

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background Of The Study

Literature reflects human culture and life, addressing social, political, and psychological aspects of society. Authors share their experiences, ideas, and critiques, making literature not only a source of entertainment but also a tool for understanding social structures, life patterns, and values. It offers insights into human life, both past and present, and is a powerful tool for reflecting on and understanding reality. As humans, we have the ability to think critically about everything around us (Verma, 2024). This concept of survival through social interaction is evident in films like *The Pianist*, where Wladyslaw Szpilman survives by relying on social connections, and in *A Man Called Otto*, where Otto's identity evolves through his interactions with others, illustrating resilience in the face of adversity (RAHMADHANI, 2017).

The Looking-Glass Self concept can be seen in the movie *A Man Called Otto*, directed by Marc Forster. The story is about Otto, a man who feels lonely after his wife's death. At first, he

stays away from other people, but when he starts talking to his new neighbors, his feelings about himself begin to change. This connects to the Looking-Glass Self theory, which says that people develop their identity based on how others see them. (Jones, 2016) explains in *The Looking Glass Lens: Self-Concept Changes Due to Social Media Practices* that social interactions, both in person and online, influence self-identity. In the same way, Otto starts to see himself differently because of the people around him.

In literary studies, characters represent different aspects of life, such as psychology, morality, and ideology, reflecting societal beliefs. In *A Man Called Otto*, Otto's character evolves through his interactions, showcasing the dynamic nature of identity. The structure of a story also helps explore important themes such as identity, freedom, justice, and relationships between people in society (Gaiane, 2021). In *A Man Called Otto*, Otto's interactions with others highlight how his identity evolves and how he undergoes personal growth. Similarly, Enola Holmes in *The Case of the Missing Marquess* defies the traditional expectations placed on women by refusing to conform to societal norms. According to a study by (Sakinah,

Setyorini, and Mas'ulah, 2022), both characters demonstrate how individuals can challenge the roles society assigns to them.

A screenplay serves as the blueprint for a movie, detailing character actions, dialogue, scene instructions, and plot development (Field & Méltatása, 2005). This research analyzes *A Man Called Otto's* screenplay to understand Otto's character development through his interactions, rather than visual elements. Similarly, *The Case of the Missing Marquess* portrays Enola Holmes, whose independent choices challenge societal norms for women. (Sakinah, Setyorini, and Mas'ulah, 2022) note that Enola's defiance of traditional gender roles aligns with liberal feminism, showing that women can break free from outdated expectations. In *A Man Called Otto*, the study explores how Otto's self-image is shaped by his interactions with others, reflecting Cooley's Looking-Glass Self theory. The analysis of these social interactions highlights how Otto's identity evolves based on the feedback he receives, providing a deeper understanding of the symbolic meanings in the character's development.

Social interaction is important for developing identity

because it helps people share meanings, understand social signals, and adjust their behavior based on experiences with others. Through interaction, individuals learn societal rules and develop a sense of self. The Looking-Glass Self theory posits that people develop their identity by considering how others perceive them, interpreting their reactions, and adjusting their self-image accordingly. Research shows that teenagers develop their self-views by understanding how important people, such as parents, perceive them, supporting *Cooley's* theory (Branje, 2018). Social interaction influences personal growth, as individuals constantly refine their self-image based on feedback. This study examines the impact of social interactions on identity, with a focus on the Looking- Glass Self concept, and highlights the role of social feedback in shaping self-perception and development.

*A Man Called Otto* addresses relevant social issues, particularly loneliness and depression among the elderly. The film reflects the reality of modern society, where many individuals experience social isolation after losing loved ones or retiring. Otto's character illustrates how social engagement and community support can help individuals overcome loss

and rediscover a sense of purpose in life. Social interaction is essential for maintaining psychological health, as the absence of significant social connections can result in emotional distress and increased social isolation (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015). The film highlights social interaction, especially Otto's loneliness and connections with others. This research reflects how social support improves mental well-being (Umberson & Karas Montez, 2010). Using *Cooley's* Looking-Glass Self concept, this research explores how Otto's interactions influence his self- concept, emotions, and reintegration into society (Cooley, 1902). Through this analysis, the research highlights how social interaction influences self-identity and helps address loneliness and depression, demonstrating the practical application of *Symbolic Interactionism* in real-life social dynamics .

