

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains several topics, such as the background of the research, research questions, research objectives, and the significance of the research.

1.1 Background of the Research

Each age in history introduces significant changes that impact how people live. Humans have continued to adapt to technological, social, and cultural changes since the agrarian era, through the industrial revolution, and now into the digital age. In the current era, the advancement of digital technology has become one of the primary foundations of global transformation. According to Sachsenmaier (2020), globalization is a process that connects people and countries all over the world, increasing interdependence in economic, political, and cultural areas. He highlights that globalization causes fundamental changes in the way societies connect and work on a global scale. Technology has altered practically every area of human life, including the way we work, communicate, and access information. This transformation has also altered people's mindsets. Global issues such as social justice, environmentalism and inclusivity are gradually becoming mainstream concerns. The increasing complexity of modern life necessitates the need for a way to escape daily demands while meditating on the societal issues we face. In this environment, entertainment is one way for people to cope with their fast-paced and demanding lifestyle.

Entertainment has experienced a significant transformation over time. In the past, people mainly enjoyed entertainment through activities such as reading books or watching live performances. However, with the development of modern media, entertainment now includes various forms such as music, digital games, social media, and audio-visual productions. Among these, films have become one of the most influential forms of entertainment because they not only provide enjoyment but also communicate ideas, values, and social issues that can shape audiences' perspectives. According to Rauterberg (2004), entertainment

technology can have positive effects on human behavior, particularly in enhancing personal well-being. Many people consider entertainment essential to their happiness and identity. This aligns with Vorderer and Reinecke's (2015) model, which suggests that entertainment consumption is not merely for fun, but also fulfills psychological needs such as stress relief and emotional fulfillment. Amidst the development of technology, entertainment has become more accessible to everyone. Digital platforms such as streaming, social media, and entertainment apps allow entertainment content to reach a global audience. Thus, entertainment is no longer just about providing fun, but also a tool to convey ideas, messages, and criticism of social reality.

One of the most influential forms of entertainment is movies. As a product of art, movies have the ability to touch emotions, inspire, and provoke thought. Unlike other art forms, movies combine various elements such as visuals, audio, narration, and actor performance to create an immersive experience for the audience. More than just entertainment, movies are often a reflection of social, cultural, and political issues that are relevant in their time. According to Steven (2022) film is defined not only as a material object, but also as an entity involved in ethical, political, and aesthetic discussions. As such, the emergence of films with themes of inclusivity and representation reflects society's growing awareness of these issues. This broader role of cinema as both entertainment and cultural critique makes it an important medium to examine more deeply, particularly through works like Jordan Peele's *Get Out*.

On the other hand, Monaco (2009) argues that film is a communication medium that combines moving images and sound to tell a story or convey information. This opinion emphasizes that film is not merely entertainment but also functions as a tool of expression and message delivery. With the combination of visual and audio elements, movies have the unique ability to shape emotional experiences, convey ideas, and even influence the social and cultural perspectives of the audience.

Although Jordan Peele is not a literary author, his cinematic works demonstrate narrative complexity and thematic depth that allow them to be examined through literary analysis. Peele is widely recognized as a filmmaker who

incorporates symbolism, social commentary, and layered storytelling in his films. Similar to literary texts, his works present themes, character development, and metaphorical representations that invite critical interpretation. Therefore, even though Peele's medium is film rather than written literature, his productions can still be approached using literary analytical frameworks to explore social, cultural, and ideological meanings.

According to Zacks (2015), watching movies is a complicated cognitive process in which viewers actively evaluate the narrative, visual features, and auditory clues, thereby improving their cognitive ability and empathy. This shows that movies can be used to broaden social and emotional knowledge in addition to providing amusement. By engaging with the story and characters, viewers can gain a broader perspective while also improving their critical thinking abilities and empathy for varied human experiences.

Film can also be understood as a cultural text that produces meaning and represents social realities. Stuart Hall (1997) emphasizes that representation is not merely a reflection of reality but a process that constructs meaning through language, images, and symbols. In this sense, cinema is never neutral; it conveys ideological positions and shapes how audiences perceive identity, power, and culture. This perspective is crucial when analyzing films such as *Get Out*, which intentionally stages race, identity, and social conflict as part of its narrative construction. As Bordwell and Thompson (2013) argue, films serve as sites where cultural anxieties and collective imaginations are projected, making them valuable resources for understanding social ideologies.

Another important concept to highlight is the relationship between film and autobiography. According to Philippe Lejeune (1989), autobiography establishes a "pact" between author and audience, in which the writer's life is implicitly or explicitly presented as a central reference point. While *Get Out* is not an autobiography in the traditional sense, it incorporates what Smith and Watson (2010) term "autobiographical acts," where personal experiences, perspectives, and identity negotiations are inscribed into a cultural text. In this context, Jordan Peele uses the character of Chris Washington as a surrogate through which his lived experiences with racial microaggressions and identity conflicts are

represented. This autobiographical dimension enriches the film, turning it into more than fictional narrative; it becomes a medium for self-expression and cultural critique. To understand this process, it is essential to situate *Get Out* within broader theoretical frameworks of race and representation.

