

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

Psychology is a science that studies or explores various things about the mental, mind, and behavior of humans. Psychology is not only a study of human but also animal behavior normal and abnormal behavior conscious and unconscious influence of behavior, and behavior from the conception to the dead (Asia & Samanik, 2018). Freudian Psychoanalytic is usually used by the researcher to analyze the psychological problems of the character (Dintasari & Amalia, 2017). Freudian believes that human has three psychology elements which are Id, Ego, and Superego (Setri & Setiawan, 2020). That is why by using Freudian Literary criticism, the action or psychological problems suffered by the people or character in a movie can be analyzed by using the three personality elements (Lina & Setiawan, 2017). Apart from three elements of psychology by Sigmund Freud that can analyze the mental illness by the character in a movie, there is a New criticism theory that appears in the mid-20th century created by John Crowe Ransom in 1941. The new criticism considers a detailed analysis of the relation and ambiguity of verbal texts in a work (Abrams, 1981). Many psychology issues are found not only in real life but also in literary works such as movie, drama, and novel. Most psychologists believe that movie has deeper impact to the audience especially in shaping the opinion and the perception, because of the cognitive ability of human by capturing moving image in their minds (Kiranamita &

Samanik, 2021). There are many types of mental illness suffered by people with their own symptoms that are not easy to identify only by looking at one symptom. That is why analyzing the existence of mental illness in movies is very important by seeing every detail such as the dialogues, scenes and expressions (Yunara & Kardiansyah, 2017). One of mental illnesses that commonly happen in real life is Over Obsession for perfection which is being analyzed by the writer.

Obsession for perfection is a common behavior that every people has. People tend to do anything to chase the perfection that has already been created in their minds. it is possible for those who are so obsessed with something to easily sacrifice anything that is no less important in their lives so that it will perhaps harm themselves. People with this obsession sometimes do not realize that they are obsessing onto something. Subconsciously people sacrifice anything to look perfect just because they are chasing perfection without considering what will be affected because they are losing control. By doing this, many people suffer in their quest for perfection. This happens because many people exceed the limits of their abilities as humans to get perfection. Mel Schwartz in *Psychologytoday.com* says that the mindset of perfection can dominate humans to do anything. A case like this is something that often happens and people do not realize that they go beyond the limits of their physical and mental abilities in order to achieve 1 perfection.

Obsessions can also be interpreted as persistent and unreasonable ideas and are usually accompanied by compulsive behavior. Ralph Ryback (2016) from also clarified in *Psychological Today*, that the "examples of obsessive thoughts center on order, cleanliness, symmetry, security, doubting one's own thoughts and

perceptions, and unwanted sexual aggression or ideas." They will act compulsively if something they do is not based on their references or does not even reach the expectation. Obsession for perfection is the right expression to describe this phenomenon in real life. We can learn this phenomenon from the live of celebrities. The perfection that many celebrities highlight is physical appearance. In achieving perfection, many celebrities even do plastic surgery to improve their physique, they even go on a strict diet to balance the ideal body proportions to look perfect in front of the camera and in front of many people. This can be said to be an obsession with perfection because plastic surgery is a way to achieve perfection. Obsession for perfection is becoming a universal issue. Nowadays many people hurt themselves mentally and physically just because of an obsession over something. Perfection has become the standard of living that everyone pursues. Kristi Tackett (2019) said on her article that "personal standards are nothing more than a set of behaviors that are based on expectations people have of themselves in various situations." This line of thinking suggests that by having high standards, you are much more likely to achieve everything you want in life. If people have high personal standards, they will strive to be the best. It vice versa if someone has low personal standards.

Darren Aronofsky, director of the *Black Swan* movie, who also shares the same issue with *The Aviator* movie revealed in one of his interviews that "The greatest enemy of human is fear." Fear is something that cannot be controlled by humans. Fear of failure, fear of not being accepted, fear of being useless, and many more. Because of that fear usually, people will try to do better and better in order to overcome the fear. This activity can be said to be an obsession for perfection.

Darren also observed that some people suffered from mental disorders simply because of their excessive activity in attaining perfection.

Martin Scorsese as the director of this film as well as an inspiring filmmaker is famous for his several works on psychological issues, such as *Taxi Driver*, *Shutter Island* and *The Aviator* which is being analyzed by the writer. *The Aviator* tells the story of the early years of legendary Howard Hughes' career from the late 1920s to the mid-1940s. A successful director played by Leonardo DiCaprio who has a mental illness and ends up locking himself out of the world, but must eventually find the strength to put himself back in it. Howard Hughes, billionaire aviator, film producer and business tycoon, spent most of his life trying to avoid germs. Howard's character is known to have OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) and it was even clearer when the movie came to an end. Towards the end of his life, he lay naked in bed in a dark hotel room in what he considered a germ-free zone. The phobia grew so severe that it may have contributed to Hughes' growing addiction to codeine and to loners in the two decades before his death from heart failure in 1976. This movie was published in 2004 and portrays Hughes' life from 1927 to 1947 during which time Hughes became a successful film producer and an aviation magnate while simultaneously growing more unstable due to severe obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Positive reviews with critics praising DiCaprio's performance and Scorsese's direction in making this legendary movie (Dittaman, 2005).

None of the previous studies have observed how Howard Hughes tried to achieve perfection. Anne Chosak (2012) wrote on her article that "Hughes' perfectionism and need for control are common in others with OCD". If we pay close attention

to *The Aviator* movie, we will understand that perfection is one of the main issues that occur in the movie. Therefore, the writer offers something new about research in *The Aviator* movie. The writer sees that there is a possibility that Howard Hughes has a mental disorder due to trying to achieve perfection or in other words an obsession for perfection. The writer chose this topic because the obsession for perfection is a problem that the writer believes happens to everyone in reality. It aims to convincing people that perfect is not always good. Maybe it is good but for only certain times and eventually will disappear. We as a human need to be grateful for what God has given to us.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Referring to the background of the study, the writer provides some research questions as follows:

1. How is obsession for perfection reflected in *The Aviator* movie?
2. How are the effects of obsession for perfection toward Howard Hughes in *The Aviator* movie?

## **1.3 Research Objective**

Referring to the research question, the writer analyzes obsession for perfection reflected by Howard Hughes as the main character in *The Aviator* movie. The objective of this research is to reveal the indicator of obsession for perfection played by the main character and find out the effects suffered by Howard Hughes as the main character who is obsessed with perfection.

## **1.4 Uses of Study**

Any research needs to bring real contribution to the development of research and bring significance to the society. Therefore, research should be written with the reasons and benefits for doing it in mind. The main purpose of this study is to provide knowledge that is not widely known by the public, knowledge that can be applied to everyday life, and additional information. Thus, this study overcomes two uses of study. Which are theoretical and practical use.

### **1.4.1 Theoretical Use**

Theoretically, the research is able to give contribution to the research development in literature department and add insights and knowledge about the topic analysis. Moreover, the writer could be a guideline for other literature students to analyze obsession for perfection.

### **1.4.2 Practical Use**

Practically, the research is expected to give contribution for the readers to understand more about obsessive behavior that may lead to mental illness. Even more, for the common readers, this study will give knowledge and explanation about the danger of obsession for perfection.

## **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on revealing the main character in his obsession for perfection about how his obsession to pursue perfection led to his career. And what indicators show Howard Hughes is obsessed with pursuing perfection. In addition,

the author will also reveal the effects caused by the obsession for perfection experienced by Howard Hughes in the film *The Aviator*.