

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

*Mona Lisa Smile* is a 2003 romantic drama film with duration 117 minutes, produced by Revolution Studios and Columbia Pictures in association with Red Om Films Productions, directed by Mike Newell, written by Lawrence Konner and Mark Rosenthal, and starring Julia Roberts, Kirsten Dunst, Maggie Gyllenhaal, and Julia Stiles. The title is a reference to the *Mona Lisa*, the famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci, and the song of the same name, originally performed by Nat King Cole, which was covered by Seal for the movie. *Mona Lisa Smile* is written by two men, Lawrence Konner and Mark Rosenthal, and directed by Mike Newell, best known for his hilarious depiction of upper class antics in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Mona Lisa Smile* takes a pointed stance on the stifling morals and expectations imposed on the country's elite young women in mid-century America.

This is an American film produced by Revolution Studios and Columbia Pictures. *Monalisa Smile* was realized in December 19, 2003, this movie is acted by Julia Roberts, Kristen Dunst, Julia Stiles, Maggie Gyllenhaal and Ginnefer Goodwin. The title is a reference to the *Mona Lisa*, the famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci, and the song of the same name, originally performed by Nat King Cole, which was covered by Seal for the movie. The

running time of this movie is 117 minutes. The budget to make this movie is US \$ 65,000,000. The genre of this movie is drama. The movie is based around the life of Katherine Ann Watson, played by Julia Roberts. The movie takes place in 1953 at Wellesley College which is an all girls school.

The movie is pretty good; it is about life at Wellesley College in 1954-55. It focuses very heavily on women's liberation, and freedom of choice regardless of what the choice is.

The film fills with an amazing music director and it got nomination for *BFCA Award* category best song (from a film "Mona Lisa Smile" (2003)) for "The Heart of Every Girl". It also got nomination for *Golden Globe* category Best Original Song - Motion Picture (from a film "Mona Lisa Smile" (2003)) for "The Heart of Every Girl" shared with Bernie Taupin (lyrics). Then it got nomination for *Golden Satellite Award* category Best Original Song (from a film "Mona Lisa Smile" (2003)) for "The Heart of Every Girl".

Based on the detail explanation about the director, the actors and the awards, it can be seen that the film is created maximally to show the capacity of the whole story and the range of the production. To get more specific about the capacity of the movie it can be seen on the short synopsis.

In 1953, Katherine Ann Watson (Julia Roberts), a 30-something grad student from California, takes a position teaching "History of Art" at Wellesley College, a conservative women's private liberal arts college in Massachusetts because she wants to make a difference and influence the next generation of women. At her first class, Katherine discovers that the girls have

already memorized the entire syllabus from the textbook so she instead uses the classes to introduce them to Modern Art and encourages spirited classroom discussions about topics such as what makes good art and what the Mona Lisa's smile means. This brings her into conflict with the conservative College President who warns Katherine to stick to the syllabus if she wants to keep her job. Katherine comes to know many of the students in her class well and seeks to inspire them to seek more than marriage to eligible young men. Joan Brandwyn (Julia Stiles) dream of being a lawyer and enrolled as pre-law so Katherine encourages her to apply to Yale Law School, where she is accepted. Joan, however, elopes with her fiancé Tommy, is very happy and decides that what she wants most is to be a wife and mother after graduation and asks Katherine to respect her choice.

Betty Warren (Kirsten Dunst) is highly conservative like her mother, the head of the Alumnae Association. Betty does not understand why Katherine is not married and is strident in insisting that there is a universal standard for good art. She writes two editorials for the college paper, one which exposes the nurse for giving out contraception, which results in the nurse being fired, and one attacking Katherine for advocating that women should seek a career instead of just being wives and mothers as intended. Betty can not wait to marry Spencer as their parents have arranged and expects to get the traditional exemptions from attending class because she is married, but Katherine insists that she will be marked on merit. Connie Baker (Ginnifer Goodwin) is dating Betty's cousin Charlie but Betty persuades her that he is only using her since it

has been arranged by his parents for him to marry Deb, a girl more of his social standing, so Connie ends the relationship. However, Charlie had already decided for himself that that was not going to happen and they get back together. Giselle Levy (Maggie Gyllenhaal) has liberal views and supports Katherine because she sees her as having chosen what she wants in her life. Giselle brazenly has affairs with a professor and a married man.

