

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Narcissism is a self-centred personality style characterised by an overemphasis on oneself and one's own desires, frequently at the expense of others. It exists on a spectrum, from healthy self-esteem to pathological expression. Moderate narcissism can be beneficial for self-esteem, resilience, and ambition (Jackson & Beck, 2021). In contrast, pathological levels, diagnosed as Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) reflect a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, lack of empathy, a chronic need for admiration, and exploitation of others, resulting in significant functional impairment and psychosocial disability (American Psychiatric Association, 2022)

In today's society, people are sometimes misunderstood whether a person is narcissistic or just being confident of their own self. It is said only between 0% to 6.2% in community samples are identified with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). In spite of this, it is actually rare to meet someone with this personality. But because of the development of society, especially in social media, there are a lot of people who generalise that someone with confidence is a narcissist. For example, if someone talks about their achievements whenever they speak, they are being called a narcissist, even though it is just to validate their value or maybe they are just being proud of what they achieve.

The picture of narcissistic can also be found in some movies, usually it can be seen by the character's personality in the movie. In spite of this, we have to do

research first about the previous studies that can help us understand on how to analyse the characterization of some characters in the movie. In some movies, this characterization can be seen by the character's utterances, body language, and expressions. Because of this, there are many ways to analyse the personality of a character in a movie.

Using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory to study movie characters can provide valuable insights into their motivations, behaviours, and inner problems. Freud's theory emphasises the unconscious mind, internal conflicts, and the impact of early childhood events, making it an effective tool for comprehending complicated, multifaceted characters in film (Freud, 1915). Freud believed that much of human behaviour is driven by unconscious desires, often related to instincts like sex and aggression. In analyzing movie characters, Freudian insights remain a powerful lens for illuminating seemingly irrational or contradictory actions, often uncovering hidden fears, unconscious desires, and unresolved trauma (Shimiao Wang, 2024). Sigmund Freud's structural model of the psyche, id, ego, and superego, offers a foundational framework for understanding human behavior and internal conflict (Freud, 1923). These three components are in constant dynamic interaction, influencing an individual's thoughts, actions, and emotional responses. Understanding Freud's structural model is essential for analysing characters' psychological motivations and internal conflicts, particularly in literature and film, where unconscious desires, repression, and identity fragmentation often mirror the dynamic interplay between the id, ego, and superego (Metz, 1982; Mulvey, 1975). Using Freud's theories, we can delve into the

psychological complexity of characters, providing more nuanced interpretations that go beyond surface-level analysis, thus enriching the storytelling and themes.

The movie *Cruella* has a clear depiction of narcissistic of the two main characters, that is why it is a good source of data. In the movie, there is a lot of behaviour, gesture, dialogue, of the characters that can be interpreted as a narcissistic personality. Because of this, this research needs to be conducted to understand different depictions of narcissistic personality and how it can affect the people around them. It also can help people to understand the difference between someone with narcissistic personality and people that have more confidence than ordinary people. Narcissistic Personality Comparison of Cruella and Baroness in *Cruella* (2021), can help us to understand that narcissism is far more complicated and potentially has a negative impact in our life, that is portrayed by the two of the main characters, Cruella and Baroness. People with this personality can make a benefit out of us without thinking about our own desires, sometimes they even make us think that they are a nice person. Sometimes, we do not even realise that they are already manipulating us to get what they want. That is why, it is important to be more aware of someone with this personality, because maybe there is someone with this personality that we did not realise in our life. So that we can avoid being involved with them while preventing them from taking advantage of us and harm us.

In one of the prior studies, titled "Cruella: A Deep Psychological Analysis" (Katona, 2023), the character of Cruella is examined through a broad psychological lens, with a focus on her narcissistic tendencies. The article tells Cruella, who was initially Estella, as she matures into a personality known for her flashy clothes,

manipulation, and need for recognition from others. This narcissism is carefully presented, resulting from her desire for recognition, deep insecurities, and unresolved trauma. Her obsession with expensive self-presentation, media power, and revenge-driven ambition originates from a narcissistic self-image created by emotional wounds. In this study, psychological defence mechanisms like sublimation, projection, and dissociation are linked to her narcissistic character, implying that her inventiveness and brave are both representations of internal conflict and coping techniques for psychological pain. Finally, the study views her narcissism not only as ego, but as a complicated, trauma-rooted construct that connects with her journey of identity and self-acceptance.

Based on this previous study, the difference with the research that will be conducted is that, this research will focus on comparison of two of the main characters in *Cruella* (2021) that have a narcissistic personality and also analyse how it can impact people around them using the theory of Freud. It is new from other research because we can have a clear understanding and comparison of people with narcissism based on the characters in a modern movie that depict today's society.

## 1.2 Research Questions

1. How are the comparison of narcissistic personalities of Cruella and Baroness portrayed in *Cruella* (2021) movie script?
2. How do narcissistic personalities impact the people around Cruella and Baroness in *Cruella* (2021)?

## 1.3 Purpose of The Study

1. To compare the narcissistic personalities portrayed by Cruella and Baroness in *Cruella* (2021) movie script
2. To analyse the impact of narcissistic personalities to the people around Cruella and Baroness in *Cruella* (2021)

## 1.4 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on analysing comparison of narcissistic personalities portrayed by Cruella and Baroness in *Cruella* (2021). The study will specifically investigate utterances and body language of Cruella and Baroness to determine their differences of narcissistic personalities and how it can impact the people around them. The focus will be limited to the two main characters, Cruella and Baroness, with data collected from the whole scenes of the movie.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the growing literature on the comparison of the portrayal of psychological disorders in media, specifically Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) in *Cruella* (2021). By analysing the characters of Cruella de Vil

and Baroness Von Hellman, the research examines how movie shapes public perceptions of narcissism. It explores how *Cruella* presents a different character with same personality traits, and how this portrayal influences audience attitudes, helping to identify stereotypes and reduce stigma around NPD. Ultimately, the study encourages critical thinking about media representations of mental health, encouraging awareness toward individuals with narcissistic traits.

