CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains research backgrounds, statement of the problems, research objectives, research significances, conceptual frameworks, definition of key terms, and previous studies. The research background presents the selected object related to the theories of the experts used as references. The statement of the problem describes the research questions based on the research background. The purpose and significance of the research discusses the purpose and significance of the research. Then, the definition of key terms explains the terms used in this research.

1.1 Research Background

According Nurgiyantoro (1998) popular literature as a literary work as well as an activity in the literary industry that is both entertaining and commercial. Because popular literary stories will entertain readers and generate income from sales of these literary works. Popular literature refers to stories that are simple enough to understand because it prioritizes the tastes and over the aesthetic value of literary works. Klarer (2004) defines a film can be considered a literary work because it has the same stage concept (actors and action-visualization) as drama but is in recorded form and shares some characteristics with the novel, including plot, technique, narrative, and setting. In a sense, this film is similar to a literary work that has been recorded and can be looked back on (Klarer, 2004). According to Adi (2011) films and novels which are forms of well-known literary works that can be considered as useful medium for expressing people's emotions, because film is a type of entertainment in which a story is acted that strongly influenced by the history of literary works and one of the most popular forms of media (Adi, 2011). Films and literary works are related because films are frequently adapted from literary works like novels, short stories, or dramas, both aim to amuse and inform which is the same objective for both. Films employ visual and auditory elements, whereas popular literature employs words with conjure up the scenes and characters to visualization the stories and then film genres are also important in increasing the

appeal of literary works and films.

Every literary work has a genre, similarly films and genres cannot be separated, the two are inextricably linked, because genre drives the story or sets the plot in the film. Genres are used to classify works of art based on theme, style, and other elements. Classification of film genres is useful for informing the viewers about what to expect from a film. Then, according to Gelder (2004), one of the many items produced by popular culture that many people are interested in is popular fiction, because popular fiction is basically genre fiction (Gelder, 2004). One of the hallmarks of popular fiction from literary fiction is plot, plot always being a yardstick rather than language, style, or tone. Therefore, films as popular fiction is often taken less seriously because it never focuses on grammar and instead focuses on plot. The plot creates a story and makes readers interested in various genres, one of which is the thriller genre, which presents a story full of suspense. The plot creates a story and makes viewers interested in various genres, such as the thriller genre which presents stories full of suspense and mystery stories which have plots full of puzzles.

According to Saricks (2009), a thriller is a gripping and plot-centered story, set within a detailed framework of a particular profession, which puts the hero or heroine in a dangerous situation from which they must break away. Thrillers are a genre of exciting action films that usually focus on heroes racing against the clock, facing difficult situations, and needing important support to complete their mission of thwarting the evil plans of stronger and better prepared enemies. The purpose of a thriller is to excite the viewers while watching its narration. Thrillers mostly tell stories of terror and anxiety. Thrillers provide a cinematic mix of adventure, intrigue, mystery and suspense. Although the characters may not be in a life-and-death situation, they always face danger of some kind, certainly from a conspiracy if not a physical antagonist. The plot twist plays a major role and makes the reader guess, not necessarily about the outcome, but about how exactly the victory will be carried out, even if the characters are not in a life or death situation, they are always in danger, if not from a conspiracy, then from a physical antagonist.

In general, thrillers tell the story of ordinary people who find themselves in extraordinary or dangerous situations such as mysteries, terrorist acts, or even murders. Thrillers significantly increase viewers' levels of anticipation, uncertainty, surprise, anxiety, and terror. One of the films in the thriller-mystery genre is the film Missing.

The film *Missing* not only presents plot twists, suspense, surprises, this film also relates to the current digital era, because this film is a screen life film that depicts increasingly sophisticated technological advances in this era of globalization. *Missing* is a thriller-mystery screen life film which was released in 2018 which was both written by Aneesh Chaganty and Sev Ohanian. *Missing* is released on January 20, 2023, directed by Nicholas D. Johnson and Will Merrick. Missing revolves around a teenager named June (Storm Reid) who is looking for her mother, Grace (Nia Long). The story begins when Jane's mother goes missing while on vacation in Colombia with her new boyfriend, Kevin (Ken Leung). Before Grace's departure with Kevin, she tells June that Heather (Amy Landecker), Grace's lawyer friend will be watching her while she is on vacation with her new boyfriend. Grace asks June to meet her at the airport a week later. But on that very day, Grace and her boyfriend did not show up and June began to worry. June then decides to seek help from the authorities, namely the FBI. But the FBI investigation was clueless, which eventually led June to intervene because she was frustrated. June used the internet to track down her mother's whereabouts from his home in Los Angeles. June uses cutting-edge technology to track her mother's digital footprint. She searches for everything about her mother, from WhatsApp, her mother's last location to Gmail, Facebook and other internet searches. During the search, June encounters a situation that raises many questions for her. June only realizes she doesn't recognize her mother when Grace's secrets begin to unfold one by one and made her a figure full of mystery in June's eyes.

