

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Psychology of Literature means “the psychological study of the writer, as type and as individual, or the study of the creative process, or the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature, or, finally, the effect of literature upon its readers (audience psychology) (Wellek & Warren 1949: 75). Psychology of literature is literary study that views literature as psychological activity (Endraswara 2006:96). Psychology of literature can interpret as the psychological study of the writer as a type and individual, the study of creative process, the study of the psychological types and laws present in literature and the effects of literature upon its readers (audience psychology).

Then, literature also has been growing rapidly from romance, mystery, comedy, to psychology. Psychology that discusses is already diverse and widely told by famous writer in the world. In other word, there are a lot of literary works that discuss about psychology and one of those the psychological discusses find in literary work called as Psychopathic Personality Disorder.

Psychopathic disorder is a condition in which people show a pervasive disregard for the low and the rights of other. People with psychopathic personality disorder may tend to lie or steal and often fail to fulfill job or parenting responsibilities (American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th edition). From that sentence, the writer understands that a

psychopath has more than one characteristic, steal and lie. Besides stealing, the very strong trait is lying. Psychopaths will often lie and cover it up with other lies and from the impacts, they will fail to fulfill their responsibilities at work even to their family.

Just as the writer would like to say in this research, the writer takes one of the famous novels that discuss Psychopathic Personality Disorder. The novel is entitled *American Psycho* by Bret Easton Ellis and published in 1991. The novel tells about the major character and his name is Patrick Bateman, a serial killer and Manhattan businessman. This horror novel has 399 pages and published in New York with the publisher named Vintage Book. This novel is also adapted into a movie with the same title, *American Psycho* in 2000.

This novel follows the life of wealth young investment banker named Patrick Bateman. Bateman is a handsome hedonist who has an almost perfect life. He works in a good company and abundant wealth. But, behind it all, he keeps his alter ego that he is a psychopath who kills people at night. The story begins when Bateman start killing people and traces of the blood often imprint on the sheets even on his clothes, but Bateman often lies to people who washes in laundry and his friend that it is just traces of the blood often imprint on the sheets even on his clothes, but Bateman often lies to people who washes in laundry and his friend that it is just a syrup spill. Bateman also often invites several women to his apartment, but not only that, Bateman also sadistically torture and even kill those women. In the story, Bateman also kills a bum just because the bum begs to Bateman to give money, but Bateman feels angry and upset, because Bateman won't easily give money to other people just by begging, then Bateman says that

the bum must work to get money. Even though the bum begs because he feels very hungry and cold, Bateman does not care at all he even kills the bum with the knife he carries in his pocket. He also kills his colleague, Paul Owen and he lies to detective who looks for Owen.

The writer says *American Psycho* novel is one of psychopath's stories, because in general, story about psychopath tends to be a thriller (psychological thriller) genre. Thriller means the genre heavily simulate viewer's moods making them feel anticipation, ultra-hightened expectation, use of subgenre to thriller is mystery, crime and psychological thrillers. It also strengthen by seeing the title of the novel, *American Psycho*. According to Robert D. Hare, he argues that a psychopath always makes complex camouflage, reverses facts, spreads slander, and lies to get his own satisfaction and profit. From *American Psycho* novel, Bateman tells can manipulate his kindness and he always lies to get his satisfaction.

This research also reinforces with one of the articles written by Roger Cohen in The New York Times with the title *Bret Easton Ellis Answers Critics of 'American Psycho'*. Mr. Cohen states Ellis as the writer, chooses to place a murderous madman, Patrick Bateman, because Ellis says that it seems that this man would be working on Wall Street at that time. Bateman, the narrator of *American Psycho*, is indeed as ruthless and amoral as the worst manipulators of 1980's Wall Street. He believes almost everybody is in love with him but cannot feel. He gets very upset when he cannot recognize the designer of pair of socks. He does abominable things to women, including slicing out a tongue and nailing limbs to the floor: then he kills them and, occasionally, cooks up the remains. The

purpose of this article is to strengthen this research to get the information about the character that discusses and his name is Patrick Bateman, because Ellis says in that article, Bateman as the worst manipulators of 1980's Wall Streets and he is a psychopath. Then, it also strengthen with all of the symptoms that mentioned by Mr. Cohen.

The writer discusses about Psychopathic Personality Disorder, because psychology and literature have close relationship and the writer wants the reader to gain more understanding about the application of Psychopathic Personality Disorder theory on literary works by seeing the symptoms. The relation between psychology and literature is a bilateral relation. Human's soul makes the literature and literature nourishes human's soul. Human's psychical receptions take into consideration the human and natural life perspective and provides of literary works; on the other hand, literature also take into account the life's truth to make clear the perspective of human's soul. Literature and psychology both, pay attention to fancy, thinks, feelings, sensations, and soul physical issues (Dastmard, 2012).

The writer decides to analyze the *American Psycho* novel to explain to the readers about the descriptions of Psychopathic Personality Disorder which is seen in the major character, namely Patrick Bateman. This research is important, because the writer wants to draw attention from the reader to discuss about literature and psychology and from the novel, the writer also wants to give a clear understanding of the symptoms of a psychopath, so from this research, the reader can get the knowledge and give a quick responses when the people closest to them that have symptoms from a psychopath. Then, the writer wants to tell the reader more about

psychopathic personality disorder by reading from its definitions and theories. From *American Psycho* novel, the writer also learns much more about the condition of life from a person who describes as a Psychopathic Personality Disorder by seeing his actions in the novel and the writer gets deeper understanding on Bateman's character in a research entitled Psychopathic Personality Disorder as Portrayed in Ellis' *American Psycho* Novel. The writer sees the Psychopathic Disorder in Patrick Bateman's character by seeing his actions in the novel and comparing to the symptoms of psychopathic.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the research background, the writer arranges the research question as follows:

How are the symptoms of psychopathic personality disorder as reflected in Ellis' *American Psycho* novel?

1.3 Research Objective

Based on the research question, the writer gets a research objective of the study as follows:

To show the symptoms of psychopathic personality disorder as reflected in Ellis' *American Psycho* novel.

1.4 The Use of Study

By presenting this research, the writer hopes that it gives some benefit as follows:

a. Theoretical

This research expects to contribute the development of the knowledge particularly the psychology of literary studies.

b. Practical

This research expects to enrich the knowledge and experience of the writer and other students at Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia who have interested in the psychological research of literary study.

1.5 The Scope of Study

In conducting this study, this research focuses of the main character in *American Psycho* novel, Patrick Bateman. In the novel, he describes as having complicated life, because he has psychopathic personality disorder.