Placing *Get Out* within the frame of autobiography also emphasizes the role of personal testimony in cultural production. As Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (2001) argue, autobiographical elements in literature and film can function as powerful interventions into dominant narratives, offering marginalized voices a means of reclaiming representation. By embedding his own racial experiences into the horror genre, Peele not only shares his personal struggles but also aligns them with the collective experiences of African Americans. This strategy transforms the film into what Delgado and Stefancic (2017) describe as “counter-storytelling,” where the perspectives of marginalized individuals are used to challenge the supposed neutrality of dominant cultural discourses. In order to explore these narrative and symbolic strategies, the present study employs three key theoretical approaches.

Therefore, the theoretical backgrounds of representation, autobiography, and race are essential to frame this study. Microaggression theory provides a lens for analyzing how subtle and covert forms of racism appear in everyday interactions. Psychoanalytic theory offers tools to explore how trauma and repression are symbolically represented in cinematic language. Meanwhile, Critical Race Theory situates these experiences within broader systemic and historical structures of racial inequality. Together, these approaches highlight how *Get Out* operates simultaneously as a personal narrative, a psychological exploration, and a critique of systemic racism.

In this regard, the present study is not only concerned with *Get Out* as a film but also as a hybrid text that fuses autobiography and social commentary. By analyzing its narrative strategies, symbolic elements, and autobiographical dimensions, the research aims to demonstrate how Peele transforms lived experiences into cultural critique, thereby contributing to both film studies and broader discussions of race and representation in contemporary society.

One of the more interesting instances is Jordan Peele's *Get Out* 2017. The film is not only a commercial triumph, but it is also a profound social study of racism, racial conflict, and one's own encounters with societal prejudice. Peele uses the horror genre to explore these subjects in a unique and thought-provoking manner. Jordan Peele's *Get Out* is one of those movies that has captured the world's attention, not only for its artistic excellence, but also for its social content. The movie cleverly combines horror elements with profound social commentary, making it one of the most significant cinematic works of the last decade. With its unique approach, *Get Out* not only entertains, but also provokes people's thoughts on complex social issues. One of the main attractions of this movie is its success in raising the issue of racism through a fresh and innovative perspective. Using the horror genre, Jordan Peele explores the fear experienced by black individuals in a predominantly white society. The movie highlights forms of racism that are often covert and not immediately visible, but still have a significant impact on individual lives. The narrative built in *Get Out* presents a reflection of the social tensions that exist in the United States, especially regarding interracial relationships.

Get Out's impact on society cannot be ignored. The movie was not only a commercial success, but also earned many prestigious awards, including the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay in 2018. In addition, *Get Out* is considered part of a "new movement" in horror films that uses the genre to explore social and political issues. The film managed to spark a wide-ranging dialog about racism and identity in the United States, while strengthening Peele's position as a filmmaker who is able to blend entertainment with social criticism. As such, *Get Out* not only functions as a work of art, but also as a tool to spark in-depth discussions about social issues that are relevant today. In this context, it is important to understand how Peele's personal experiences contributed to the making of this movie. The autobiographical elements in *Get Out* provide an additional layer to the story, allowing the audience to see how an artist's life experiences can shape his or her views on broader social issues. As such, the movie serves not only as entertainment, but also as a mirror for society to reflect and discuss important themes. This dual nature artistic and sociopolitical forms the central rationale for this research.

Through this study, the researcher aims to explore the autobiographical components in *Get Out* and examine how they contribute to the film's societal critique. To provide context and clarify the objectives of this study, several key reasons underpin the selection of this topic as the primary focus of analysis. First, *Get Out* is a film rich in social commentary on racial experiences, making it highly relevant to the current sociocultural climate, particularly within the United States. Second, the film reflects Jordan Peele's personal struggles with identity and race as a Black filmmaker, offering valuable material for autobiographical interpretation. Third, examining the autobiographical elements in the film can offer deeper insight into how individual experiences are transformed into powerful social critique through visual storytelling. Therefore, this research seeks not only to analyze the film on a textual level but also to uncover the personal dimensions embedded within its narrative as a reflection of broader societal issues.

This study explores the autobiographical themes present in Jordan Peele's *Get Out* by employing a qualitative descriptive analysis approach. This methodology was selected as it aligns with the researcher's objective of understanding how Peele's personal experiences are interwoven into the film's narrative while simultaneously delivering social critique. The primary data source will be the film *Get Out* itself, analyzed through multiple viewings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the plot, themes, visual elements, and character dynamics. Particular attention will be given to scenes that reflect Peele's lived experiences and convey the film's underlying social commentary.

To support this analysis, the researcher will also conduct a literature study to gather secondary data, including relevant books, journal articles, and previous research. The literature reviewed will focus on issues related to racism, identity, and autobiographical elements in film. This information will be used to develop a theoretical framework that strengthens the overall analysis. Additionally, directed observation techniques will be applied to examine key events, dialogues, symbolism, and character interactions that emphasize themes of racism and personal experience. This method is intended to capture significant moments that contribute to the film's overarching message.