In addition to the thriller genre, film *Missing* also borrows the mystery genre in the storyline, as stated by Joyce G. Saricks that thrillers continue to merge with other genres, especially Suspense and Mysteries. Intrigue and puzzle-solving,

an attraction borrowed from the Mystery genre, also stand out. All these elements add layers to titles in this genre, but the distinguishing features in Thriller are the story frame, the details of the profession, and the way the hero uses his skills and knowledge in that profession to escape dangerous situations. Mystery is a genre that has an attraction to the personal lives of the main characters who are both detectives and non-detectives in several situations and conditions. Apart from that, the secret of the mystery is still in the form of a puzzle, which is presented carefully for the main character and the viewers to solve. The more complex and ingenious the puzzle and its solution, the more attractive it is to the audience's intellect (Saricks, 2009). Apart from that, in solving puzzles, just like the mystery and detective genres, the film *Missing* uses clues or foreshadowing as a plot rules which will later be related to suspense and surprise, just as suspense and surprise are very closely related to the thriller genre.

The film *Missing* (2023) uses foreshadowing, suspense and surprise in its plot rules. Exciting, sensational, and interconnected humanitarian events that lead to complex conflicts are usually well received by the viewers. In fact, what confronts and grabs the audience's attention is a conflict that is rapidly approaching its climax and resolution. This conflict will directly cause tension and curiosity about the continuation and completion of the story (Ristiana, 2017). Suspense and thriller formula are inseparable elements in storytelling, especially in the thriller genre. Both help build tension, engage the audience, and keep them calm. Foreshadowing frequently contributes to a story's suspense. The audience is kept on edge by dropping hints or subtle indicators about what might happen, eagerly awaiting the fulfillment of these clues. In addition, according to Kurniawan (2009) defines surprises as events containing surprises in the story, the story of which may be beyond the audience's expectations (Utami, 2019). These plot rules are successfully displayed in the film Missing by using digital data visualization, such as security video recordings, webcam images, or computer screen recordings, to depict events in a narrative that involves the way this film creatively and interestingly visualizes and depicts plot rules in digital settings.

Missing is one of the thriller and mystery screen life films with the main heroine who uses digital settings. *Missing* uses a digital display for its story, which takes place in a real-time digital environment, showing character activities and interactions through computer displays, cell phones, and surveillance cameras, and includes software interfaces, websites, apps, and text messages used in the film to tell the story. The film *Missing* illustrates the use of cyber-crime in its use of digital settings, because some of the online information that June obtains is based on blogs and other applications that show clues and information between characters and advance the plot through social media profiles, chats, and posts that provide information about the characters and move the story forward. All plots and storylines are explored through the presentation of digital information, such as online searches, video recordings, and digital data investigations. The use of search technology, messaging apps, and other websites is an important part of the film's digital setting.

The researcher interested about conducting this study, because there aren't many thriller and mystery films that use digital settings. Formula studies is a science that studies the categorization of film texts into specific genres based on the pattern or structure of the film. Each genre has its own pattern, which is a repetition of the previous pattern. The researchers wants to find out the formula thrillers and mysteries using Joyce G. Sarick's theory through characteristics and genre appeal, which include pacing, frame or setting, story line, characterization, tone or mood, and style or language. Apart from that, the researcher interested in researching plot rules in order to understanding, interpreting, and evaluating how foreshadowing, suspense, and surprise are related to Sarick's thriller and mysteries formula, which occurs only in digital settings. The results of this study include complex story collections, frequent plot twists, violence, concentration of stories in action and conflict, and protagonists fighting crime and surviving which is in the digital settings.

1.2 Statement Problem

A statement problem is a general statement of the subject matter to be researched and a formulation of the research problem in the form of questions. This research concerns the thriller and mystery formulation used in the film *Missing* (2023) which is uses digital settings to reveal the thriller and mystery formula and plot rules. Plot rules are related to the thriller and mystery formula because it contains foreshadowing, suspense, and then surprise as the end of the story plot. Therefore, to ensure that this film displays the thriller and mystery formula, it is necessary to carry out an in-depth analysis of this matter. Based on the background and formulation of the problem, the researcher concluded that there were two questions that would be the main focus of this research, namely:

1. What are the thriller and mystery formula explained in the film *Missing* (2023) through digital settings?
2. What are plot rules in the film *Missing* (2023) through digital settings?

