

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

According to the survey by Pew Research Center entitled *The Global God Divided* (2020), 96% of Indonesia think that belief in God is necessary so that humans have good morals. This is followed by the other most populous country in the world, America, with 44%. Nevertheless, Minister of Religious Affairs of Indonesia, Fachrul Rozi, argues that some religious adherents no longer hold fast to the essence and nature of their religious teachings, but are fanatical about their preferred version of the interpretation of truth (Kemenag RI, “Rapat Koordinasi Nasional Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama Tahun 2020”, 1:37:25). Religious fanatic is someone who is controlled by a religious objective, and in order to become a fanatic, he or she must be able to provide absolute obedience to the target group while leaving the rest of their lives behind (Mirdal 2003). Hehanussa (2018) argues that in countries that favor specific religion, such as Indonesia and the United States of America, religion has such a powerful institutionalization process in society. It is arguably the main doorway for disseminating radical ideology. Religious exclusivity is frequently more powerful than social cohesion.

One of the recent cases regarding this issue was a video showing a pastor, John B. Lowe, from New Life Christian Church & World Outreach in Warsaw, Indiana, United States. He confessed to his congregation that he had been

committed sexual abuse. He did not regard it as a mistake, but a sin. After his confession, church members began to applaud him (Smietana 2022). Another example is the case of Ustadz Abdul Somad (tirto.id, 2022) whose visit was denied by Singapore immigration for allegedly spreading extremist teachings. The statement from Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was based on Abdul Somad's sermon saying that suicide bombings were legitimate in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and were considered "martyrdom" operations. In addition, Abdul Somad is also said to have commented on members of other religious communities, such as Christianity, by describing the Christian cross as the abode of the 'infidel jinn (spirit/demon)'. Reported on dunia.tempo.co, since Abdul Somad was rejected coming to Singapore, some of his followers have publicly threatened on social media to physically attack Singapore. One said for it to be *Carried out* in a similar manner to the 9/11 or September 11 attacks in New York in 2001.

From the cases above, it can be concluded that fanaticism is characterized by intense vigor, unwavering focus, and a complete lack of restraint or moderation (Harmon 2005). In this context, moderation refers to moderate behavior, moderate thought and knowledge, and moderate religious practices. Furthermore, moderation entails rejecting violence or avoiding extremity (Mubakkirah 2018). Theoretically, in religious moderation, the religion itself is not moderated; rather, the manner in which religion is practiced. As religion must be perfect, according to Lukman Hakim (2019), it is not the religion that is moderated. In spite of the fact that it is from God, our religious understanding and implementation needs to be moderated

(Ali 2020). Based on the John B. Lowe and Ustadz Abdul Somad cases, it can be concluded that their community tends to conduct violence or riot. Because religious teaching is founded on religious emotions, persons who are prone to fanaticism overlook the need of having a clear understanding of their faith. When people's religious feelings are touched, they are easily controlled by the fanatics, and such circumstances are easily exploited to disseminate their ideals (Hehanussa 2018).

The issue of religious fanaticism also can be found in many forms of media, particularly films. Film is a hugely popular medium. In modern society, it forms and reflects a variety of cultural, economic, religious, and social behaviors and viewpoints (Wright 2007). Several films have depicted religiosity and fanaticism from various perspectives. One of the films that depict religious fanaticism is *Carrie* (2013). It brings up the narrative of religiosity alongside violence and psychological issues. From this film, it can be seen that religious fanatics are different from other religious adherents. The character, Margaret, believes that everything was sinful, even several things not mentioned in the Bible, such as receiving compliments. She also abuses and isolates her daughter, *Carrie*, whenever she does something that she considers is sinful. Thus, they are treated like a threat by society specifically in America, where this film takes place. Another film that brought the issue of religious fanaticism is *The Da Vinci Code* (2006). This film represents several characteristics shown by fanatics. They tend to be ignorant, violent, yet still see themselves as the truest followers to the religion. Eventually, this film shows a narrative that to develop a harmonious community, the faith placed in a religion must be guided by deep deliberation and wisdom. These films show a similar

narrative pattern, in which a fanatic starts from being a considerably normal religious person, but as the story goes along, their behavior become violent and concerning—as they use their faith as a justification for horrifying acts of violence against others they deem to be different, inferior, and separate.