To gain a deeper understanding of the social issues presented in *Get Out*,

this study employs three main theoretical approaches: microaggression theory, psychoanalytic theory, and Critical Race Theory (CRT). Microaggression theory is used to analyze subtle forms of racism experienced by the main character, particularly in his interactions with the Armitage family. This approach highlights how seemingly ordinary words or actions can convey implicit hostility or exclusion based on race. Psychoanalytic theory, on the other hand, is applied to interpret the symbolic elements in the film that reflect psychological conflict and racial trauma such as the “sunken place,” which symbolizes feelings of alienation and loss of control. Meanwhile, Critical Race Theory provides a broader conceptual framework to examine how Jordan Peele’s personal experiences as a Black filmmaker influence the film’s social critique and how systemic racism operates within popular culture. These three approaches are used complementarily to uncover the deeper meanings embedded in the narrative, visual symbolism, and social structures portrayed in *Get Out*.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the explanation of the background above, the researcher formulates two research questions as follows:

1. How are Jordan Peele's personal experiences with microaggressions reflected in the interactions between Chris and the Armitage family?
2. How are symbolic elements used in "*Get Out*" to represent racial trauma and psychological conflict?
3. How do the five symbols in "*Get out*" reflect Jordan Peele’s personal experiences and serve as a form of social critique?

1.3 Research objectives

Based on the formulation of research questions above, the main purpose of conducting this research is stated as follows:

1. To examine the way Jordan Peele’s personal experiences with microaggressions are reflected in the interactions between Chris and the Armitage family in *Get out*.
2. To analyze the symbolic elements in *Get Out* that represent racial trauma and psychological conflict.

3. To investigate the strategies through which the symbolic elements in *Get Out* reflect Jordan Peele's personal experiences and function as social critique on race and identity.

1.4 Scope of the Research

The scope of this research is limited to an examination of the film *Get Out* and Jordan Peele's autobiographical components as represented in the storyline, characters, and issues explored in the film. This research aims to discover how Peele's personal experiences influenced the story's structure and how these components contribute to a larger social commentary on racism and identity in the United States. The primary focus of this research is an examination of themes such as institutional racism, the African- American diaspora experience, and the representation of racial identity in the film *Get Out*. In this regard, this study will examine how Peele's lived experiences as an individual and as a member of the black community in America are reflected in various aspects of the film, such as character portrayal, storyline construction, and the use of symbolism and visual metaphor. In contrast to previous studies that primarily focus on intrinsic elements such as narrative structure, cinematography, and aesthetics, this research emphasizes the extrinsic dimension of film analysis.

This includes a study of the relationship between Peele's personal experiences and the construction of social messages in the film, as well as how *Get Out* functions as a medium of expression that reflects personal experiences and broader social tensions. The analysis will focus on key scenes and specific dialogues that contain elements of Peele's autobiography, both explicitly and implicitly. In addition, this research will also consider audience responses and the impact produced by Peele's use of personal experiences in conveying his social criticism. Thus, this research not only seeks to identify autobiographical elements in *Get Out*, but also highlights how these elements enrich the film's meaning and resonance in a broader social and cultural context.

In addition to its role as a groundbreaking horror film, *Get Out* also marks the emergence of what Jordan Peele himself calls a "social thriller" a genre that fuses suspense and horror with direct social critique. Peele's work continues the tradition of horror as a vehicle for political allegory, but it also redefines the genre

by centering Black experiences and racial tensions in America. Unlike conventional horror that relies heavily on supernatural elements, Peele integrates real social anxieties, particularly about race and identity, into the narrative. This makes *Get Out* an important cultural milestone, illustrating how cinema can simultaneously entertain and confront audiences with uncomfortable truths. Moreover, Peele's biracial background and career in Hollywood, an industry historically dominated by white voices, highlight the autobiographical dimension of the film and make it an especially rich subject of study.

1.4 Significant of the Research

The researcher hoped that this study would contribute significantly to the understanding of how an artist's life experiences, especially those of Jordan Peele, influence the creation of artistic works. By analyzing the autobiographical elements in the film *Get Out*, this research aimed to show how Peele's personal experiences related to his racial identity shape the storyline, characters, and thematic concerns of the film.

Furthermore, this study was expected to contribute to the discourse on racial representation in cinema by examining how *Get Out* addresses issues of discrimination and social tension among different ethnic groups. It aimed to offer fresh insights into how autobiographical elements can be used not only as narrative strategies but also as powerful tools for conveying social critique and reflecting cultural dynamics.

The methodology employed in this research might also provide new perspectives in film and art studies by emphasizing the use of external or contextual analysis. Finally, the findings of this study were intended to serve as a valuable resource for scholars interested in exploring the relationship between art, identity, and social issues, and to inspire further research on similar topics.

Beyond its academic contribution, this study is also significant in practical terms. First, it can serve as a reference for scholars and students of literature, film, and cultural studies who wish to explore how personal narratives influence artistic production. Second, it highlights the relevance of media literacy by showing how films such as *Get Out* can be used as educational tools to foster critical awareness

of systemic racism and microaggressions in contemporary society. Third, it offers a broader cultural insight by demonstrating how autobiographical elements in film can help audiences connect more deeply with social issues, turning entertainment into a platform for empathy, dialogue, and social change. In this sense, the research is not only valuable for academic discourse but also for educators, activists, and filmmakers who seek to understand the power of cinema as both art and advocacy.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains several topics, such as a preview of related studies, the theoretical approach, and pertinent studies.

