CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The presence of heroes and villains in every narrative is essential and coexist. In many stories, they are being put against one another as a representation of good versus evil. In brief, the heroes are mostly associated with those with self-sacrificing nature who are putting aside their issues or interests to help others (Vogler 2007, 29). On the other hand, the villains are identified with ill-mannered personalities who get in the way of the hero's pursuit of justice. The hero—as a depiction of righteousness, always acquires the absolute spotlight in the story. Every lens is directed toward these figures as the plot of the narrative follows their progressions on a journey. This special quality will not vanish even though the hero characters make a million mistakes or terrible failures. Even when the heroes wind up dead, people will more likely remember them as martyrs. With this much limelight being placed upon the hero, it is logical that the readers forget the significant role of the villain in the story. The absence of villain figures will weaken the hero characters and make the story appears dull and lifeless. It accentuates the fact that the villains give the hero a battle to fight for—they give the hero a motive to enter a journey (Faria 2008, 53).

A great number of stories employ the typical characterization in the figures of hero and villain. The two characters are simply being put in two big boxes, both classified depending on their stance with morality in which those who stray away from

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the morality will fall in the villain box and the ones who preserve it will belong to the other box. This classic narrative can easily be found in the prominent literary works such as *Aladdin* or the *Lion King*. In *Aladdin*, Jafar fulfills the criteria to be called psychopath—a quality that is completely far from the morality principle. He has bad intentions and a merciless personality. It is Aladdin and his sidekicks who have to deal with Jafar's destructive plans to overthrow the Sultan, own the princess, and possess the authoritative prowess. In line with this, the *Lion King* story is also telling about the hero Simba who needs to fight his evil uncle with his vengeful motive to take over the land and watch the world burns.

However, there is an expansion in the classification of hero and villain. The readers are exposed to new figures with complex traits characters that do not easily conform to the two previous boxes. Christopher Vogler acknowledges the presence of multi-faceted characters that are beyond the narrow classification that all heroes are saints and villains are all sinners. In his book *The Writer's Journey*, among other varieties of heroes that he describes, Vogler (2007, 34-35) mentions about an unwilling or reluctant hero and a tragic hero. These two types of heroes defy the conventional hero's description and share a sense of villainy in their characteristics and actions. The former is associated with those who have heroic capacity but are also fraught with doubts and hesitation, while the later are those with heroic capacity but tragically lose in the battle with their inner demons at the end.

Same goes with the types of unconventional hero above, Vogler (2007, 67) also realizes the presence of some three-dimensional villains who are often times portrayed

as characters that are not totally evil, but complex, human character with weakness and emotion that scream ambiguity. One prominent example would be the character of Darth Vader in the *Starwars* franchise. He was blatantly described as a true evil and appeared to be a character that did not have the capacity for being good. However, when the past story unfolded, it was revealed that Darth Vader was originally a character named Anakin Skywalker. One of the reasons Anakin joined the dark force and eventually becoming Darth Vader was because he wanted to save his wife and gain his freedom (Belkhatir 2016, 55). This served as the first transition of the character. The second transformation can be found later on the verge of the story when Darth Vader decided to save his son by defeating Emperor Palpatine, a strong figure that once became his master. The readers were given an emotional moment where Darth Vader asked Luke to remove his mask, so Luke can finally see his father. His good deeds invited sympathy. It complicates the readers' perception towards the character of Darth Vader as he showcased few personality switches between good and evil traits. This proved that Darth Vader is an example of an ambiguous character. This ambiguity complicates the character and that what makes the villain figure is compelling to be observed.

While the discussion about heroes character slowly become a mainstream, the discussions about villain characters are recently gaining considerable interest. This is supported by the phenomenal impact of the movie *Joker* that was released in late 2019. Todd Phillips, the director of the movie, executed the masterpiece using a unique perspective in the storytelling; the movie progressed with the focal point on the villain.

In the discussion of Jung's archetype, the movie captured shadow elements through the character Arthur Fleck: comedic expression to cope with a mental problem, an agent of sexual deviance, the absence of self-control, and a commentary agent to reveal the shingles of societal discrepancies (Herrera 2019). The audience was invited to witness not only the private factors that later initiate the character's rebirth as a supervillain such as the trauma and mental problem but also the distressing environment and the mistreatment from others as external aspects. It led the audience into a reflection about the amount of personal accountability are carried for failing to acknowledge people with mental issue (Ocampo 2019). Being perceived as an Oscar-worthy movie and earned top-grossing success (Rochlen 2019), *Joker* shows that positioning a villain figure in the spotlight is a viable option.

