identity of the character. Cassidy examines the intersection of gender, consumerism, and the performance of patriarchy to articulate the boundaries of women's identity. Because Cassidy's analysis directly addresses *Priscilla* and the matters of female identity under the patriarchy, her work is of primary concern to this study. Whereas Cassidy prioritizes the dimension of commodification, this study analyzes the impact of patriarchy on women's identity and agency within the context of close relationships

In this section, too, reference is made to the study of Sumarsono (2025) titled *Feminist Sacrifices*, which is a comparative feminist analysis of *Princess Mandalika and The Little Mermaid*. Sumarsono discusses the sacrifices of both female characters in a patriarchal setting, highlighting issues of gender roles, agency and transformation. The most obvious connection is that both studies are concerned with the ways in which patriarchy limits what women are able to do and who they are able to become. The difference in this research is its focus. Instead of viewing sacrifice as spread out between two mythic or folkloric figures, this work remains close to the personal,

following the ways Priscilla Presley's identity and agency are defined specifically through her intimate relationship with Elvis, a dynamic that brings patriarchal power to its most private and everyday level.

The third study is by Rikhana, Lesmana, and Wijayanti titled *The Representation of Women Empowerment in The Little Mermaid Movie (2024)*, which discusses *The Little Mermaid* from the point of view of women's empowerment following Ariel's struggles against social norms and her journey towards independence and equality. The research pertains to questions regarding female resistance within patriarchal frameworks. It is the only research to provide such a specific focus. Thus, it becomes a useful comparator to the current research. At the end of the day, both works deal with female resistance and navigation within patriarchy. Where they differ is in scope and setting. In a different scope, this research focuses more on the construction of women's identity and agency within intimate relationships in *Priscilla (2023)*, offering a more personal and psychological perspective

Next is the previous research by Rahma (2023) titled *The Implications of Patriarchal Culture toward Gender Discrimination Behavior in Anne with an E Movie Series*. It analyzes the impact of patriarchal culture on gender discrimination relating to education, marriage, and work. It also shows how social customs constrain women, and shows women's struggle against social constructs as they seek equality. This research helps in the comprehension of systemic gender issues. The current research, relaying on this framework, aims to fill in the gaps on the development of women's

identity and agency in the context of interpersonal relations as presented in *Priscilla* (2023).

The fifth previous study is by Nawa (2025) entitled *Women's Struggle Against Patriarchal Practices in the Moxie Movie: A Feminist Approach*. It examines women's struggles against patriarchy from liberal and radical feminist perspectives. Nawa states that the character Vivian employs practices of solidarity and self-reflection, and encourages others to do the same, and, therefore, represents both individual and social struggles against the dominant patriarchal practices. In the case of *Priscilla* (2023), while Nawa's study addresses feminist struggle in more of an individual context, the current study attempts to explore feminist struggle in the absence of patriarchal dominance in various spheres of life, primarily in the context of interpersonal relations.

The previous study by Kamila titled *Patriarchal Culture's Effects on Women as Reflected in On the Basis of Sex* (2018), investigates the effect of patriarchal systems on women's education, profession, and actions, via the lens of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her fight against gender injustice. This study would be appropriate as it also examines elements of patriarchy in the cinematic space. However, while Kamila's study examines women's battles in public and legal domains, this study will examine how patriarchy impacts women's identity and agency in private and personal relationships, thus providing different analytical lenses.

1.6 Research Methods

1.6.1 Data Sources

This research uses a qualitative method to analyze the primary data that are taken from the film *Priscilla* (2023) which will be analyzed to describe the identity of women in a patriarchal society. Primary data is raw material providing direct and first hand evidence on the topic of research (Creswell 2014). Secondary data will be gathered from academic books, journal articles and other theoretical sources to support the analysis.

1.6.2 Method of Data Collection

The data used in this study will consist of scenes, scripts, and dialogues from the film *Priscilla* (2023). This film is the main source of data for this study, which was collected through literature research. The literature research involves the systematic identification, search, and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem (Hart, 1998). This approach will provide a deep analysis of how the film portrays female identity in the context of patriarchy, using feminist theory to analyze the cultural and social influences on the character of Priscilla Presley.

1.6.3 Method of Approach

This study uses an objective approach to analyze the intrinsic elements of *Priscilla* (2023), focusing on the theme, characters, and story structure. The analysis will not focus on the writer, but on the film itself. For intrinsic elements, such as the influence of patriarchy on Priscilla's identity, will be analyzed with Simoen de

Beauvoir feminism theory. This approach focuses more on how social pressures shape individual behavior, especially how Priscilla deals with her relationship with Elvis and the broader gender dynamics of the 1960s and 1970s.

1.7 Organization of the Writing

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The introduction chapter includes the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, scopes of the study, previous studies, research method, and organization of the writing.

CHAPTER II INTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the intrinsic elements, including themes, plot, characters, settings, and conflicts.

CHAPTER III EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will discuss Simone de Beauvoir's feminist theory and Feminist Issues and Resistance in the 1960s and 1970s.

CHAPTER IV DISCUSSION

This chapter will provide an analysis and interpretation of all the data gathered in relation to the chosen theory.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of the study's conclusion.