2.1 Preview of related studies

The first study by Purba et al. (2022), titled "Analysis of Violent Racism in Jordan Peele's *Get Out*," aims to identify different forms of violent racism depicted in the film and how the main character navigates these brutalities. This qualitative study categorizes racial violence into direct, structural, and cultural forms. The findings highlight the various manifestations of racism in the film and the protagonist's struggle against discrimination. While both this research and the study by Parlindungan Purba et al. analyze racism in *Get Out*, their approaches differ. This research explores Jordan Peele's autobiographical elements and how his personal experiences shape the film's social critique, whereas the study by Parlindungan Purba et al. focuses on categorizing types of racial violence without delving into Peele's background. This study adds context by connecting Peele's experiences to the film's themes, providing a broader interpretation of its social commentary.

The second study by Allen (2022), titled "*Get Out*: Structural Racism and Academic Terror," investigates the link between institutional racism and systemic oppression within academic settings as portrayed in *Get Out*. This research examines how the film presents the horrors of racism through the exploitation of Black bodies by affluent white individuals. Using a critical analysis framework, the study demonstrates how the horror elements of the film symbolize social issues such as the commodification of Black lives and the deceptive nature of white liberalism. The findings indicate that *Get Out* serves as a powerful commentary on structural racism, emphasizing the objectification and exploitation of Black individuals. Furthermore, the study draws parallels between the film's themes and the real-life experiences of marginalized groups in academic environments, particularly within legal institutions, where their voices are often suppressed. These insights highlight the film's role in critiquing power dynamics and social

injustice. The third study by Taylor Reisdorf (2020), titled "*The (American) Gothic and Jordan Peele's Get Out: An Affective Exploration*," examines how the film incorporates affective experiences rooted in Black identity and cultural memory. Using the American Gothic tradition, Reisdorf argues that Peele's personal and collective racial trauma is aestheticized through horror tropes to evoke emotional responses. While not directly labeled as autobiographical, the study underscores how Peele's identity and lived experiences shape the film's emotional and symbolic layers. This aligns with the current research's focus on how Peele embeds his personal experiences in *Get Out* to convey social critique.

Based on these three studies, it can be concluded that although they all analyze racism and social critique in *Get Out*, each takes a different approach: violent racism, institutional oppression, and affective/gothic symbolism. In contrast, this research explores how Jordan Peele's autobiographical experiences, especially those related to racial identity and trauma, inform the film's characters, symbolism, and narrative structure. This approach aims to deepen the understanding of how personal experience can be embedded into artistic expression to address broader cultural and societal issues.

This research aligns with the three studies discussed above, as all examine racism and social critique in *Get Out* through the film's narrative and characters. However, the methodology and focus of this study differ. While the previous studies analyze racism from structural, violent, or affective perspectives, this research emphasizes Jordan Peele's autobiographical elements, investigating how his personal experiences, particularly regarding racial identity and trauma, influence the film's symbolic structure and thematic depth.

This approach contributes a more intimate and reflective lens to the discourse surrounding *Get Out*. By centering on Peele's own lived experiences, the study reveals how the film functions not only as a broader commentary on systemic racism, but also as a deeply personal narrative that reflects the director's emotional and cultural reality. This autobiographical perspective is intended to complement earlier scholarship by offering a unique understanding of how personal experience can enrich cinematic storytelling and intensify its social impact. Ultimately, the study broadens the academic conversation on the

relationship between artistic identity and the construction of racial themes in film.

While these previous studies provide valuable insights into racism, structural oppression, and affective symbolism in *Get Out*, their focus remains largely on the thematic, structural, or genre aspects of the film. Few, however, have explicitly examined how Peele's lived experiences shape the film's narrative and symbolic construction. By foregrounding the autobiographical dimension, the present research addresses this overlooked aspect and contributes a more intimate perspective to the scholarly conversation. In doing so, this study highlights that Peele's cinematic strategies are not merely artistic choices but also deeply personal interventions into broader cultural and racial discourses. This emphasis on autobiography positions the research within a unique scholarly niche, demonstrating how personal experience can operate as a critical tool for analyzing both film and social critique simultaneously.

2.2 Theoretical Approach

2.2.1 Microaggression theory

Microaggression theory was first introduced by American psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce in the 1970s to describe subtle, everyday insults and dismissals directed at African Americans. The term initially focused on interpersonal exchanges in which members of marginalized racial groups were subjected to derogatory remarks or behaviors that, while often appearing trivial to outsiders, reflected deep-seated societal prejudice. Over time, the concept was expanded and systematized by psychologist Derald Wing Sue, who defined microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 271).

Sue's framework identifies three primary forms of racial microaggressions:

1. Microassaults, Explicit racial derogations characterized by verbal or nonverbal attacks, often conscious and intentional. These are the most overt form of

microaggression, functioning similarly to old-fashioned racism, such as the use of racial epithets or purposefully discriminatory behavior.