The growing interest in the discussion of complex villain characters is also found in the world of literary works, especially in the realm of drama. The world of theatre or Broadway is no stranger to complex villain characters. People are exposed to antagonists that do not easily conform to the conventional villain classification which is generally associated with their rebellion against morality principle. These villain characters undergo a transformation and take the readers to an emotional roller coaster ride as they can be despised and sympathized as the story progressed. Villains with complex portrayal can be witnessed in some theatre plays, such as Javert in *Les Miserables*, an obedient police officer who is hated for his constant attempts in tackling the protagonist; The Phantom in *Phantom of the Opera* who despite his numerous mischievous deeds, holds a pure affection toward Christine; or the character of Judas

in *Jesus Christ Superstar* who betrayed the religion but can also be pitied because he is disliked for voicing his perspective. Interestingly, the element of complexity can also be observed in Aaron Burr, a villain figure in a recent musical production *Hamilton: An American Musical*.

Hamilton is a phenomenal Broadway production that hits the world by storm. Written by an American composer Lin-Manuel Miranda (2015), the show highlights the life journey of Alexander Hamilton, one of the American founding fathers. Lin made something unthinkable. In *Hamilton: An American Musical*, he breathed a new air into the world of musical by uniquely synthesizing the production with hip-hop music, which is an overlap that rarely happens. The ground-breaking, rule-bending work is a product of brilliant mind that is polished by Lin's experience, listening habits, and his love for musical theatre that are garnered since early stage of his life from the family and neighborhood (Paulson 2015). Because of its uniqueness and cultural impact, the show earned recognition from high-profile audiences, such as Beyonce and Obama. *Hamilton: An American Musical* also became the highest-grossing production on Broadway and has won an abundance of awards—including Tony Awards and Pulitzer for drama (Piepenburg 2016). The Pulitzer was awarded as the show has brought a rising number of public interests in history and revolutionary. It also inhibited the removal of Alexander Hamilton's face from the $10 bill. With this much attainment, *Hamilton: An American Musical* is worthy to be discussed and researched since it is hugely acknowledged as a literary work with a major impact and significance.

In brief, the story tells about Alexander Hamilton, one of America's heroes that fought with the rebel troops for the country's independence from the British. The plot follows the ebb and flow of Hamilton's journey from the struggle he endured at the beginning of his life, his eminent role in the early development of the country, and up to his tragic death at the end of the story. Discussing Hamilton's arc would not be complete without taking into account other characters in the narrative—especially the vital character who has a striking contrast principle that accentuates Alexander's stance as a hero. This character is none other than his adversary, Aaron Burr.

Even though Burr is not the main figure in the spotlight, the character is present from the initial part of the show up until the end and he holds a significant role in the narrative. Burr is perceived as Hamilton's adversary after the revolutionary war (Schrader 2019, 262). Being someone that creates obstacles, Burr can be considered as a villain in Alexander's journey. This status is not only given, but it is also internalized by the character as he proclaims it himself at the closure of Act 2 by saying *"now I'm the villain in your history. I was too young and blind to see"* (The World Was Wide Enough, Act 2). However, as stated in the previous part, Aaron Burr is perceived as an ambiguous character. Despite the villain label placed upon him, he shows some favorable personality traits throughout the story. This initiates this study to reveal whether Aaron Burr deserves to be called "a villain" or depicted solely only as a "bad guy" and how his character is categorized in the existing villain archetypes.

The show may draw global attention, however, due to its being recently produced, there is not much research and academic discussion devoted to it yet—

especially the ones that specifically examine its specific character. Most of the writings encompass the foreground of what appears in the surface—impressionistic imprints of the show. This was affirmed by a journal article of performance review written by Shannon Walsh. Walsh (2016, 459) mentioned that there have been discourses about the show: the narrow representations of women in the story, the perpetuation of the white male figure as a history maker, the resemblance and the difference of the plot compared to the historical evidence, reversed stereotypes, and the limited access for the show that has made it seems like it only is available for the elitist. This inferred that the discussion about the show's intrinsic elements such as the storyline, the plot, and the characters have not been much explored yet. This initiated the ideas and chances to analyze the yet untouched elements that were equally alluring to be discussed. On that matter, the discussion seeks to contribute to enriching academic discussion on *Hamilton: An American Musical* that puts more focus on the textual element of the literary works—which in this case, an archetypal villain character in the story, Aaron Burr.

