

**PSYCHOPATHIC PERSONALITY REFLECTED IN TOM TYKWER'S  
*PERFUME: THE STORY OF A MURDERER* (2006)**

**PUBLICATION ARTICLE**

Submitted to Fulfill One of the Requirements for the Completion of  
Post Graduate Degree in Language Study Program



by

APRILIA RIYANA PUTRI

S 200 110 012

**MAGISTER OF LANGUAGE STUDY**

**POST GRADUATE PROGRAMME**

**MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA**

**2014**

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It has been declared eligible

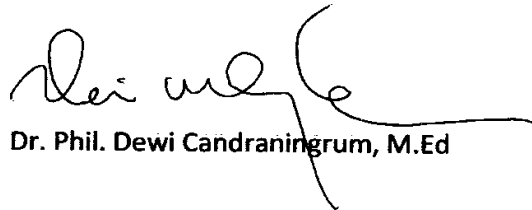
June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014

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## ABSTRACT

(Aprilia Riyana Putri, S 200 110 012, 2014. *Psychopathic Personality Reflected in Tom Tykwer's Perfume : the Story of a Murderer* (2006)). Thesis. Magister of Language Study. Faculty of Language Department. Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. Advisors: (1) Dr. M. Thoyibi, M.S. (2) Dr. Phil. Dewi Candraningrum, M.Ed.

This research aims at: (1) To find the characteristics of psychopath as shown in *Perfume: the Story of a Murderer* (2006) movie. (2) To know the conditions that make a person can be categorized as a psychopath as in *Perfume: the Story of a Murderer* (2006) movie. (3) To analyze how can a person become a psychopath as shown in *Perfume: the Story of a Murderer* (2006) movie. (4) To find out the effects of psychopath as shown in *Perfume: the Story of a Murderer* (2006) movie.

The qualitative research is carried out by making use of the descriptive method. The researcher analyzes the data by using abnormal psychology and behaviorist. The analysis is used for: describing the extrinsic elements of film including the psychological condition of main character Jean Baptiste Grenouille; the factors of Jean Baptiste Grenouille being a psychopath.

Based on the result of the data analysis, the research finds the characteristics, symptoms, causes and effects of psychopath on the major character in this movie that is Grenouille. There are some factors that influenced someone's behavior. Those are gene, parents, environment, job or position, educational level, media and motivation.

*Key words: Perfume: the Story of a Murderer* (2006), *psychopath*, *Jean Baptiste Grenouille*, *Abnormal psychology*, *Behaviorist approach*.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Life is not always talking about a beautiful story that full of happiness, love and peace. There are so many problems face by people in their life such as disappointment, sorrow, strife, revenge, sexual harassment, rape, and also psychopathic trait.

Every person has a desire to get the best things in life, for examples; having desire to get the best job, to be rich, to be a leader, to be a beautiful girl with perfect body, to be an artist, to have many cars and etc. It is really important as it can create a power, but having desire to make perfume by killing twenty five girls sounds frightening. Someone who has a decreased sense of emotional investment in others, shallow emotion and lack of empathy is defined as a psychopath (Hare, 1993: 34).

Psychopaths are social predators who charm, manipulate and ruthlessly plow their way through life, leaving a broad trail of broken hearts and shattered expectations without the slightest sense of guilt or regret (Hare, 1993: xi). However, not all psychopaths are criminals. They are more likely to be men and women you know who move through life with supreme self-confidence - but without a conscience (Hare, 1993: 5-6).

*Perfume: the Story of a Murderer* tells the twisted tale of a broken boy in a broken society. This boy, Jean Baptiste Gronuille, has complex characters in his background, his motivation, and the way he is represented to the audience. However, in two versions of the story, the original novel by Patrick Suskind and the film directed by Tom Tykwer, the character is taken in subtly different directions. Both authors adapt to their medium, Suskind uses graphic and descriptive diction while Tykwer utilizes the camera's eye and the lead actor's performance to present Gronuille as a wholeheartedly evil murderer and a pitiable, misguided outcast, respectively. Naturally, such a change in character significantly changes the theme of each work. Though both deal

with identity, humanity's flaws, and death, Suskind's *Grenouille* shows the absolute evil that exists in an absolutely evil world.