2. Microinsults, subtle snubs or comments that convey insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity, often unconsciously delivered. These operate through tone, choice of words, or assumptions that position a person of color as inferior or "other." Within this research, two recurring subthemes of microinsults are identified:

- **Biological essentialism**, referring to remarks or assumptions that reduce a person's abilities, personality, or value to their perceived biological or genetic traits. In *Get Out*, this appears when Chris's physicality or skill is implicitly attributed to his race, implying a predetermined link between biology and ability.
- **Exoticization**, referring to comments that overemphasize perceived "otherness" or cultural uniqueness in a way that objectifies and separates the individual from the dominant group. In the film, this occurs when Chris's Blackness is framed as a fascinating novelty, making him an object of curiosity rather than an equal participant in social interaction.

3. Microinvalidations, communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of people of color, such as dismissing a person's account of racism as oversensitive or exaggerated.

While microassaults are intentional and visible, microinsults and microinvalidations are often covert and embedded in social norms, making them harder to identify and confront. This invisibility intensifies their impact, as the targets often experience self-doubt, frustration, and cumulative psychological strain. Scholars such as Nadal (2011) and Sue (2010) emphasize that repeated exposure to microaggressions can lead to chronic stress, racial battle fatigue, and a diminished sense of belonging, particularly in predominantly white spaces.

Microaggressions function not only at the interpersonal level but also as mechanisms that reinforce systemic racism. They are embedded in institutional settings workplaces, schools, media representations where they normalize racial hierarchies under the guise of politeness, liberal inclusivity, or "colorblindness." This subtlety is precisely what makes microaggressions dangerous: they are

socially acceptable enough to go unchallenged, yet powerful enough to perpetuate inequality.

In the context of *Get Out*, microaggression theory offers a crucial analytical lens for understanding how racism operates beneath a veneer of liberal tolerance. Chris Washington's interactions with the Armitage family and their friends are laden with racialized remarks that masquerade as compliments praising his "genetic makeup" or expressing a desire to "know what it's like to be Black" which are forms of exoticization and objectification. Such comments, while framed as friendly, function as microinsults that reduce Chris to racial stereotypes. Moreover, when Chris subtly expresses discomfort, these feelings are dismissed or ignored, exemplifying microinvalidations.

Through these layered exchanges, the film captures how microaggressions can accumulate, creating an undercurrent of unease that mirrors the real-world experiences of many people of color. This theoretical approach illuminates the film's social critique: that racism in contemporary society is often less about overt hostility and more about the constant, normalized slights that erode one's psychological well-being over time.

2.2.2 Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalytic theory was developed by Sigmund Freud in the early 20th century as a framework for understanding human behavior, personality development, and the treatment of mental disorders through the exploration of unconscious processes. Freud, an Austrian neurologist, sought to uncover the hidden mental life beneath conscious awareness, proposing that much of human thought, emotion, and behavior is shaped by desires, fears, and memories that are repressed due to their incompatibility with social norms or personal self-image. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899, p. 647), Freud famously stated that "the interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind," underscoring the role of dreams, slips of the tongue, and symbolic imagery in revealing repressed material often linked to traumatic or unresolved early-life experiences.

Central to Freud's model is the tripartite structure of the psyche: the id, representing instinctual drives and the pursuit of immediate gratification; the ego, functioning as the rational mediator between the id's desires and external reality; and the superego, which embodies internalized moral codes, social expectations, and ideals. This dynamic system often produces internal conflict, as the ego attempts to negotiate between primitive impulses, moral prohibitions, and the constraints of the real world. Psychoanalytic theory also emphasizes defense mechanisms such as repression, denial, projection, and displacement that protect the ego from psychological distress but can distort one's perception of reality.

Freud developed various therapeutic methods to access the unconscious, including free association, where patients verbalize thoughts without censorship, and dream analysis, which deciphers the latent content hidden beneath the manifest content of dreams. Later psychoanalytic thinkers, such as Carl Jung, Jacques Lacan, and Melanie Klein, expanded or reinterpreted Freud's ideas, integrating them into broader analyses of culture, symbolism, and identity formation. Despite facing criticism for its lack of empirical testability, psychoanalysis has profoundly influenced modern psychology, literary studies, and film criticism by providing tools to decode symbolic meaning, unconscious motivation, and the psychological underpinnings of narrative.

In the context of *Get Out*, psychoanalytic theory is particularly valuable for examining how horror cinema externalizes internal psychological realities. The film constructs visual and narrative metaphors for unconscious fears, repressed memories, and identity struggles. The "sunken place" serves as a central symbol, representing both psychological repression a state where one's voice and agency are buried beneath layers of control and social marginalization, where Chris is rendered powerless despite being fully aware of his surroundings. This imagery resonates with the Freudian notion of being trapped in unresolved trauma, unable to act against external forces.

Chris's interactions with the Armitage family can also be interpreted through the lens of psychoanalytic concepts such as identity fragmentation and racial trauma internalization. Moments of unease, awkward politeness, and subdued resistance illustrate the ego's attempt to maintain composure while suppressing

the anger and fear triggered by microaggressions and subtle threats. Furthermore, the hypnotism scene embodies a literal invasion of the unconscious, where an external force (Missy Armitage) gains access to Chris's repressed memories, particularly those associated with his mother's death. This intrusion bypasses his conscious defenses, forcing a confrontation with emotions he has long kept buried.

