CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this research constitutes the introductory session of the study. This chapter encompasses the background of the research, statements of the problem, research objective, research significance, and definition of key terms.

1.1   Background of the Research

In general, film or usually called movie is a modern literary work that provides visual or motion pictures, audios, all mixed together so as to scheme and deliver one or several stories to its audiences. According to Mario Klarer, unlike drama or play, a film is a recorded or preserved literary work that can repeatedly be viewed or watched rather than staged each actor and unrepeatable (2006).

Until the early of the twenty-first century, film urged the literature world to include it as one kind of literary works by giving huge influences and impacts to them (Klarer, 2004). The noticeable realisms presented by films have invented a great evolution in many kinds of literary works, especially works like drama, theater and play as films serve a whole lot more realistic portrayals and visualisations through the modern techniques and technologies they utilized. This is admittedly in line with one of Mario Klarer's idea in his book which states:

"At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is impossible to neglect film as a semi-textual genre both influenced by and exerting influence on literature and literary criticism. Film is predetermined by literary techniques; conversely, literary practice developed particular features under the impact of film. Many of the dramatic forms in the twentieth century, for example, have evolved in interaction with film, whose means of photographic depiction far surpass the means of realistic portrayal in the theater. Drama could therefore abandon its claim to realism and develop other, more stylized or abstract forms of presentation." (p.56)

From Klarer's statements above, it can be assumed that the considerable realistic illustrations and depictions given by a film really exceed most of the realistic ones in the theater, drama, or even play. It is because a film is a recorded literary work just like novels so that there must always be numerous inserts, editing, retakes, realistic visual and audio effects that can definitely not be done on a live theater, drama, or play. Such elements that movies have amuse the audiences more and give the audiences more comforts rather than live plays have in certain ways. It also denotes that the impacts and elements of films in the literature

world have made it considered as a kind of literary work, just like novel, poetry, poem, drama, theater, play, and etc.

In terms of rationalities films can serve to the audience, films encompass a myriad of rational elements that engage audiences on multiple levels. They serve as catalysts for critical thinking, presenting intricate plots and moral quandaries that prompt active engagement and analysis. First, films act as societal mirrors, reflecting cultural norms, political landscapes, and real-world issues, fostering discussions and augmenting awareness. Second, they evoke empathy and understanding through diverse perspectives, contributing to emotional intelligence. Third, movies offer insights into varied societies, traditions, and historical contexts, promoting cultural appreciation and understanding. Fourth, films explore moral dilemmas, prompting introspection and contemplation. In addition, they offer visual and engaging learning experiences, particularly in historical contexts. Certain films analyze media itself, shedding light on storytelling and its societal impact.

As films evolve throughout decades, they were then divided into various film genres. A film genre is a category or classification that groups movies based on shared characteristics such as themes, settings, narrative structures, and stylistic elements. Genres help audiences and filmmakers understand and categorize films according to their similarities in storytelling techniques, tone, and subject matter. Film genres are including adventure, drama, horror, action, fiction, mystery, as well as science-fiction. Science-fiction has been one of film genres that fascinates numerous film watchers so as to broaden its audiences.

According to Isaac Asimov, science-fiction is a genre in a film that explores technological advancements, as well as their scientific advancements and societal changes on humanity (1975). It subsequently elucidates that science-fiction raises the possibility of advanced, alternative civilizations that many people haven't even thought of yet. Science-fiction, or usually called sci-fi films mostly depict speculative, advanced sciences and technologies, futuristic settings, as well as social reactions on technologies. Thus, one of sci-fi films intriguing to discuss in this research is 'Project Almanac'. 'Project Almanac' is a sci-fi film that is composed of some other genres as adventure, drama, and mystery. The film revolves around the time-travel events and their consequences done by a group of high-school teenagers by using a time-machine.

