

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

All human activities that can produce works of art are categorized as literature (Wellek and Warren in Hawa, 2017). Both written and verbal works. However, literature is also not only the result of imaginative work but there are elements of fact or reality contained in literature, this is certainly inseparable from the beginning of the emergence of literature from the reality of life and the ins and outs of events experienced by humans every day. Film as a literary work has a strong influence and enriches one's life experiences. Movies can entertain, educate, engage feelings, stimulate thought, and provide encouragement. In addition, movies can contribute to understanding human values, this is possible because movies are a representation of reality. Movies have several genres such as comedy, thriller, romance, horror, science fiction, fantasy, musical, and others (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013). As a form of expression, film is one of the media that is often used to convey messages about social phenomena. Apart from being entertainment, movies are also used as a social construction tool. Recently, mental health issues have become a hot topic of discussion. Many movies present mental health issues, this is because the issue regarding human psychological issues seems endless to be discussed and explored.

Psychology and literature are two different branches of science. However, they are interconnected with each other. Psychology studies all things psychological

and examines a person's subconscious, while literature is a field of science that studies work of art in the form of text or writing. Psychology and literature have a close relationship and influence each other. Psychology, as the study of human thoughts, emotions and behavior, provides a theoretical framework that helps us understand characters, motives and internal dynamics in literary works. Literature, on the other hand, provides rich and deep insights into the human experience that cannot always be explained scientifically or objectively. This connection is established through the characters in literary works. Literary psychology research has an important role in the understanding of literature because of several advantages such as: first, the importance of literary psychology to examine more deeply the aspects of characterization; second, this approach can provide feedback to researchers about characterization problems developed; and finally, this kind of research is very helpful for analyzing literary works that show psychological problems (Endraswara in Minderop, 2016).

Literature and psychology are related in the sense that there are several things that can make a person experience psychological changes, one of which is emotion. Joy, anger, fear, and sadness are often considered the most basic emotions. Krech (in Endraswara, 2013) explains that emotional situations can evoke feelings associated with the actions they cause and result in tension. In the classification of emotions, there are several causes including the concept of guilt, suppressed guilt, self-punishment, shame, sadness, hatred, and love. In literary studies, the psychological behavior of characters can be analyzed by psychoanalysis approach. The theory of psychoanalysis in literature is an approach used to interpret literary

works from a psychological perspective. Psychoanalysis was first introduced by Sigmund Freud, a German neurologist, in the 19th century. Initially, his work focused on medicine, but it eventually expanded into literature. Freud, an avid reader, believed that books not only address major scientific issues but also unravel the mysteries of real life and human nature. He noted that literature often explores emotional conflicts, desires, and expressions relevant to psychoanalysis. The core concept of psychoanalysis is that all human actions stem from thoughts and experiences. According to Alwisol (2018), psychoanalysis emphasizes the unconscious aspects of personality, stressing the importance of understanding how individual traits shape a person's character. It involves unconscious elements that influence one's feelings, experiences, and thoughts, affecting their opinions and behaviors.

One of the psychoanalytic theories suggested by Freud is the concept of anxiety. Anxiety is a feeling of discomfort due to a threat in a person (Esternita Warkey et al., 2020). When a person runs into trouble in a dangerous situation, anxiety arises. Someone will realize that he must overcome a problem, which will potentially harm him. Anxiety or fear is usually the individual's reaction to the possibility of displeasure and harm that has not been faced. Anxiety causes a person to become aware and attempt to avoid danger or something awful from occurring to themselves. Freud had the view that humans are driven towards tension reduction, to reduce feelings of anxiety. When anxiety occurs, the mind responds in two ways: First, problem-solving efforts increase, and second, self-defense mechanisms are triggered. However, when anxiety becomes overwhelming, the

human mind must defend itself. Freud in (Feist & Feist, 2008) divided anxiety into three types: realistic anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. The emergence of anxiety as a trigger that delivers a defense mechanism (Freud, 1977).