*Symbolic interactionism* is a sociological perspective that examines how individuals create meaning through social interactions, influencing both personal identity and social norms. Three articles explore this framework in film studies, showing how cinematic narratives reflect and influence social behavior. One article analyzed the relationship between

*symbolic interactionism* and film theory, focusing on Game of Thrones and how it presents moral messages while forming audience perceptions (Gaiane, 2021). However, this study does not address character development through social interactions. Another discussion of *symbolic interactionism* shows how meaning is built through collective action and shared conventions but does not include film narratives (Takui, 2001). The third study focused on *symbolic interactionism* and communication, discussing its role in understanding human interactions, but did not explore its application in cinematic portrayals of identity formation (Ummah, 2019).

This research focuses on how *symbolic interactionism* shapes self-identity through social interaction. By examining Otto's character in *A Man Called Otto*, the study explores how social engagement influences his self-identity and emotional growth. Analyzing Otto's interactions provides a deeper understanding of how social feedback contributes to identity formation. The screenplay is chosen as the main source of data because it clearly presents the character's dialogue and actions. This makes it easier to identify and analyze the social interactions that reflect the Looking-Glass Self process. In

comparison to the full film, the screenplay provides a more concentrated perspective on the dialogue and actions that contribute to the development of the character's self-identity.

In choosing *A Man Called Otto* as the main subject of this research, the writer also considered how this film clearly shows the struggle of an older man who feels cut off from people around him. Otto, as a man living alone after losing his wife, reflects a real situation that many people face in everyday life.

According to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), about one in four older adults often experience social isolation and loneliness, which can affect their emotional and mental state. Otto's character, who is in his later years and lives in a quiet neighborhood, shows how where he lives and who he meets influence how he sees himself after losing his partner and the daily routines that once gave his life meaning.

The place where Otto lives, surrounded by neighbors from different backgrounds, also makes this film highly suitable for analysis. Otto's daily conflicts with his neighbors show how everyday interaction plays an important role in reflecting how he understands himself. This makes *A Man Called Otto* relevant for applying the concept of the Looking-

Glass Self, as Otto's story highlights how simple daily contact can influence how he sees himself (Stryker & Burke, 2000). For this reason, the writer believes that analyzing Otto's identity through *symbolic interactionism* not only offers new insights but also shows how everyday social contact helps a person keep their sense of meaning in real life.

In addition, this film was chosen because it presents a real social condition that is still relevant today. Many people go through moments when they lose daily routines, connections with others, or responsibilities that once made them feel useful and noticed. This situation often happens when someone starts living alone after losing a loved one or after leaving work that used to fill their days. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), about one in four older adults often feel lonely, which affects not only their feelings but also their mental and physical health. This shows why this film is worth studying, as it reflects real situations that many people face in everyday life.

By using the Looking-Glass Self concept, this research explains how daily social interaction helps a person rebuild their understanding of themselves. When someone starts to feel

lonely, everyday communication and even short reactions from others can help them feel seen and needed again. The idea that identity develops through how a person imagines others see them is not just a theory but happens in real life when people face changes in family, work, or community life. Many people do not realize that gestures like saying hello, listening, or showing trust can shape how someone sees their own worth. This shows that a screenplay is not just a story but can be an example for studying how theory and real life connect. By reading a screenplay, students can see how dialogue and actions show how identity is built through daily interaction. Through this research, the writer hopes readers understand that social theories such as *symbolic interactionism* can explain real situations around us (Hewitt, 2007).