According to Nessie Agustina (2011: 2) in her thesis "The Unconscious Mind of a Psychopath in Patrick Suskind's *Perfume: the Story of a Murderer*", she analyzed one characteristic of psychology problems shown in *Perfume* novel by Patrick Suskind, Grenouille. The analysis is including mind and action of Grenouille who has a big desire to the scent, so he acts as a murderer to get what he wants. And this psychological problem is called psychopath. The data is taken from perfume novel. It means that the text in this novel is used as the sources of analysis. The personality analysis of the main character is using Sigmund Freud theory in psychology. The analysis is divided into two steps; those are the experience of the main character that is not accepted in his family and environment and this condition influences his mind when he becomes adult.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher would like to analyze the characteristics, symptoms, causes and effects of psychopathic personality as shown in *Perfume: the Story of a Murderer* (2006) movie based on abnormal psychology and behaviorist approach.

## **B. Theoretical Foundation**

Psychopathy infects the full spectrum of humanity irrespective of race, culture, geography, economic class or personality type. It is distributed in a population in a similar way that left-handedness is. One would not notice a person is left handed until you see him write or catch a ball. Similarly, one may not notice a psychopath until you see him do something that requires them to have a conscience (Verstappen, 2011: 5).

Most people think of a psychopath as a rare creature found only in the lowest levels of society. However, the reverse is true. They are not rare, but actually quite common, and you are more likely to find psychopaths in the

boardroom than on the wrong side of the tracks. The reason is that the more competitive a particular environment is, the more ruthless the use of the Cheating Strategy becomes. Within the highest circles of power and wealth, a lack of pity and remorse is practically a prerequisite to success, and only the psychopathic mentality can thrive.

Psychopathic killers, however, are not mad, according to accepted legal and psychiatric standards. Their acts result not from a deranged mind but from a cold, calculating rationality combined with a chilling inability to treat others as thinking, feeling human beings. Such morally incomprehensible behavior, exhibited by a seemingly normal person, leaves us feeling bewildered and helpless (Hare, 1993: 5).

The study of psychopath reveals an individual who is incapable of feeling guilt, remorse or empathy for their actions. They are generally cunning, manipulative and know the difference between right and wrong but dismiss it as applying to them.

They are incapable of normal emotions such as love; generally react without considering the consequences of their actions and show extreme egocentric and narcissistic behavior. Common Characteristics among Psychopaths, the following characteristics of a psychopath, defined by Hervery M. Cleckley (1941: 202) include superficial charm and average intelligence, absence of delusions and other signs of irrational thinking, absence of nervousness or neurotic manifestations, unreliability, untruthfulness and insincerity, lack of remorse or shame, antisocial behavior without showing regret, poor judgment and failure to learn from experience, pathological egocentricity and incapacity to love, general poverty in major affective reactions, specific loss of insight, unresponsiveness in general interpersonal relations, fantastic and uninviting behavior with drink, and sometimes without, suicide threats rarely carried out, sex life impersonal, trivial, and poorly integrated and failure to follow any life plan.

According to Hare (1991: 394), there are twenty symptoms of psychopath. Those are: glib and superficial charm, grandiose self-worth, need for stimulation or proneness to boredom, pathological lying, Conning and manipulateness, lack of remorse or shame, shallow affect, callousness and lack of empathy, parasitic lifestyle, poor behavioral controls, promiscuous sexual behavior, early behavior problems, lack of realistic, long term goals, impulsivity, irresponsibility, failure to accept responsibility for own actions, many short-term marital relationships, juvenile delinquency, revocation of condition release and criminal versatility.

Psychopaths can suffer emotional pain for a variety of reasons. Like others, psychopaths have a deep wish to be loved and cared for. This desire remains frequently unfulfilled, however, as it is obviously not easy for another person to get close to someone with such repellent personality characteristics. Psychopaths are at least periodically aware of the effects of their behavior on others and can be genuinely saddened by their inability to control it. The lives of most psychopaths are devoid of a stable social network or warm, close bonds (Martens, 2001: 1).

