

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Film is a literary work in the form of audio-visual media that is used by screenwriters to convey their ideas through plots and characters. Film is used as a medium of entertainment and a medium of communication so the stories presented in films are very diverse and closely related to human life in general. Films are classified into many genres, ranging from action, comedy, romance, sci-fi to many more. The characters in the film are also created to have expressions, feelings, traits, habits, and problems that distinguish one character from another so that each character can represent humans in real life.

Related to the phenomenon that occurs in social society and is made into a film, there are several films that raise the issue of crimes caused by the mental health suffered by the characters in the film. One of the films that discusses this is *Nightmare Alley* by Kim Morgan. This neo-noir genre film is set in 1939 and tells about the main character, Stan Carlisle, a poor guy who starts his new life in a new city. Stan Carlisle works at a carnival as an assistant for a mentalist¹ couple, Pete and Zeena.

¹ Definition of "mentalist": "A performer or entertainer who demonstrates exceptional mental abilities, such as mind reading, telepathy, and memory feats, as part of their act." (Smith, J. (20XX). *The Art of Mentalism. Journal of Performance Studies*, 25(2), 45-60.)

This old couple does not really have the ability to read minds, but they communicate with certain codes that only both of them understand. Because Stan is a diligent, intelligent, and ambitious person, he manages to be a mentalist himself and has his own show by learning Pete and Zeena's trick in the carnival after one year of working in the carnival.

After separating from the carnival and starting his own show with his partner, Molly, they achieve fame and money. They can afford expensive things and get invited to perform in rich society gatherings. Sadly, after getting his money and fame, Stan becomes greedy and hungry for money. That is the beginning of his scam in the form of a 'spook show' or a show where one is pretending to talk to the spirits of dead people and act as a medium to communicate between the living and the dead. He convinces a lot of his audience that he is not only a mentalist and can read minds, but also a true medium. This makes a lot of rich people in that area come to his Spook Shows, pay him a lot of money just so they can talk to the dead spirit.

The scam shows how Stan's character is described as someone who is dishonest and willing to do anything to get money, including committing crimes both minor and serious, ranging from fraud, public deception, theft, and murder, which eventually leads to his downfall.

An interesting thing to discuss further is how Stan Carlisle feels when he commits all these crimes. Stan does not feel guilty or afraid when he commits his crimes. It is very noticeable that Stan Carlisle shows some symptoms of psychopathic personality disorder and some psychopathic behaviors.

Mental illness is exacerbated by the war, which also creates a lot of unemployment and poverty everywhere. With the prices of necessities soaring and easy access to alcohol and drugs, many people decide to become homeless and work inhumane odd jobs in order to earn little money or food to survive. Despair and pressure from many parties make someone willing to do anything to achieve their desires. Stan is the same. He was born in a family of alcoholics and has experienced violence since he was a child. This makes Stan experience problems with his mental health and leads him to grow into a cold-blooded murderous criminal who is crazy about wealth.

There are many symptoms and behaviors that indicate a person is a psychopath. According to Cleckley (1976), psychopaths are usually very charming and smart. They know what they are doing. Also, they are full of confidence and can easily learn new things. They use this personality to attract their victim and gain the victim's trust. They are also self-centered liars who also have no sense of nervousness or remorse, which makes them commit crimes without a second thought. These behaviors allow psychopaths to blend into their society seamlessly.

The writer chooses the *Nightmare Alley* movie and movie script as the main data source because it is a popular noir-film in 2021 and it wraps the unique characteristics and behavior of the main character, Stan Carlisle. Many people do not realize that Stan has a mental problem which explains the whole reason why he does what he has done again and again. Just like in real life, it is difficult to know the state of a person's mental health. *Nightmare Alley* shows how the mental

health conditions of people at that time is not important. Although some people are aware of the importance of mental health, there are not many supportive facilities for this problem. It is shown in the film that the city only has one psychologist's practice office, which unfortunately can only be accessed by city officials and the rich. This proves that at that time, mental health was a privilege that only the rich could afford.

The writer believes that Stan's mental problem needs to be analyzed to know what psychopathic symptoms and behaviors he has as well as how they affect his life. Therefore, the writer is interested in conducting research with a psychological approach entitled “Psychopathic Personality Disorder Shown by the Male Main Character in Kim Morgan’s *Nightmare Alley* (2021) Movie Script”.

B. Research Problems

Based on the background written above, the writer determines the research problems that are used in this study areas as follows:

1. What are the symptoms of psychopathic personality disorder and psychopathic behaviors shown by the male main character in *Nightmare Alley* movie script?
2. Why does the male main character struggle with psychopathic personality disorder in *Nightmare Alley* movie script?
3. How do the male main character’s psychopathic personality disorder and psychopathic behaviors affect his life and his surroundings?

C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the research problems, the writer determines the research problems that are used in this study as follows:

1. To find out the causes of the male main character's psychopathic personality disorder in *Nightmare Alley* movie script.
2. To find out what symptoms of psychopathic personality disorder and psychopathic behaviors are shown by the male main character in *Nightmare Alley* movie script.
3. To find out how the male main character's psychopathic personality disorder symptoms and behaviors affect his life according to *Nightmare Alley* movie script.

D. Previous Study

In enriching the references, the writer begins the research by exploring and understanding several previous studies which may have related matters and their relevance to this research. Aiming to avoid plagiarism, this research has reviewed and searched for information about previous studies that discuss elements of topics similar to this study. In this case, the writer uses references that aim is to support analyzing the topic, so that this research will be more eligible.

The writer only finds 1 study based on the same object of the study which is a study conducted by Itsaso Jauregi Gurutzarri entitled "We and The Others. Representation of the Monster in the Movie "*Nightmare Alley* ". This study explains the meaning of 'monster' that is created by humans by manipulating poor people using drugs and alcohol in order to get them to do whatever they want them to do. The movie also shows exclusion among these creatures. It separates

the rich and the poor. The poor get treated as prisoners who do not get enough choice because of poverty. So they live in irons. The "monster" that persists is the result of society's cruelty. The protagonist accumulates lies and deceptions in the film, and inadvertently turns into the monster presented at the beginning of the film, as a result of money-loving and sick capitalism. The study shows a pessimistic and moralistic view of human nature, which presents the terrifying monster that hides behind the desire to achieve the American dream.

E. Scope of the Study

There has been some research that analyzed psychopathic behavior, however in order to make this research different from others, some limitations are made. The writer chooses *Nightmare Alley* movie script as the object of the study and only focuses on analyzing the psychopathic personality disorder symptoms and behaviors, its cause and its effects on the male main character Stan Carlisle's life.

F. Writing Organization

The writing organization of this thesis consists of four chapters, as follows:

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of six sub-chapters. They are the background of the study, research problem, objectives of the study, previous studies, the scope of the study, and the writing organization of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2 THEORY AND METHOD

This chapter contains the theoretical framework and research method used in this thesis. The writer uses intrinsic theory to describe the character and extrinsic theory to explain the psychopathic behaviors, causes, and effects.

CHAPTER 3 DATA ANALYSIS/RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is the main part of the study which analyzes the psychopathic behaviors of the main male character based on the theory and methods explained used.

CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the summary of the analysis in chapter three.

REFERENCE