In contrast to Project Almanac, other sci-fi films bringing out time-travel events as Interstellar (2014), which narrates a time-travel through grand cosmic concepts and is centered

on the astronauts and scientists, and Lucy (2014) which issues the effects of enhanced cognition and human potential experienced by the main character only who's a member of a drug cartel. Such unconventional narrations in those two films somewhat yield gaps between the films and their audiences, in which the audiences of the films can't really relate themselves to neither the characters nor most of the events. In addition, Project Almanac serves a simple yet unthinkable concept of time-travel, namely travelling in time doesn't necessarily have to be way further to the past nor future; People should even just travel back to a few hours ago in terms of time-travelling rather than travelling further back to even the pre-historic era, as done by the character Lucy in 'Lucy' film just by utilizing her own disrupted brain, or travelling further to hundreds of years ahead caused by tampering with 'Blackhole'. Such concepts are eventually way too complicated to even make sense of as if the audiences were in such situations, they wouldn't even really be able to find out what they can do about that all with their mere common knowledges. Consequently, this distinct, or so-called 'peculiar' concept of time travel that Project Almanac offers will be discussed further, in detail, so as to disclose the 'Temporal Realism' of Time Travel in Project Almanac (2015)".

Project Almanac is a science-fiction film directed by a South African director named Dean Israelite, written by Jason Harry Pagan and Andrew Deutschman. This film was published back in 2015. The movie is around 106 minutes long, presents a super scientific-realistic-looking concept of time travel in its plot. The film centers on a group of high-school teenagers who discover several blueprints of a time machine and subsequently embark on a journey through time, exploring the consequences of altering the past. Set within the found footage genre, "Project Almanac" combines elements of science fiction, drama, adventure, as well as thriller to create an enticing narrative that attracts its audiences to contemplate the complexities of time manipulation. This film holds significance in the sci-fi genre due to its innovative approach to time travel and its exploration of the personal and ethical ramifications of altering the past.

Starting from the summary of the film, Project Almanac is centered around the main characters of the film, such as David Raskin, Adam, Jessie Pierce, Christina, Quinn Goldberg, and David's mother Kathy. David is a genius highschooler who often make advanced robotic devices by himself. The story begins when David is making a project with his bunch of high school friends to get himself into the university he has been eager to continue his higher education at. He eventually gets accepted at that campus, but unfortunately the tuition fee is not covered by the campus entirely so that he has to spend a lot of money for that and he can't

afford it. His mother somehow wants to sell their house and it definitely makes him struggling in finding the way out of it. While figuring out how to make such huge amount of money, he somehow goes up to his house attic and finds his father's old handy-cam. As he starts re-operating the handy-cam, he jumps into watching a video of himself having his seventh birthday with his family and his childhood friends, who are also his high school friends, and at the same time he somehow sees a glimpse of his teenage figure on that video. Knowing that there's that peculiar thing happens, he shows that video to his high school friends Adam, Jessie, Christina, and Quinn. Ending up believing him in a difficult way, David then invites his friends to come into the basement in his house which used to be his father's workroom. Surprisingly, they find a set of blueprints indicating a time-machine designed by his father and equipped by the instructions to build those arrangements up.

With a number of trials and errors, David and his friends manage to make the time machine work very well and make the progress little by little afterwards. He leads it to bring him go back in time starting from a few seconds, hours, days, until years ago. As his friends enjoy going back in time together to get a lot of money, pass an exam, have fun, David is instead obsessed with making the machine able to bring them go back way much further to the past, as well as jumping into the past alone just for his own satisfaction. Realizing that there are a lot of strange things happen due to what David has been doing, his friends eventually find out David has used the time machine to jump to the past alone for so many times, and it has caused so many disasters to his friend. Knowing that the time line has been disrupted poorly, especially the Jessie's disappearance for Jessie interacts with herself in the past, David decides to bring himself go ten years back and meets his father right when he was about to see his father for the last time before he died, all the way there just to destroy the time machine so that all the good things and chaos that have happened due to its existence will not occur at very all. He finally succeeds in making all the time machine events vanish and everything just appears at the time he struggles in going to college, as well as finds the handy-cam again in his attic which has jaw-droppingly gotten duplicated into two old handy-cams in any how.

Speaking of the Project Almanac movie, it has already been mentioned earlier that this movie revolves around time travel and its exploration, as well as cause and effects for changing the past. It became the reason why the researcher came up with the idea of delving into temporal realism and exploring authorial creativities in depicting time travel in Project Almanac film, for the film's directors considerably put so many peculiar, mind-blowing, and mind-opening elements into the film that many other film directors or writers have never really invented such

a remarkable-bizarre concept of time travel in their movies earlier. As a result, it is very essential for us to discuss first the basic concept of time travel itself, how it is usually used in most sci-fi films, and what distinguish time travel concept in Project Almanac from any other time travel films.

