CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Over the decades, films have gained immense popularity as a source of entertainment and a powerful medium for storytelling. They are not just for fun, they also reflect our society, values, and cultures. Films based on true stories have a unique significance in the realm of cinema. They provide a dramatized representation of historical events, real-life characters, and authentic experiences, bridging the gap between reality and storytelling. Analyzing such films offers an opportunity to explore the interplay between fact and fiction, and how filmmakers balance artistic license with historical accuracy. It also allows us to examine the impact of these narratives on public memory and cultural discourse.

The film *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023), directed by Martin Scorsese, is a compelling narrative based on a true story, adapted from David Grann's non-fiction book. It intertwines historical events with the personal struggles of its characters. The film dramatizes the Osage murders of the 1920s, a series of heinous crimes driven by greed and racial animosity towards the oil-rich Osage Nation (Grann, 2017).

In the context of *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023), Mollie Burkhart's character embodies the experience of 'feminine otherness' as both a woman and an Indigenous person in a white, patriarchal, and colonial society. Mollie's struggle to protect her family, heritage, and wealth in the face of violence and exploitation

highlights how Indigenous women, like women generally, have historically been marginalized and reduced to objects of power and control. By applying Beauvoir's theory, this study seeks to explore how Mollie's character resists these oppressive forces, challenging both the patriarchy and colonialism through her resilience, agency, and pursuit of justice.

This study not only enriches the readers viewing of Mollie Burkhart's personal narrative but also highlights the broader implications of feminist theory in contemporary discussions about gender, race, and power. By Simone de Beauvoir framework, the author examines how historical narratives like the Osage murders are intertwined with issues of gender and racial issues, providing a critical lens for understanding and describing these events. Mollie Burkhart's character stands as a powerful symbol of resilience and resistance, making her story a significant case study for exploring the relevance of Simone de Beauvoir feminist theory in both historical and modern contexts.

1.2. Research Problems

This research is done to address the following questions:

1. How is Mollie portrayed as a character in the film *Killers of the Flower Moon* 2023?

2. How is Mollie described as a feminist in the film *Killers of the Flower Moon* 2023?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To find out how is Mollie portrayed as a character in the film *Killers of the Flower Moon* 2023

2. To described Mollie as a feminist character in the film *Killers of the Flower Moon* 2023

1.4. Previous Studies

There are several previous studies used by the writer either as references or as a comparison to the improvement of the study.

First, *Racial Issues Reflected in David Grann's Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* thesis by Mufidhatul Ulliya (Ulliya, 2024). She examines two main problems: the types of racial issues depicted in the book and how Mollie Burkhart copes with the resulting anxiety using Bonilla Silva's critical race theory and Freud's psychological theory. The analysis identifies three forms of racism, such as ethnic racism, ideological racism, and white privilege racism experienced by the Osage tribe. It also reveals that Mollie deals with her

anxiety through psychological mechanism such as projection, repression, and sublimation.

Second, article *'Killers of the Flower Moon' Review: Martin Scorsese's Osage Murders Movie Is Overlong but Never Slow* by Peter Debruge published in *Variety* on May 20, 2023, at 12:45 PM. Martin Scorsese's film *Killers of the Flower Moon* critically explores the Osage Murders, highlighting early 20th-century socio-economic and racial tensions. The film depicts the Osage as wealthy targets of exploitation. Through the character of Ernest Burkhart, who becomes complicit in a scheme to murder Osage people for their oil wealth, and his wife, Mollie Kyle, an Osage woman whose resilience and suffering are central to the narrative, Scorsese exposes the pervasive corruption and violence faced by the Osage Nation. The narrative focuses on the perpetrators' perspectives, delving into the moral and psychological dimensions of their actions. This approach emphasizes systemic injustice, racial violence, and the struggle for Indigenous rights, while poignantly portraying Mollie's personal tragedy and strength amidst the unfolding conspiracy.

The difference between this current study and the previous studies above is that in this study, the writer focuses on the character of Mollie Burkhart in the film adaptation, using Simone de Beauvoir feminist theory. This framework is instrumental in examining how Mollie's character navigates and confronts the gendered and racial adversities depicted in the film. In contrast, Mufidhatul Ulliya's thesis, *Racial Issues Reflected in David Grann's Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*, examines the novel, identifying racial issues and Mollie's psychological coping mechanisms through Bonilla-Silva's

critical race theory and Freud's psychological theory. Additionally, Peter Debruge's review in *Variety* provides a critical cinematic exploration of the film, highlighting socio-economic and racial tensions without a specific focus on Mollie's character or a detailed theoretical framework. Despite these differences, all studies share the common object of investigation *Killers of the Flower Moon* although they provide with different focal points: this study examines the film, whereas Ulliya's thesis focuses on the novel.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study aims to provide a comprehensive description of Mollie's character from a feminist perspective using Simone de Beauvoir theory by exploring her portrayal, and her characteristics as a feminist in the film *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023).

1.6. Research Method

1.6.1. Data Collection

In this study, the film *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023) will be the main source of data, complemented by secondary resources like books, journals, articles, and online materials, including e-books and websites. Additionally, audio content from the film will be transcribed into textual quotes for further examination. The writer uses library research to gather factual data and opinions relating to analysis. Library research involves identifying a research question or topic, finding relevant sources, evaluating their credibility and relevance, and synthesizing the information gathered to form an argument (George, 2008. p. 6). Furthermore, a

close viewing of the film *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023) will be performed as part of this study's examination.

1.6.2. Method of Approach

In this study, the writer employed a qualitative approach to understand the phenomena being examined, including behavior, perception, motivation, and action. This method was chosen because it is ideally suited for research that involves collecting, describing, and analyzing data. The qualitative approach allows for a deep exploration of the complex character dynamics present in the film *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023).

Additionally, the writer used a feminist approach, particularly drawing on Simone de Beauvoir's theory to examine the film through the lens of feminist theory. This approach focuses on how the film portrays women, gender roles, and power dynamics, with an emphasis on the character Mollie Burkhart. To structure this analysis, the writer followed the research methodology outlined by Mary W. George. George's methodology emphasizes a systematic approach to research, which involves defining a clear research question, conducting a thorough literature review, and using appropriate analytical frameworks to interpret findings (George, 2008. p. 134).This method is particularly valuable for examining feminist themes in film, as it ensures a rigorous and organized examination of how feminist theory applies to the portrayal of Mollie Burkhart and the broader narrative of *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023).

1.7. Writing Organization

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, previous studies, the scope of the studies, and writing outline.

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter consists of two sections, the theoretical framework, and the research method. The theoretical framework explains the theory that was used to analyze research problems. The research method section contains an explanation of the research approach, methods, and steps for data collection, as well as methods and steps in analyzing data.

CHAPTER III RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data and the findings of the study, as well as the evidence that will later be interpreted in the discussion section.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the writer's conclusion and suggestions.