By applying psychoanalytic theory, this study uncovers how *Get Out* transforms abstract psychological conflict into tangible horror imagery, making the internal visible and visceral. The approach not only deepens the reading of individual scenes but also connects personal psychic struggle with broader social realities, paving the way for integration with Critical Race Theory. When combined, these perspectives reveal that Chris's personal trauma is not an isolated psychological issue but is inextricably linked to systemic racial oppression, thereby bridging the inner world of the psyche with the outer structures of social power.

2.2.3 Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) originated in the late 1970s as a critique of traditional legal frameworks that failed to account for the influence of race and power within social structures (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Emerging from the intellectual efforts of legal scholars such as Derrick Bell and Kimberlé Crenshaw, CRT investigates how racism is embedded not only in individual attitudes but also in laws, institutions, and cultural norms (Bell, 1995; Crenshaw, 1989).

Derrick Bell argued that racism is not an anomaly but a permanent and structural feature of American society. One of his key contributions, the concept of *interest convergence*, posits that racial justice is only advanced when it benefits the interests of dominant (White) groups (Bell, 1995). Meanwhile, Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced *intersectionality*, a framework for understanding how different forms of oppression such as racism and sexism interact to produce unique experiences of marginalization, especially for women of color (Crenshaw, 1989).

CRT also critiques widely accepted legal and social principles such as objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017), these ideologies often obscure the realities of systemic discrimination, perpetuating racial hierarchies by maintaining the illusion of fairness and equality.

Furthermore, CRT has evolved to address a broader spectrum of racialized experiences through branches such as Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit) and Asian American Critical Theory (AsianCrit), underscoring its interdisciplinary applicability.

In addition, Bonilla-Silva (2018) expands the critique of colorblindness by outlining how contemporary racism persists through seemingly neutral ideologies. His concept of “color-blind racism” identifies strategies such as abstract liberalism and the minimization of racism, which sustain inequality while appearing tolerant. While this study primarily relies on Sue’s (2007) microaggression framework and CRT’s core principles, Bonilla-Silva’s perspective is acknowledged here as a complementary framework that situates Peele’s experiences within broader racial discourse.

In relation to this research, CRT provides a crucial theoretical lens to interpret how Jordan Peele’s *Get Out* critiques the subtle and systemic forms of racism that persist in liberal American society. Although the Armitage family outwardly expresses progressive views, their behaviors reveal covert racial biases and dominance. Their manipulation of Chris reflects how systemic racism operates beneath the surface of politeness and acceptance. The Armitages’ home and their performative attitudes serve as symbols of structural oppression and the commodification of Black bodies under the guise of inclusion.

This study draws upon CRT to highlight how *Get Out* reflects not only societal structures of racial dominance, but also how Peele’s own experiences as a biracial Black man inform the film’s nuanced portrayal of racism. CRT helps reveal how the microaggressions and racial anxieties portrayed in the film are rooted in broader ideological and institutional practices.

When integrated with psychoanalytic theory, CRT enables a deeper exploration of *Get Out*’s autobiographical and emotional layers. While psychoanalysis helps uncover the internal psychological trauma experienced by the protagonist, CRT situates that trauma within systemic and historical contexts. This dual approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis of how Peele translates personal experiences into a compelling critique of racial injustice in American society (Peele, 2017).

2.2.4 Symbolism in Film Analysis

Symbolism in film refers to the use of objects, characters, settings, or actions that signify ideas and meanings beyond their literal sense. Filmmakers often utilize symbolism to communicate deeper emotional, psychological, or social messages that enrich the narrative and provoke reflection (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013). Through the strategic use of visual metaphors, colors, sounds, and recurring motifs, films can convey subtextual themes that may not be explicitly addressed in the dialogue.

In psychoanalytic theory, symbolism plays a central role in expressing repressed fears and desires. Freud (1900) proposed that dreams and by extension, art and literature reveal unconscious conflicts through symbolic imagery. Jung (1964) further expanded on this by introducing the idea of archetypes and collective unconscious, asserting that certain symbols, such as the shadow, mirror, or descent, reflect universal human experiences.

Symbolism also plays a significant role in racial discourse within cinematic narratives. Hooks (1992) emphasized that visual culture often encodes racial ideology through symbolic imagery, which can either reinforce or subvert dominant power structures. Benshoff and Griffin (2004) also noted that film can use symbols to portray racialized bodies, spaces, or objects that reflect social hierarchies and cultural trauma.

In *Get Out*, symbolic elements such as the "sunken place," the use of deer, the teacup, and the Armitage house are central to the film's racial and psychological commentary. The "sunken place," for example, represents the silencing and psychological paralysis experienced by Black individuals in a white-dominated society (Peele, 2017). These symbols not only function as narrative tools but also serve to externalize the protagonist's internal conflict and broader racial anxieties.

Thus, symbolism is essential for interpreting *Get Out* as both a psychological thriller and a social critique. This study employs symbolic analysis to understand how Jordan Peele embeds his personal experiences and racial

commentary into visual metaphors, which ultimately deepen the autobiographical and political dimensions of the film.