Katherine confides to the girls that she was engaged when young but that she and her fiance were separated by the war and the relationship fizzled out and that she has since had several affairs. Katherine declines a proposal from her boyfriend from California because she does not love him enough. She begins seeing the Wellesley Italian professor, Bill Dunbar (Dominic West) who is charming and full of stories about Europe and his heroic actions in Italy during the war. He has also had affairs with many students including Giselle, so Katherine makes him promise that that will never happen again. However, when she discovers that he actually spent the entire war at the Army Languages Center on Long Island she decides he is untrustworthy and breaks up with him. Dunbar responds that Katherine did not come to Wellesley to help the students but to try to find herself.

Betty's marriage fails miserably. Spencer is soon spending as much time as possible away in New York on business and is also spotted by Giselle conducting an affair. Betty's mother tries to pressure Betty into not divorcing him at least for a while to avoid scandal for the families. Betty asks her mother if the Mona Lisa's smile means she is happy. At graduation Betty tells

Katherine that she is divorcing Spencer and is going to share a flat in Greenwich Village with Giselle and is considering applying to Yale Law School, which impresses Katherine. Katherine's course was highly popular and there is large demand for places the next year so the college invites her to return. However, the President and Betty's mother impose conditions on Katherine that she must follow the syllabus, submit lesson plans for approval and not talk to the girls about anything other than classes. Katherine decides to leave and heads off to explore Europe for herself.

In a short conclusion of the story tells that Katherine Watson, an Oakland State University Ph.D. student, is hired as an Art History instructor at Wellesley College for the 1953/54 school year. She is not an obvious choice as Wellesley is an exclusive upper crust institution where its faculty, students and alumni generally look down upon "State" universities. Katherine quickly learns that her paper credentials do affect how her students treat her. She also learns that the students are book smart, but do not know how to think for themselves. Their parents and the school administration foster a predetermined path in life for the girls, namely to stick to traditional mores and thoughts, with the primary goal of marrying into a good family. There are pockets of free thinking among faculty and the students, but those thoughts and associated actions are generally quashed by the overall tone of the school. Katherine decides to instill into her students her own beliefs of what is important in learning.

There are several reasons why the writer chooses the film *Mona Lisa Smile* to be analyzed. Based on a sociological analysis, the writer wants to explore the social life within the film including the actor's life, religion, culture, law, etc. The first reason, the film played by the famous actors: Julia Roberts Kirsten Dunst Juliet Stevenson and Tori Amos.

The second, the story is not simple, the writer needs to play it more than one to understand the whole story related with social life of the film.

The third, the film got a lot of awards especially on the musical part. The music was arranged by Elton John and it got nomination for *BFCA Award* category best song (from a film "Mona Lisa Smile" (2003)) for "The Heart of Every Girl, *Golden Globe* category Best Original Song - Motion Picture (from a film "Mona Lisa Smile" (2003)) for "The Heart Of Every Girl, and *Golden Satellite Award* category Best Original Song (from a film "Mona Lisa Smile" (2003)) for "The Heart of Every Girl".

And the last reason is based on the visualization of the film. The director and the special effect director are able to create a different situation by creating a different time effect from modern into the old theme. Changing the theme of the time on the movie is difficult, because they must know the real situation on the past. Good special effect directors will create the different time by using a brilliant technology to apply it.

Based on the reasons above, the writer is interested in analyzing this film by using a sociological approach. In this study the writer encourages

herself to give a title WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN MIKE NEWELL'S *MONALISA SMILE* MOVIE (2004): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH.

## **B. Literature Review**

The writer uses the previous review as a guideline to make the paper better. The study belongs to Anna Widayanti (2009) entitled: "The power of Katherine Ann Watson in changing the fate in Mike Newell's *Monalisa Smile* movie: individual psychological analysis". Her study was qualitative study and the result was that the creative power of Ann conquers all of her inferior. She wants to make a difference and influence the next generation of women. Fictional finalism to be an amazing woman, all appears on her ways to get the right position in her education.

The second study belongs to Karlina hendrawati (2009) entitled: "Struggle for women's independence in *Monalisa Smile*: feminism approach". Her study was qualitative study and the result was the woman within the film was fighting against the awkward educational system and it can be seen when they were against the type of woman on position, role, right and participation which are characterized by the concept of woman can be categorized as feminist attitude.

The third study belongs to Hermawadi adijaya (2010) entitled "Katherine and her fictional finalism against the educational conflict in *Monalisa Smile* movie: feminism approach". His study was qualitative study and the result was Katherine as a major character fighting against the awkward educational system. She was fight to show the right position like a man, she wants

to prove that the type of woman on position, role, right and participation which are characterized by the concept of woman can be categorized as feminist attitude. This is evident that Anna King wants to affirm that women cannot be ignored in the society. They should not be seen as the second class. She affirms that God creates men and women in the same equality; thus men should not degrade women.