1.3 Research Purposes

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the research objectives aim to:

1. To find out the elements of the thriller-mystery formula built in the film *Missing* (2023).
2. To know the foreshadowing, suspense, and surprise in film *Missing* (2023) through digital settings.

1.4 Research Significances

This research has theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this study explains what has not been studied in the literature review (Marshall, and Rossman, 2006). This study aims to identify and analyze the characteristics of the thriller and mystery formulas and plot rules in the film *Missing* 2023, which are expected to provide useful references for future research on how the characteristics of the thriller and mystery formulas in films build their narratives through digital

settings as screen life films. In practical terms, this research is related to the use of research. Theoretically, analyzing formulaic characteristics in thrillers and mysteries helps to understand the pacing, frame or setting, plot, characterization, tone or mood, and style or language, also the relation between plot rules. This allows researchers to explore how a heroine character can gather various forms of important information and collect clues until the mystery can be solved based only on online information. This analysis shows the psychological and intellectual realizations involved in the search or investigation process in addition to revealing the heroine's investigative techniques.

Practically, identifying the characteristics of thrillers and mystery formulas and their elements such as crime and clue or foreshadowing as the part of plot rules has significant research implements. Analyzing the search for the missing person as the main conflict helps to focus attention on the core source of conflict that centers on the unknown crime and the villain's motive in the story, as well as how the heroine can solve the case with the help of the heroine's supporting characters. In addition, complex stories make the appeal of thrillers and mysteries because in them the heroine character becomes an important role in creating a suspense and dramatic story that creating a plot twist or surprise.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

The researcher presents theories related to research. These theories serve as an analytical framework to answer this research question. The theories used in research involve the explanation of research analysis to find out the elements of the thriller and mystery formula in film *Missing* (2023) use Joyce G. Saricks theory and plot rules which consist of foreshadowing, suspense, and surprise.

1. Popular Literature: The popular definition is liked or enjoyed by many people. This is related to the study of popular literature. Popular literature is different from high literature because high literature contains a lot of meaning and information about culture in the century before the birth of popular literature (Hornby, 1963). Popular literature is literary work that is really liked by the general public because

it is easier to watch and enjoy.

2. Film: films can be considered literary works because they have the same stage concepts (actors and action-visualization) as dramas but are in recorded form and share several characteristics with novels, including plot, technique, narration, and setting. In a sense, this film is similar to a literary work that has been recorded and can be seen again (Klarer, 2004).

3. Thriller Formula: The thriller genre is an interesting narrative that revolves around an interesting plot and is set within the complicated parameters of a particular profession. The storyline pushes the heroes into dangerous situations from which they must escape. The characters are constantly facing danger, if not direct physical danger then at least the threat of conspiracy, even in situations that may not be life or death threats. Plot twists play a big role in keeping readers guessing about how victory will be achieved, not just about the conclusion. Even though justice is the ultimate goal, efforts to achieve this goal are not always in accordance with applicable law (Saricks, 2009).

4. Mystery Formula: Mystery is built on a puzzle; the author provides clues towards the solution while attempting to hide certain details to prevent the mystery from being solved too quickly. In an effort to solve the puzzle, the detective and I got involved. There is a crime which is usually murder and there is a corpse in this puzzle. An amateur or professional investigator (or team of investigators) solves a "whodunit" mystery. With a simultaneous examination of the lives of the killer, victim, and detective, Mystery formula follows the investigation (Saricks, 2009).

5. Foreshadowing: Foreshadowing is a storytelling technique in which subtle hints or clues are given early in the story to hint at future events. Foreshadowing can be used in a thriller to build anticipation, create tension, and prepare the audience for upcoming twists or revelations. It creates a sense of impending doom and adds to the overall suspenseful atmosphere. According to Ballon (2005), the beginning always has a relationship with the ending, and it is important for the writer to know the whole story when preparing shadows. The result of a sign can be positive or

negative. How can a writer create the necessary shadows if the ending is unknown? To prepare for foreshadowing, the writer must know the end first.

6. Suspense: Suspense is one of the must-have storylines for a fiction writer because it is important to arouse the audience's curiosity about what happens next (Eneste, 1991). The thriller genre relies heavily on suspense. It entails creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and tension in order to keep the audience invested in the story. Suspense plot rules may include strategic pacing, withholding information, and putting characters in danger.