2.3 Operational Definitions

This study uses five core concepts that are operationalized based on how they function within the context of Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (2017). Each concept is defined not only theoretically, but also in terms of its practical application in the analysis.

1. Microaggression

Microaggressions refer to subtle, indirect, and often unconscious expressions of racism that occur in everyday interactions. This research adopts Sue et al.'s (2007) framework, which classifies microaggressions into three categories: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. Unlike overt discrimination, microaggressions are often disguised as compliments, jokes, or well-meaning remarks, making them difficult to identify or confront. Nadal (2011) emphasizes that the cumulative effect of repeated microaggressions contributes to *racial battle fatigue*, producing long-term stress and diminished well-being for people of color.

In the context of *Get Out*, microaggressions appear in seemingly harmless remarks, such as Dean Armitage's comment, "I would have voted for Obama for a third term if I could." While framed as progressive, this statement reduces Chris's individuality to a political token, exemplifying a microinvalidation. Such scenes illustrate how Jordan Peele embeds his lived experiences with covert racism into the narrative, demonstrating the psychological strain caused by normalized racial slights.

2. Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalytic theory, originally developed by Freud (1899), is employed in this study to explore unconscious motivations, trauma, and repression within the film. Freud's notion of repression refers to the process of pushing traumatic memories into the unconscious, which later return in disguised forms. Chris's suppressed guilt over his mother's death resurfaces during Missy's hypnosis

session, where he is forced into the “Sunken Place,” a metaphor for psychological paralysis and loss of agency.

Building on Freud, Lacan (1977) introduced the concept of *the Other* to explain how identity is shaped through alienation and external gaze. In *Get Out*, Chris is constantly positioned as “the Other” by the Armitages and their guests, who perceive him not as a full individual but as a racialized body for fetishization or exploitation. This lens highlights how Peele transforms personal and collective traumas into horror tropes that reveal the persistence of racial alienation.

3. Symbolic Elements

Symbolism in film refers to objects, settings, or actions that convey meanings beyond their literal function. Bordwell and Thompson (2013) argue that symbols enrich cinematic storytelling by producing layered interpretations. Drawing from Jung (1964), symbols can also be understood as archetypes that reflect collective human experiences. For instance, the deer struck by Chris and Rose functions as an archetype of the *sacrificial victim*, foreshadowing Chris’s own vulnerability within the Armitage household.

Hooks (1992) adds that visual culture often encodes racial ideology through symbolic imagery, which can either reinforce or challenge dominant structures. In *Get Out*, recurring symbols such as the teacup, spoon, and the Sunken Place represent the subtle yet powerful mechanisms of systemic control. These objects, while ordinary in daily life, become instruments of domination in the film, visualizing the lived realities of racial oppression.

4. Autobiographical Elements

Autobiographical elements are defined as reflections of Jordan Peele’s personal experiences, perspectives, and racial consciousness embedded in the film. Smith and Watson (2010) describe such instances as *autobiographical acts*, where life narratives are interwoven with cultural texts. Nichols (2017) further argues that films can operate as “performative autobiographies,” presenting the filmmaker’s subjectivity through narrative and style.

Peele has acknowledged in interviews that Chris Washington operates as a surrogate for his own experiences as a Black man navigating predominantly white spaces (CBS News, 2017). For example, the discomfort Chris feels at the Armitages' party echoes Peele's accounts of experiencing liberal racism and fetishization. By embedding these autobiographical dimensions, Peele transforms *Get Out* into more than a horror film—it becomes a medium of personal testimony and cultural resistance.

5. Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory (CRT), developed by scholars such as Derrick Bell (1995) and Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), provides a framework for understanding how racism is embedded within systemic structures. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) argue that CRT challenges notions of colorblindness and meritocracy, which often mask persistent racial inequality. Bonilla-Silva (2018) extends this critique by introducing the concept of “color-blind racism,” where racism is perpetuated through seemingly neutral ideologies that deny the significance of race.

In *Get Out*, the Armitage family embodies this contradiction. Outwardly, they appear progressive and accepting, but their true intentions reveal a commodification of Black bodies for white gain. This duplicity reflects what CRT identifies as the permanence of racism within American society. By situating Peele's autobiographical experiences within CRT, the analysis demonstrates how his personal encounters with racial tension resonate with broader systemic realities, reinforcing the film's role as both autobiography and social critique.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

To clarify the relationships between the variables in this study, the conceptual framework is presented as follows.