As its own terminology, in general, time travel is going or travelling in time. It can be going forward to the future, or back to the past. According to John Chen, Time travel refers to the theoretical act of journeying into either the past or the future (Chen, 2012). This notion of traversing time holds significant recognition in both philosophical discussions and the realm of fiction, particularly within the genre of science fiction. Within fictional narratives, the concept of time travel is commonly realized through the utilization of an imaginary apparatus commonly referred to as a "time machine." David Lewis (1976) stated that time travel means departing from the current time a time traveler is in to another time line. Based on those two statements proposed by John Chen and David Lewis above, it seems that time travel involves the theoretical journey into the past or future. This concept holds significance in both philosophical discourse and fiction, particularly within the genre of science fiction. Fictional narratives frequently depict time travel through the use of a hypothetical device known as a "time machine." These perspectives collectively emphasize the enduring fascination with temporal exploration and its diverse manifestations across various intellectual and creative realms.

In most science fiction films, the concept of time travel refers to the hypothetical ability of characters or objects to move backward or forward through time, often with the aid of advanced technology, supernatural powers, or unexplained phenomena. Time travel in these films typically allows individuals to revisit historical periods, alter events, or explore potential futures. It serves as a narrative device that introduces complex themes, including causality, paradoxes, and the implications of altering the past or future. Time travel in sci-fi films often blurs the boundaries between past, present, and future, creating intriguing storytelling opportunities and exploring the profound consequences of tampering with the space-time continuum. It is an engaging concept that leads the audiences to contemplate and comprehend the mysteries of time and its potential manipulation.

Unlike the other time travel films with such concepts of time travel mentioned earlier, the Project Almanac film gives its audiences a number of very different and new perspectives of time travel. Not going way back further to the past times such as historical or pre-history

era, alter events, other layers of time, nor going back to the future, Project Almanac excludes all of those elements by telling its audiences that going in time, especially back to the past doesn't necessarily always have to be like that all. Contrarily, going back in time can be started with departing to just a few seconds ago first and it must need enormous amounts of energy, just to go to a few seconds back instead of going further to the past or future with illogical small amounts of energy and irrational convenient techniques. Therefore, how the directors of the film pour their creativities in depicting a peculiar concept of time travel through this film, what the narrative techniques and visual effects used in *Project Almanac* to convey the idea of time travel, as well as how these techniques contribute to the temporal realism in Project Almanac will be examined intensely in this paper.

Based on the previous studies, the researcher wanted to develop the peculiarities from the researchers as follows: (1.) David Wittenberg journal Time Travel: The Popular Philosophy of Narrative (2013). This book explores how time travel has fascinated people through literature, science, and culture. It looks at its history, how authors use it to explore big ideas, and the impact of time travel on science and society. The book shows why time travel remains a popular and intriguing theme in our stories and imagination, offering insights into its enduring appeal. (2.) Ramitha Rupasinghe journal The Philosophy and Physics of Time Travel: The possibility of Time Travel (2017). This journal examines how time itself works in reality, some of time travel definitions, how time travel in physics, and how time travel could possibly happen or be done. The researcher delves into sci-fi literatures, scientific journals, and combines it with quantum mechanics theories. The journal eventually comes to a conclusion that time travel is a possibility supported by the natures of time itself quantum mechanic examinations.

1.2   Statements of the Problem

1. How does the *Project Almanac* depict its time travel concept?

2. What are the narrative techniques and visual effects used in *Project Almanac* to convey the idea of time travel?

3. How do these techniques contribute to temporal realism in the film?

1.3   Research Objective

1. To elaborate how the film *Project Almanac* depicts its time travel concept.

2. To elaborate the narrative techniques and visual effects used in *Project Almanac* that convey the idea of time travel.

3. To find out how such techniques contribute to temporal realism in the film

1.4   Research Significance

This research is aimed to explore and understand the unique concept of time travel. The primary purpose of the research is to delve into the unique and unconventional concept of time travel presented in the film "Project Almanac." It provides the readers a comprehensive understanding of how this particular portrayal of time travel differs from traditional depictions in science fiction.