7. Surprise: Djuanda and Prana (2006) stated that the story must contain elements of surprise and stories that do not surprise the audience are considered boring (Djuanda and Iswara, 2006). Surprise elements, including plot twists, are crucial for keeping the audience engaged and interested.

8. Missing Films: *Missing* is a thriller film which was released in 2018 which was both written by Aneesh Chaganty and Sev Ohanian. The films *Missing* and *Searching* both depict the process of searching for missing persons through internet searches. *Missing* is released on January 20, 2023 and directed by Nicholas D. Johnson and Will Merrick. Missing revolves around a teenager named June (Storm Reid) who is looking for her mother, Grace (Nia Long). The story begins when Jane's mother goes missing while on vacation in Colombia with her new boyfriend, Kevin (Ken Leung).

1.6 Previous Study

In this study, it is necessary to review two types of literature as a reference and comparison: first, literature related to the material object of this study and second literature related to the application of thriller theory. Researchers were inspired by some previous research. First, a study conducted by Alawiyah (2019) entitled *The thriller formula in Angels and Demons by Dan Brown*. In this study, the thriller genre was analyzed through the role of the hero, elements of tension, and conflict/climax. The theory used is Frey's theory which contains the role of the hero in the thriller genre, or especially in the work *Angels and Demons*. Then, the

theory of Joyce Saricks (2009) analyzes the elements of tension in the novel, and finally, the theory of Fitzgerald and Stanton to analyze the conflict and climax in the novel *Angels and Demons*. The result of this study is that the portrayal of Robert Langdon as the main character as a hero is one of the important elements of the thriller genre in the novel Angels and Demons. Then descriptions of suspense, elements of the thriller genre, can be featured in the novel Angels.

Second, research conducted by Salsabila (2019) entitled *The thriller formula of plot in Don't Breathe film by Fede Alvarez*. This study analyzes how thriller formulas can be analyzed through plots in Fede Alvarez's *Don't Breathe*. The researcher used the method of structuralism in his studies. In this study the formula for the thriller genre is analyzed through the plot, containing several aspects such as complex story collections, frequent plot twists, violence, condensation of stories in action and conflict, protagonists fighting crime and survival and suspense. The results of his research found 40 data contained in the plot.

Third, a study conducted by Adawiyah (2020) entitled *Psychological thriller in the perfume: The story of Murderer movie* (2006). This study focuses on the analysis of thriller formulas through characters, conflicts and climaxes in The Story of Murderer (2006). The researcher focus more on the sub-genre of the thriller formula, namely psychological thrillers. The results found thriller formulations, especially psychological thrillers, on the object under study, such as short storylines, dark tones and informal language, which are some of the data found in the object.

Fourth, *Suspense, Foreshadowing, and Surprise in the Novel Cantik Itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan* by Puspita Trie Utami (2019). Researchers found a phenomenon that contained suspense and foreshadowing, these two elements the researchers found when the character Dewi Ayu rose from her grave after fifty-two years of death, this phenomenon was found at the beginning of the story. With the conflict and the setting of a terrible place, namely a cemetery, suspense or tension arises as well as foreshadowing or guesses in the reader's mind about what events will happen next. Apart from these two elements, in this novel there is also another

element, namely surprise. The surprise in this research arose when she found out that the prince *Cantik* was waiting for was *Krisan*. These elements will lure readers to follow the story to the end. Therefore, researchers are interested in examining suspense, foreshadowing, and surprise in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan.

Fifth, *Thriller Genre Formula in Split* (2016) by Reni Kurnia Sari (2022). This study analyzed the thriller genre in the United States film entitled Split (2016) which has a psychological thriller genre. This film is unique because it is a psychological thriller genre, where good and bad characters can be clearly seen. However, this movie is unique compared to other thrillers because the main character good and bad are in the same character, which is Kevin. Although there are many personalities, some are good characters, but some are bad. So, this object is interesting to discuss because it has a thriller formula like in general, but with unique hero and villain characters, who are in the same body. In this study, researchers focused on analyzing the thriller formula genre in the film *Split* (2016) because the film *Split* is a film that has been analyzed by many people, but the discussion discusses psychological conditions. In addition to the psychological state of the main character, one of the most important things is the genre and formula. In addition, many viewers still miscategorized horror and thriller films. Of course, the two genres are different. This Split film often becomes horror because it triggers the adrenaline of the audience. It also contains mystery in it. However, if analyzed in depth, it turns out that this film has more formula as a thriller genre. So, this topic will show how a movie is said to be a thriller genre, especially in *Split.*