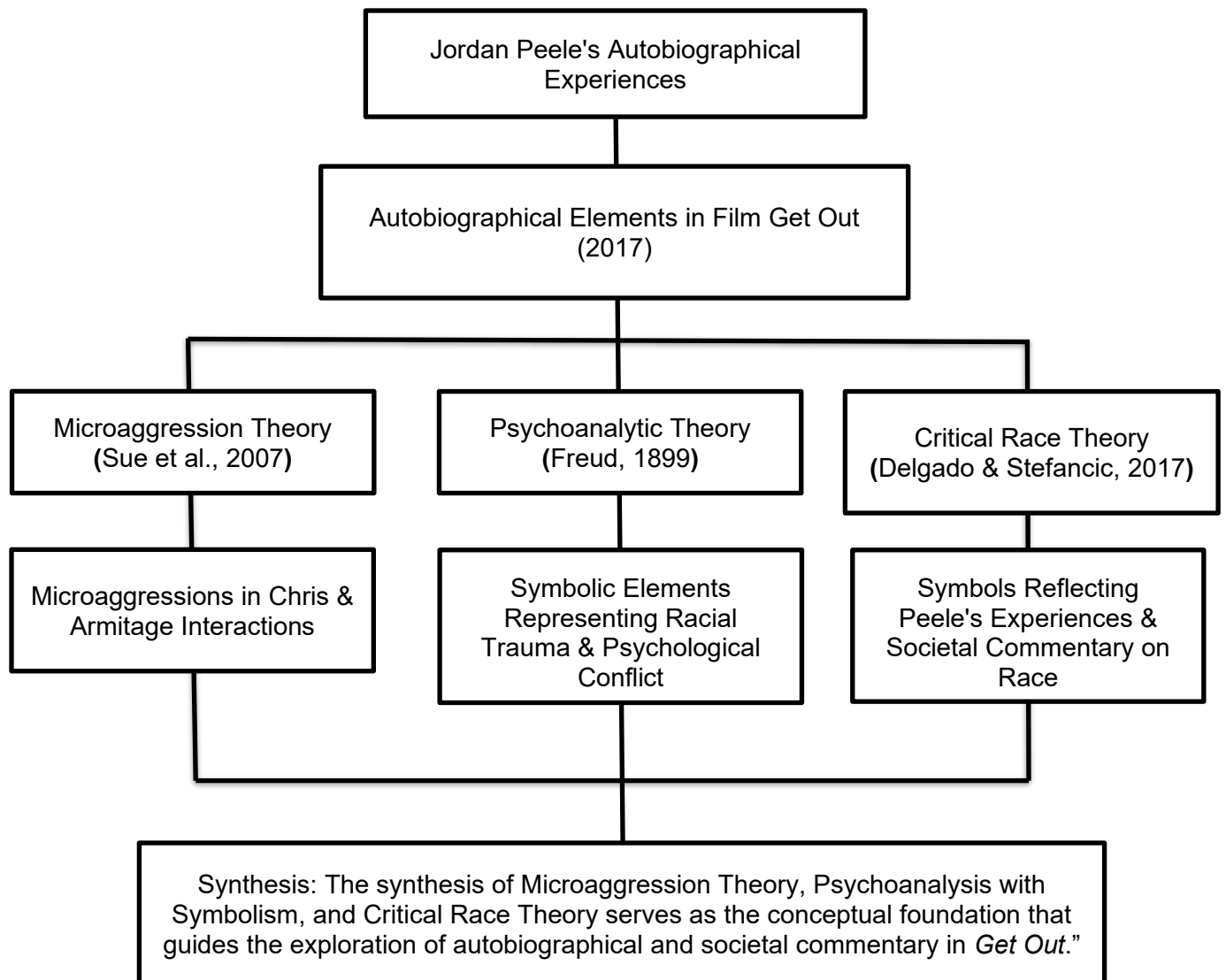


Figure 2.4 Conceptual Framework

This study aims to examine the relationship between Jordan Peele's autobiographical experiences and the narrative, symbolic, and thematic representations in the film *Get Out* (2017). The analysis is grounded in three primary theoretical foundations: *Microaggression Theory*, *Psychoanalytic Theory*, and *Critical Race Theory* (CRT). The conceptual framework below illustrates the connection between these theories and the research focus.

At the initial level, the framework begins with Jordan Peele's autobiographical elements, which serve as the core foundation for interpretation. These lived experiences are articulated in *Get Out* through scenes, dialogues, symbols, and narrative constructions that reflect racial and psychological issues.

The first approach, Microaggression Theory (Sue et al., 2007), is applied to identify and analyze the forms of subtle racism experienced by the protagonist, Chris Washington, particularly in his interactions with the Armitage family and their social environment. This theory enables the classification of various types of microaggressions and reveals the link between Peele's personal experiences and the representation of dialogue and social dynamics in the film.

The second approach, Psychoanalytic Theory (Freud, 1899), is used in conjunction with symbolism to examine the symbolic elements that represent racial trauma and psychological conflict. This perspective helps uncover the visualization of subconscious fears, repressed memories, and deep-seated anxieties manifested through the film's narrative structure and visual elements.

The third approach, Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), is applied to interpret the symbols that reflect Peele's personal experiences while also serving as a commentary on social realities. CRT provides the ideological and cultural lens necessary to understand the film's critique of systemic racism and its challenge to dominant racial narratives.

Based on the conceptual framework above, this study synthesizes the three approaches to form a comprehensive understanding of *Get Out*. The integration of *Microaggression Theory*, *Psychoanalytic Theory* with symbolism, and *Critical Race Theory* offers an interpretation that connects personal narrative to broader racial discourse. In doing so, the research not only uncovers the autobiographical dimensions of the film but also positions it as a theoretically structured form of social critique.