This background also provides practical value for students and teachers who want to learn about Symbolic Interactionism in literature and film. Otto's story is an example of how a simple film shows that identity **does not stand alone** but develops through daily contact with people around us. This idea can help students see that social support helps people feel connected and valued. By using this research, readers can see that identity

grows from actions, reactions, and everyday words from others. This makes social interaction an important topic when discussing human behavior in the classroom. For teachers, this research can be used to show how theory appears in real life through film. For this reason, the writer hopes this study can give a clear view of how daily feedback affects how people see themselves and how society helps people find meaning again (Umberson & Karas Montez, 2010).

### **1.2 Statements of the Study**

1. How does Otto's conflict in A Man Called Otto reflect the process of the Looking-Glass Self through his social interactions?
2. How do the social interactions, as reflected through the Looking-Glass Self theory, shape Otto's self-identity?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

1. To describe how Otto's conflict in the story reflects the process of the Looking-Glass Self through his interactions with others.
2. To explore how social interactions, as explained by the Looking-Glass Self theory, shape Otto's self-identity based on the screenplay A Man Called Otto.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is important for education because it helps students understand how people interact and develop their sense of self through social experiences. By analyzing Otto's character in *A Man Called Otto*, students can see how communication, symbols, and interactions influence a person's thoughts and actions. This makes it easier for them to connect social theories with real-life situations. It also helps students think more critically about human behavior and identity. Teachers can use this study to make lessons more interesting by using movies to explain ideas in sociology, psychology, and language learning. By looking at Otto's experiences, students can learn how social interactions influence personal growth and the way people see themselves. This study also teaches important values like empathy, communication, and the importance of social connections in daily life. Understanding these ideas can help students relate better to others and apply what they learn to their own social experiences.

## **1.5 Scope And Delimitation**

This study focuses on Otto, the main character in the

screenplay *A Man Called Otto*, and uses Charles Horton Cooley's symbolic interactionism theory, especially the concept of the "looking-glass self." The analysis is limited to the screenplay only. It does not include elements from the full movie, such as visual details, music, or the actors' performances. The study looks only at Otto's character development and does not analyze other characters in detail. It also does not use other sociological theories or discuss wider social, cultural, or historical contexts. The interpretation is based only on Otto's actions and interactions as written in the screenplay. In addition, the study examines self-identity only in relation to discrimination based on age, commonly referred to as ageism, and does not explore identity aspects connected to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or other social classifications.

This study focuses on Otto, the main character in the screenplay *A Man Called Otto*, and uses Charles Horton Cooley's symbolic interactionism theory, especially the concept of the "looking-glass self." The analysis is limited to the screenplay only. It does not include elements from the full movie, such as visual details, music, or the actors' performances. The study looks only at Otto's character development and does not analyze other characters in detail. It also does not use other sociological theories or discuss wider social, cultural, or historical contexts. The interpretation is based only on Otto's actions and interactions as written in the

screenplay. In addition, the study examines self-identity only in relation to discrimination based on age, commonly referred to as ageism, and does not explore identity aspects connected to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or other social classifications.

## 1.6 Definition Of Key Terms

### 1. Symbolic Interactionism

The theory used to analyze social interactions in *A Man Called Otto* through *Cooley's lens*, specifically about identity formation through social relationships.

### 2. Looking-Glass Self

A concept that explains how a person's identity is formed based on how they think others see and judge them, which is the main focus of this research.

### 3. Social Interaction

The dynamic process through which individuals connect with others, share thoughts and emotions, and respond to social signals. Through repeated involvement in social interactions, individuals modify

their behaviors, attitudes, and self-concept, contributing to the formation of their personal and social identity.

#### 4. Self-identity Formation

Is the process of learning and understanding who someone is. It happens through meeting and talking with other people, having experiences, and thinking about what those experiences mean. Through this process, a person finds their role in society and what is important to them, which helps to understand themselves better.

#### 5. Screenplay

A screenplay is a script or story used to make a movie, drama, or TV show. It includes dialogue, scene directions, and action descriptions that show how the story will appear on the screen.