Freud proposed a principle called the motivational or dynamic principle, to explain the driving forces behind human actions. Humans are motivated to seek pleasure and reduce stress and anxiety (Alwisol, 2018). Motivation is caused by physical energies derived from instincts. For Freud, the concept of instinct is both psychological and biological, a concept bordering on the boundary between bodily and mental phenomena. Instinct can be defined as the psychological manifestation of a deep somatic source of stimulation carried from birth. Freud (Minderop, 2016) believed that human behavior is based on two fundamental energies, first, the life instinct (*Eros*) which is manifested in sexual behavior, supporting life and growth. Second, the death instinct (*Thanatos*) which underlies aggressive and destructive actions. These instincts, although subconscious, are motivational forces. The death instinct can lead to suicide or self-destructive behavior or being aggressive towards others. Self-destructive behaviours are a form of abnormal behaviour that causes physical injury or damage to one's own body (Febrita & Sagimin, 2020). This inappropriate and dangerous behaviour causes physical harm or even death. People tend to engage in self-destructive behaviour because of the stress and pressure they experienced at school, in their environment, and with the people around them. Individuals who have self-destructive behavior are usually unwilling or unable to ask for help regarding their problems, emotional problems, unhealthy lifestyles such as eating disorders or addiction to alcohol or other substance abuse.

Cisalghi (in Kleszczewska-Albińska, 2022) suggests that anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder are all associated with a tendency towards self-destructive behavior. People tend to engage in self-destructive behavior as a result of the stress and pressure they face at school, in their surroundings, and with the people around them. As Nock (in Febrita & Sagimin, 2020) stated a person with self-destructive behaviours will injure themselves when they feel stuck in order to cope with stress. Self-destructive behaviors can be done in a variety of ways, including self-mutilation, smoking, drinking alcohol, using drugs, engaging violent organizations, causing intended injury, and eating improperly. Suicide is the most extreme form of self-destructive behavior. “Every year 703.000 people take their own life and there are many more people who attempt suicide,” as stated by (World Health Organization, 2023). In addition, experiencing conflict, disaster, violence, abuse, or loss and a sense of isolation are strongly associated with suicidal behaviour. The pain of losing a loved one to suicide, combined with feelings of shame, rejection, anger, perceived responsibility, and other risk factors, can become overwhelming. For some, suicide appears to be the only escape from this pain . Some individuals might even feel a sense of closeness to their lost loved one by ending their life in the same manner.

The Whale is a movie that presents issues on anxiety and self-destruction behaviour. *The Whale* is a 2022 American psychological drama film, directed by Darren Aronofsky and written by Samuel D. Hunter, based on the 2012 play of the same title. The story tells about a man named Charlie who is morbidly obese and struggles with anxiety and depression. He is trying to reconnect with his daughter,

Ellie. Charlie drifted away from Ellie after he left his wife and daughter for a man named Alan. However, unfortunately Alan died, and Charlie began to eat excessively because of his loss, and he was under a lot of stress about it. The loss of Alan devastates Charlie, leaving him isolated and seeking escape in food. Overeating is one of the ways to cope with the pain he experienced after the death of Alan and to overcome his anxiety and depression. He is also haunted by guilt towards his daughter, Ellie, whom he left when she was a child. Charlie's death instinct grows stronger as his health continues to worsen, and he feels that his life no longer has meaning.

In the previous study regarding this issue, Hatyanti & Murtiningrum (2022) analyzes the depiction of anxiety in the film "Black Swan" using Freudian psychoanalytic theory. It finds that the main character, Nina, exhibits both neurotic and realistic anxieties. Naibaho & Saragih (2023) in their study applies Freud's personality theory to examine Sensei's character in the novel "Kokoro." The research reveals that Sensei is driven by both life and death instincts, and his personality is shaped by the id, ego, and superego, which ultimately lead him towards death. Suhandoko et al. (2023) explore the types of anxiety experienced by the main character, Meena in *When I Hit You* novel. The study identifies three types of anxiety: neurotic, moral, and realistic, manifesting as tension, shame, guilt, worry, and fear of her abusive husband.