Few related studies have conducted character analysis in the drama. Focused on the women characters in the show, an analysis by Stacy Wolf (2018, 167) utilized a feminist approach to criticize the restricted and poor role exhibited for the women characters in the story. The study focused on the characters Eliza Schuyler, Angelica Schuyler, and Maria Reynolds—the only three prominent women characters in *Hamilton: An American Musical*. Another character analysis came from Filipus Gilang (2018) who studied the main character in the drama—Alexander Hamilton using the

psychoanalytic approach. These related studies show which area has not been much discussed and it motivates the making of this thesis to analyze the villain character in the story, Aaron Burr.

By choosing the Broadway musical as the object of the study, the discussion is determined to offer a fresh addition into the literary studies, especially in the English Department of Universitas Airlangga since academic discussions on drama are still few in numbers compare to other literary genres, such as poems, or proses. This study also employs archetypal approach—a literary criticism that differs from the approaches employed in other related studies. By doing a different literary approach, the discussion seeks to provide new findings and academic perspectives toward the text.

The analysis in this thesis employs an archetypal approach focusing on Christopher Vogler's theory of monomyth or hero's journey. In brief, it is a development from Joseph Campbell's narrative structure that highlights the progression of the human spirit through stages of life towards the ultimate state of higher consciousness (Vogler 2017, 10). This study utilizes the monomyth or hero's journey by Vogler to attain a thorough depiction of Aaron Burr's character and his villainy. The theory is a compressed version of Joseph Campbell's 17 narrative stages of monomyth or hero's journey (Velikovsky 2017, 55). The framework of monomyth could also reveal a new variant of hero (Ardhiatyharsono 2016, 84). It is also functioned to acknowledge the development and the relevance in the contemporary setting, given that the theory became the standard guideline on many literary works in the popular culture (Boll 2011, 2). The result of this analysis is functioned as the stepping stone to

answer the second statement of the problems. Using the clear portrayal of the character, this study attempts to classify and locate Aaron Burr's characteristics using Tami Cowden's sixteen master villain archetype. Further discussion about the theory will be explained in the theoretical framework section.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

1. How can Aaron Burr's complex villainy be explained in Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton: An American Musical*?

2. How does the complexity in the character of Aaron Burr in the musical define his villain archetype?

1.3 Objectives

1. To obtain a thorough depiction and analysis of the complex villainy of Aaron Burr using the theory of the hero's journey.

2. To define Aaron Burr's villain archetype based on the complexity in his villainy.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In general, this study attempts to add more discussion about the Broadway musical show *Hamilton: An American Musical*. As a highly-acclaimed literary work, the study wants to analyze the work with archetypal literary criticism—an approach that not many scholars have employed to discuss the production. A new literary approach may provide a new perspective to read literary work. Besides, within the writing process of this research, there is a little number of journal articles that

specifically talk about the show's intrinsic elements. The research aims to provide an extensive discussion about *Hamilton: An American Musical* as it focuses on the character and plot analysis of Aaron Burr.

This study also renders a contribution to the discussion about villain characters that generally are overshadowed by the presence of the hero or heroine. By shifting the focus off from the hero, this study attempts to show that the discussion about villain characters are possible and as equally fascinating Directing the focus toward the villain character, this study is expected to invite the readers to appreciate the presence of other characters besides the hero that has long been discredited. The study suggests that these "other" characters—especially the villain, complete the story and make it whole. In line with this, the study also chooses to discuss an ambiguous character that does not easily conform to the hegemonic character traits. Thereby, this study aims to make the readers more aware of the presence of the ambiguous character, and hopefully, it can trigger future studies on this type of character.

This study also seeks to contribute to the development of literary studies especially in the English Department of Universitas Airlangga. It is also observed that most of the literary works chosen for the thesis are novels or poems. However, there is little attention and interest in the discussion of drama, especially musical drama. As the number of analyses devoted to drama is very limited, this study is expected to prove that doing literary critics on drama is possible and it is as enticing as discussing other literary works.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms:

Collective Unconscious:	The presence of archetypes corresponds with the concept of the collective unconscious, which shows why the shared experience or universal patterns reside in the psyche and distributed to the whole human race (Jung, Read, et al. 1971, 161).
Archetype:	Psyche qualities that seem to appear in every human mind in forms of behavioral pattern or a statement as the result of the hereditary process. (Jung 1975, 471).
Hero's journey:	A narrative structure that highlights the progression of the human spirit through stages of life towards the ultimate state of higher consciousness (Vogler 2017, 10).
Villain Archetype:	Characters in literary works that showcase some bad characteristics (Burt 2017).