1.5   Definition of Key Terms

1.5.1   Temporal Realism

Temporal realism is a concept of time portrayal and time-related elements in a film. A film theorist and scholar, David Bordwell once suggests that 'temporal realism' involves the portrayal of time within films in a way that creates a sense of believability, coherence, and immersion for the audience (1979). It then shows that 'temporal realism', within the context of narrative and storytelling, refers to the degree to which the portrayal of time and temporal elements within a narrative aligns (in this case, films) with the audience's expectations of authenticity and believability. It involves the art of representing time in a manner that engages the audience's suspension of disbelief, allowing them to immerse themselves in the narrative without being distracted by inconsistencies or implausible temporal elements. Thus, temporal Realism ensures that the narrative maintains internal logic and plausibility in its temporal dimension.

In the realm of film and visual media, Temporal Realism pertains to the convincing portrayal of time and time-related phenomena through cinematic techniques. It involves the use of narrative devices, editing, visual effects, and storytelling methods to create a temporal

experience that resonates with the audiences, making them feel as though they are witnessing a plausible and coherent progression of events. This concept plays a crucial role in audience engagement and immersion. When a narrative successfully achieves Temporal Realism, it enables the audience to emotionally invest in the story and its characters. It allows the viewer to connect with the temporal challenges, dilemmas, and experiences of the characters, resulting in a more profound and resonant storytelling experience.

In narratives involving time travel, Temporal Realism takes on a unique significance. It involves the art of presenting time travel concepts and their consequences in a manner that feels intellectually and emotionally authentic. Temporal Realism in time travel narratives explores the complexities of causality, paradoxes, and the ethical implications of altering the past or future while maintaining a sense of coherence and plausibility. Moreover, in historical narratives, Temporal Realism extends to the accurate depiction of historical periods and events. It involves thorough research and attention to detail to ensure that the temporal setting and cultural context are faithfully represented, allowing the audience to immerse themselves in a bygone era with a sense of authenticity.

1.5.2 Authorial Creativities

Authorial Creativity, within the realm of literature, film, and other creative mediums, constitutes the imaginative and inventive choices made by creators such as authors, filmmakers, screenwriters, and artists in shaping the narrative, characters, and overall artistic vision of their work. It refers to the unique and often innovative ways in which creators bring their stories and ideas to life, reflecting their distinct perspectives, experiences, and artistic sensibilities. Authorial Creativity involves the selection of narrative devices, character arcs, plot twists, and thematic elements that distinguish a work from others and contribute to its originality.

An American literary critic, Harold Bloom states that the true authorial creativity involves a process of misreading or creatively misinterpreting the works of predecessors. In the context of literature, thus, 'authorial creativity' is evident in the crafting of compelling characters, intricate world-building, and the exploration of literary themes that reflect the author's unique insights and creative vision. It somehow encompasses the creation of memorable dialogues, literary styles, and narrative structures that engage readers and transport them into the fictional worlds or narratives being presented. Later in filmmaking, Authorial Creativity involves decisions regarding cinematography, direction, editing, sound design, and

visual effects that shape the film's visual and emotional impact. Those aspects, subsequently, support many filmmakers' creative freedom in choosing camera angles, lighting, color schemes, and other cinematic elements to convey their intended narrative and thematic messages.

1.5.3   Time Travel

Time Travel involves the manipulation of time, transcending the linear progression of past, present, and future that is a fundamental aspect of our everyday experience. John Chen refers 'time travel' to the theoretical act of journeying into either the past or the future (2012). In time travel narratives and discussions, time is often depicted as a flexible, malleable dimension, where characters or entities can revisit historical periods, alter events, or explore potential futures. This concept serves as a powerful narrative device, introducing complex themes and storytelling opportunities, including causality, paradoxes, and the profound implications of tampering with the space-time continuum.

In science fiction, time travel often involves the use of hypothetical devices known as "time machines" or the harnessing of theoretical principles like wormholes or relativistic effects. The idea of time travel has captivated the human imagination for centuries, spurring philosophical discussions about the nature of time itself. Time Travel narratives vary in their portrayal of time's properties and the consequences of temporal manipulation. They may present time as a branching multiverse, where altering the past creates parallel timelines, or as a closed loop, where events are predestined to occur. Time travel stories also delve into ethical dilemmas, exploring questions of free will, responsibility, and the potential for unintended consequences.