Asmanah et al. (2020) conducted research on the personality dynamics of Lucas in the novel *Miracle on 5th Avenue* by Sarah Morgan. It discusses how Lucas's anxiety, life instincts (eros), and death instincts (thanatos) contribute to his

personality dynamics. Febrita & Sagimin (2020) examines Hannah Baker's self-destructive behavior in *Thirteen Reasons Why* Novel through Freud's theories of Self-Destructive Behavior and Defense Mechanisms. The study concludes that Hannah's behavior is a defense mechanism triggered by past trauma, escalating from non-suicidal to suicidal self-destructive actions.

Based on the description above, the writer is interested in conducting research using the film *The Whale* directed by Darren Aronofsky which was released in 2022 as the data source of this study. The lead actor, Brendan Fraser, her role as an isolated English teacher trying to repair the relationship with his teenage daughter who was abandoned as a child has since earned him nominations on Best Actor awards at the 2023 Academy Awards. The film also received the Best Makeup and Hairstyling award at the 2023 Oscars. The reason the writer chooses this movie is because the main character represents of life today which a lot of cases that commits suicide due to the stress of life. Stress of life that occurred in the recent past such as the loss of a family member or friend, losing a job, or social isolation (such as living alone) increases the risk to the suicidal attempts. Some grieving people cannot heal from loss or traumatic events, even after several months (Wang & Wang, 2021). Grieving at the loss of a loved one can occasionally cause a person to experience psychological conflict. Bellini et al. (2018) stated that complicated grief can lead to significant health issues, including an increased risk of cancer, heart problems, sleep disturbances, and alcohol and substance abuse. It also heightens the risk of developing major depression, anxiety disorders, and suicidal thoughts and behaviours. It is important to pay attention to psychological aspects,

as they are deeply connected to our daily lives and enhance our ability to understand and help others. In addition, no other studies have been conducted using the movie "The Whale" as a data source. Therefore, this study aims to discuss the representation of anxiety and death instincts of the main character in *The Whale*, Charlie, with a Psychoanalysis approach by Sigmund Freud.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, this study intends to answer the following questions:

1. How are realistic anxiety represented on Charlie in *The Whale* movie?
2. How are moral anxiety represented on Charlie in *The Whale* movie?
3. What are the influences of anxieties experienced by Charlie in terms of death instincts

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Based on the problem above, the purposes of the study are:

1. To identify the realistic anxiety experienced by the main character in *The Whale*
2. To identify the moral anxiety experienced by the main character in *The Whale*
3. To examine what are the influences of anxieties on Charlie in terms of death instincts in *The Whale*

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to the movie transcript of *The Whale* movie 2022. The writer focused on the two out of three types of anxiety including realistic anxiety and moral anxiety experienced by the main character, Charlie in the movie. In addition, the writer provides an explanation on the influence of anxiety in terms of death instinct using the psychological approach in literary criticism, the dynamics of personality theory by Sigmund Freud. The writer believes that these strategies can describe the types of anxiety and self-destructive actions as mental health issues represented through the main character in *The Whale* (2022).

1.5 Significance of the Study

The writer hopes the results of this study can be useful for readers in theoretical and practical terms. Theoretically, this study aims to provide better understanding of how Charlie's anxiety and death instincts are represented in the movie. This study examines the realistic and moral anxieties represented, the effect of anxiety in the form of self-destructive behaviours on the main characters in the movie with Freud's psychoanalysis in the concept of anxiety and death instinct or *Thanatos*. As for practically, this study allows readers who have academic needs, such as students, lecturers, researchers, to get a better understanding of Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis in terms of anxiety and death instinct. For readers who do not have academic requirements, this study can help easily understand the story and provide awareness of psychological issues in Daren Aronofsky's *The Whale* Movie.