The life histories of psychopaths are often characterized by a chaotic family life, lack of parental attention and guidance, parental substance abuse and antisocial behavior, poor relationships, divorce, and adverse neighborhoods (Martens, 2001: 1). They may feel that they are prisoners of their own etiological determination and believe that they had, in comparison with normal people, fewer opportunities or advantages in life.

Social isolation, loneliness and associated emotional pain in psychopaths may precede violent criminal acts. They believe that the whole world is against them, eventually becoming convinced that they deserve special privileges or rights to satisfy their desires. As psychopathic serial killers Jeffrey Dahmer and Dennis Nilson expressed, violent psychopaths ultimately reach a point of no return, where they feel they have cut through the last thin

connection with the normal world. Subsequently their sadness and suffering increase and their crimes become more and more bizarre (Martens, 2001: 2).

Verstappen (2011: 11) explain that different types of psychopath bring different effects. He also categorized the psychopath into narcissists, the victim, con artist, malevolent and professional psychopath.

Narcissists, like the mythological Greek namesake Narcissus, are so overcome with self-love that nothing else in the world matters but them. They need a constant source of *Narcissistic Supply*, which is attention, adoration, recognition, awards, and praise.

The danger to the public from narcissists is the drain on energy, time, resources, and emotional wellbeing. A narcissist is interested in a person only for what narcissistic supply that person can provide. They will gladly accept love, attention, affection, adoration, praise, emotional and financial support, but being without empathy, they cannot reciprocate any of it. Any partnership they enter into will always be one sided. Once a person ceases to be a source of narcissistic supply, or a better source comes along, they are discarded without hesitation or consideration. Thus, do narcissists leave behind them a trail of broken hearts, broken dreams, empty wallets, and abandoned children (Verstappen, 2001: 12).

The victim is commonly used by female psychopaths, (but by no means unheard of among males) is the professional victim stereotype. Preying on what psychopaths see as a weakness in others, sympathy, the female psychopath appears helpless, pitiful, emotionally fragile, persecuted, and sexually vulnerable. She pretends heartfelt gratitude for whatever small kindness strangers provide her, but behind the mask is a cunning, ruthless, and loveless predator. Often using sex as the hook, they can juggle several victims at a time draining them of life and money until there is nothing left, then skipping town to avoid the repercussions.

The next type is con artist. But not all con artists are psychopaths, but psychopaths make convincing con artists. Being excellent liars, they put that talent to use by cheating others. Without a conscience or remorse to stand in the way, they are free to cheat old women out of their life savings, sell quack cures to terminally ill patients, or shortchange the blind. They are usually charming, articulate and convincing, and make successful salespersons. Unlike the Narcissist, the con artist is not as concerned about love or attention, as money. The after effects of these psychopaths are usually financial devastation along with all the repercussions of broken marriages, suicides, alcoholism, domestic violence, drug addiction, and ruined lives.

The Malevolent Psychopath is the real life monster of our nightmares. These are the wife-beaters, murderers, serial killers, stalkers, rapists, sadists, pedophiles, gangsters, interrogators, and terrorists. They are usually career criminals and can amass an extensive criminal record while still in their early teens. The malevolent psychopath can show signs of their illness as early as age three. Early warning signs include compulsive lying, fighting, stealing, bullying, bad judgment, cheating, cruelty to animals, vandalism, truancy, sexual activity, fire-setting, substance abuse, and running away from home. The malevolent psychopath is the natural born killer.

The Professional Psychopath that is the most destructive. While the victims of the former can range in the dozens, the victims of the professional psychopath can run into the tens of millions. These psychopaths litter history with genocides and the destruction of entire nations and empires. Historical examples include such monsters as Stalin, Pol Pot, Ivan the Terrible, and Caligula. While there are many that make it to the pinnacle of the political stage there are also such historical figures as J.P. Morgan, Randolph Hearst, and Mayer Rothschild, professional psychopaths that reach the pinnacle of the financial stage where they cause no less misery and destruction as their political counterparts.

