CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A horror movie is one that has a lot of fans since it makes the audience to have many questions after watching one movie. This is the reason why many people have started doing research on horror movies.

Horror movies have various subgenres. One of them is psychological horror. Psychological horror is a subgenre of horror and psychological fiction which focuses on mental, emotional, and psychological states to frighten or disturb its audience. At first, psychological horror always raised stories about aliens, monsters, and other similar creatures. Over time, psychological horror focuses more on stories where the mental state of a character causes the audience to feel afraid and disturbed. This type of horror movie never shows any ghosts like other horror movies. However, psychological horror still makes the audience feel scared. Besides that, psychological horror always leaves the audience with lots of questions that pop up in their heads.

Orphan is a psychological horror movie directed by Jaume Collet-Serra, who is known for his various horror movies. This movie was released in 2009, telling about a couple, Kate (Vera Farmiga) and John (Peter Sarsgaard), who adopts a nine-year-old girl, Esther, after the mother experiences a miscarriage. What makes this story interesting is the fact that Esther is a very mysterious

child. When she first arrived at Kate and John's house, Esther looked like a kind and innocent girl. However, strange events one by one appear in their family.

It is known that Esther was not a nine-year-old girl, but a 33-year-old woman. Esther has hypopituitarism, a disorder that stunts her physical growth. She would spend her whole life physically like a child. She is also a very dangerous psychopath. In her past she had brutally murdered many people. She was also treated at the Saarne Institute, which is a mental institution.

The writer chooses *Orphan* as the primary research material considering how notable the movie is since it was firstly premiered in 2009. *Orphan* has its own charm. Previously, there had been no movies about adult psychopaths who looked like a child. The psychopathic side of Esther, the main character, is indeed enough to attract the reader's attention. By doing this research, the writer hopes to be able to answer some questions that arise in the minds of the writer and maybe a number of fans of other horror movies.

1.2 Problem Statements

According to the study background explained above, the writer composed two research questions to be analyzed further, i.e.:

1. Is Esther a psychopath according to the Hare Psychopathy Checklist theory?

2. What kind of self-defense mechanisms does she do to hide her condition as a psychopath?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

By the end of doing this research, the following goals are expected to be achieved:

1. Identifying whether Esther is a psychopath based on the Hare Psychopathy Checklist.

2. Identifying the self-defense mechanisms that she does to hide the psychopath condition.

1.4 Originality and Significance

This paper is the writer's original work and made with her best knowledge. Through the library and internet research done by the writer, it has been confirmed that the discussion of the reason Esther is called a psychopath in *Orphan* and its relation with the self-defense mechanism she used have not been conducted by any other researchers so far.

As for the significance, this study contributes to a new discussion about a relation between a person's mental state and their behavior.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

A person is considered a psychopath for many reasons. To be more specific, the writer will use a Hare Psychopathy Checklist from Hare (1990). This theory will help the writer to show and analyze the reasons behind the main character, Esther, being called a psychopath. In this thesis, the writer does not consult with experts in the field of psychology. The writer focuses on finding sources in available journals.

Besides, the writer will add the evidence, one can use the literary theory of mise-en-scène. There are a lot of mise-en-scène elements, such as setting, lighting, costume, hair, make-up, and figure behavior. The writer focused on the setting and figure behavior analysis.

Another theory used is the psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud. The scope of this theory is quite broad. The psychoanalysis theory used in this research is limited to self-defense mechanisms. The writer uses this section because it is considered the most different from the results of another existing research.

1.6 Operational Definition of the Key Terms

In order to be clear about some key concepts in this thesis, there are several key terms that need to be explained.

1. Psychopathy

    It is a condition which an individual who shows patterns of manipulation and violation to others (M. Team, 2021).

2. Psychoanalysis theory

    A series of psychological theories and treatments that originated in Sigmund Freud's work and theory. The main premise of psychoanalysis is the belief that all human beings have unconscious thoughts, feelings, desires, and memories. (McLeod, 2019).

3. Self Defense Mechanism

    The idea of defense mechanism comes from psychoanalytic theory, the psychological point of view of personality as the interaction between the

three components (id, ego, superego). Defense mechanisms are actions that people use to separate themselves from unpleasant events, actions, or thoughts. These psychological strategies help people distance themselves from threats and unwanted emotions such as guilt and shame. (McLeod, 2020).

4. Hare Psychopathy Checklist (PCL)

The Hare Psychopathy Checklist (PCL) is a diagnostic tool for assessing a person's psychopathic or antisocial tendencies (E. Team, 2021).

5. Mise-en-scène

All the elements of the movie you see on the camera, which plays an important role in giving the story a particular mood (Sreekumar & Vidyapeetham, 2015).