The fourth study belongs to Ika Puspitasari (2010) entitled "Against traditional colleges in Mike Newell's *Monalisa Smile*: Sociological approach. Her study was qualitative study and the result shows that there is a close relationship between the film *Monalisa Smile* and the American social realities in the twentieth century. This film is based on the social realities that happen on that time. Women on that time did not have the same position as a man on education. The women were in the second position after man.

The last study belongs Suko Purwoko (2010) entitled "Katherine's conflict of interests in Mike Newell's *Monalisa Smile*: A Psychoanalytic approach". His study was qualitative study and the result shows that the neurotic anxiety on Katherine is bigger than the other anxieties. She wants to keep the women's position in a right place without showing the arrogance to find her fictional finalism.

The above study is different with the study that is analyzed by the writer. Here the writer tries to focus on the social background on the whole movie story in the past or present.

**C. Problem of the Study**

The problem statement is: “How is women’s movement reflected in Mike Newell’s *Monalisa Smile* movie (2004)?”

**D. Limitation of the Study**

The writer will make a limitation in accordance with the discussion of the problem. This study focuses on the analysis of women’s movement in Mike Newell’s *Monalisa Smile* movie (2004)’ viewed from the Sociological perspective.

**E. Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To describe the structural elements of the movie.
2. To analyze the movie by means of sociological approach to find the women’s movement appears in every scene.

**F. Benefit of the Study**

The benefits of the study expected from the study are follows:

**1. Theoretical Benefit**

- a. To give some information which can be used by the other researchers who are interested in analyzing this literary work.
- b. To give a contribution to other literary research especially in the analysis of *Monalisa Smile* movie by Mike Newell’s.

## **2. Practical Benefit**

It is used for getting bachelor degree of education in English Department.

## **G. Research Method**

Dealing with research method, the writer uses the qualitative method. This research will discuss the woman's movement within the *Monalisa Smile* movie. There will be at least four points that need to be involved as follows:

### **1. Object of the Study**

The object of the study is *Monalisa Smile* movie by Mike Newell and he wants to analyze the woman's movement viewed from the Sociological perspective

### **2. Type of the Data and the Data Sources**

The data in this study can be divided into two kinds of data, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data are the main data consisting of dialogue, action and description about the character especially major character of the film "*Monalisa Smile*". Secondary data are supporting data consisting of theoretical approach. In this case, the secondary data are the data concerning sociological analysis.

#### **a. Primary Data Sources**

The primary data sources are the *Monalisa Smile* movie by Mike Newell's and the script of *Monalisa Smile*.

b. Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data sources are some material related to the data required. The data are taken from biography, news, articles and everything related to the problem statements.

**3. Technique of the Data Collection.**

The method that will be used by the researcher for collecting the data is library research, the techniques are as follows:

- a. Watching the movie more than just one, until the researcher gets the message offered from the movie and gets an adequate information or data to be analyzed.
- b. Reading some other resources related to the movie and the theory.
- c. Taking notes for the important parts both in primary and secondary sources in data cards. The note can be book or computer.
- d. Classifying the data into categories and develop them into a good unit.

**4. Technique of the Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data, the writer employs descriptive analysis of content. The analysis is begun from the structural analysis of *Monalisa Smile* movie by Mike Newell's and finally the sociological analysis of the literary work.

In this research the technique that will be used to analyze the data is descriptive analysis technique means that the writer will describe the structural elements of the movie with sociological analysis. The collected

data will be interpreted and analyzed in detail through a sociological analysis, in this case by showing the problems of the woman's character on her movement, and then drawing conclusion based on the analysis.

## **H. Research Organization**

This research paper consists of six chapters: Chapter I is introduction dealing with background of the study, literature review, problem statement, limitation of the study, the objective of the study, benefit of the study, research method, and paper organization. Chapter II contains underlying theory. It deals with the notion of sociology of literature, major principles of the sociological approach, and structural element of the movie, and theoretical application. Chapter III presents the social historical background that consists of social, economic, political, cultural, science and technology, religious aspect, and women condition at the time. Chapter IV is the (1) structural analysis of the *Monalisa Smile* movie, as character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, style, and theme and technical element of the movie; (2) Discussion. Chapter V is the sociological analysis of the movie and discussion. The last chapter VI is conclusion and suggestion of the research.