The professional psychopath is just as malevolent, narcissistic, and remorseless, as the other stereotypes, they are just much smarter. They can be found in any profession but usually governments, corporations, and religions will be thick with them.

### **C. Research Methodology**

The writer uses descriptive qualitative research to analyze film and other related data sources to support the subject matter. Based on the book written by John W Crosswell (2007), *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, descriptive research is a kind of qualitative research in which the researcher describes the present status of people, attitude, and progress. In this study, the writer will focus on analyzing the plot and characterization reflected in perfume movie to understand the psychological aspects which encourage the main character in his the way of thinking and his action from the points of view of psychopathic personality.

The writer's object of the study is Tom Tykwer's movie, *Perfume: the Story of a Murderer* in 2006. This movie was adapted from perfume novel written by Patrick Suskind in 1985.

In this study, the researcher will make use of multiple sources of data. There are two sources of the data in the study, namely primary and secondary data source, those are (1) The primary data source of the study is Tom Tykwer's *Perfume: the Story of a Murderer* movie. The main data involve the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the film which are relevant to the subject matter this research. The intrinsic elements will support the writer to find out some elements: the theme, setting, plot and characterization. (2) The secondary data source are taken from other sources such as books of literature, the director's biography, essays, comments, article historical information, criticism, and other relevant information.

The data collection is done through documentation of library research. The documentation, based on John W Creswell (1994: 118) is a kind of data collection which uses all of the data sources, the primary and secondary data analyze. There are some steps used by *the* writer in collecting the data, as follows: (1) Watching the movie many times for understanding well the movie and finding out the important sentence on the dialogues, (2) Reading the script of the movie, (3) Reading the books that are connected to the research, (4) Browsing to the internet to get some information, such as articles, journal, essays that are related to the research, (5) Finding out the important data, (6) Arranging the important data based on its, (7) Developing the data that are provided.

The data being collected are analyzed descriptively by using both abnormal psychology and behaviorist approach. The first is the data are being analyzed by using abnormal psychology approach. This analysis aims at obtaining the psychological background of the actor. The last one of the data source will be investigated entirely based on the factor influencing someone's behavior and psychopath applied in personality development of Grenouille as the major character in the movie. This analysis will focus on using behaviorist approach in understanding between psychological phenomenon found in the movie and also the factor influencing someone's behavior through behaviorist approach.

#### **D. Finding and Discussion**

After analyzing *Perfume: the Story of a Murderer* (2006) movie, the researcher finds five characteristics of psychopath from Grenouille, they are: antisocial behavior without showing regret, lack of remorse or shame, absence of delusions and other irrational thinking, specific loss of insight and pathological egocentricity and incapacity to love. One of the example condition shows that Grenouille as a psychopath found from his

characteristics is when he uses some material such as iron, chain, glass, copper and also animal as his media for making perfume. This condition is including into specific loss of insight.

The next are symptoms which show that Grenouille is a psychopath. The researcher found eleven symptoms of psychopath, those are : early behavior problem (glue – sniffing), poor behavior control, irrational thinking, callousness and lack of empathy, pathological lying, failure to accept responsibility for own actions, impulsivity (frustration), juvenile delinquency, lack of remorse or guilt, grandiose self worth and criminal versatility. One of the condition shows that Grenouille as a psychopath person viewed from his symptom is when he lies to his boss (Madame Arnulfi), he told her that the tank is being covered for protecting the blossoms from daylight, to preserve the scent better but in fact, the tank was covered by him because there is a corpse of a flower picker girl who has been killed by him for his experiment in making perfume. It is including into pathological lying.

Causes of psychopath in Grenouille's life are from source of sadness in family, orphanage and also the emotional pain and violence in his workplaces, in in Grimal's tannery, in Giuseppe Baldini's perfume shop and in Madame Arnulfi's perfume factory. His experience of life since he was a kid become the cause which is making him being a psychopath person.

The effect of psychopath for Grenouille's life is making him a notorious murderer. He kills more than twenty girls for making a bottle of perfume. Grenouille is categorized as con artist type of psychopath. He uses his talent to cheat everyone. He wants people adore him as he experiences a worst life in his childhood.

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