The next film that displays the narrative of religious fanaticism is *The Lodge*, which becomes the object of this study for its interesting narrative and issues. *The Lodge* shows a distinct narrative; the character starts from being a religious person that is violent and ignorant, but as the story goes along she becomes less violent and act as a normal person, but eventually, she returns into a state where she practiced the fanaticism she was taught during her childhood. *The Lodge* is a psychological thriller movie released on 2019. Directed by Veronika Franz and Severin Fiala, this film holds quite a high approval rating from many critics, especially for Riley Kelough's performance as Grace and its dark yet staggering narrative. This film also received several awards such as Best Cinematography in Diagonale and Best Feature Film in Grossmann Fantastic Film and Wine Festival. Received an overall 74% from rottentomatoes.com, *The Lodge* is perceived as a purposely ambiguous and paranoid work that invites the audience to guess not just on each character's motivation but also on the specific type of thriller that the film is.

Religious fanaticism is defined as being religiously fanatic, or having an unreasonable passion for one's religion or beliefs is defined as religious fanaticism (Hornby 1995). Klassen (2007) reveals that religious fanatics do use the same Bible as adherents of religion in general—but they have different ways about how to

interpret or apply them taking into account the present and human experience. As religious adherents in general, fanatics believe that the text of the scriptures is able to answer all questions. However, in some cases, where it conflicts with scientific discoveries or commonplace experiences, fanatics tend to trust the text in the Bible only while scientific facts and experience are regarded as incorrect or are completely disregarded (Klassen 2007). As portrayed in *The Lodge*, Grace is a lone survivor of his father's cult. Growing up in a religious cult led by her father, Grace became the only living witness of a mass suicide of all the members instructed by her father when she was only 12 years old. She spent her childhood as a member of that cult, and her daily routine was listening to her father's speech about faith. The religious teachings taught are not under the valid and common religious teachings. This study aims to analyze the narrative of an obsessive devotion to a religion and its aftereffects to the ex-followers in *The Lodge* movie. The religious fanaticism is shown through Grace's past experience as a fanatic in a cult led by her father, and her current behavior after she escaped alive from a death ritual. During her childhood, Grace was taught to repent the sins she had committed by confessing to God through constant prayer. Her father, as the leader of the cult, eventually invited his congregation to follow him in the ritual suicide believing that God had been waiting for them all in heaven. Grace, who survived the ritual, grew up with lingering trauma. Although she no longer engages in religious fanaticism, her memory of the practice still exists. When the fear of sin returns in her memory, presumably returning to the practices she was taught when she was in a religious

cult as a child, she starts to perform acts of self-flagellation to punish herself for her assumed sins.

The writer chooses to analyze *The Lodge* (2019) movie for it brings the issue of religious fanaticism. Although this is a thriller movie, it does not offer cheap jump-scares at all, but rather a kind of twisting and manipulating plot. Psychological thriller movies need detailed reading to understand the story of the film. Hence, the reading of the film text for the sake of elaborating the discourse contained with implicit meaning in it absolutely begins with structural reading. Besides, the narrative pattern within this film seems quite distinct from the narrative pattern from similar films such as *Carrie* (2013) and *The Da Vinci Code* (2006). Hence narrative structuralism theory by A.J. Greimas is needed to break down the plot within this movie. The writer prefers Greimas's theory as it uses actants to reveal the character function within each sequence, so the character's true motivation can be revealed. Then, using isotopy, the writer wants to seek motivations that are concentrated on a single theme and its interpretation, which may be repeated throughout the narrative. Greimas's structuralism seems fit to reveal every layer of the issues from the plot that is broken down into sequences – and also shows the character development from a traumatized character experiencing the effects of the fear mongering religion narrative. This study particularly focuses on the narrative of religious fanaticism – when it usually creates a pattern of fear mongering about sin and salvation and God's judgment in the afterlife. In addition, the writer further uses journal articles, seminar papers, and research regarding religion, fanaticism, and religious fanaticism in order to reveal

the religious fanaticism traits shown by the character in the film. Furthermore, the non-narrative aspect employed to support the analysis is *mise-en-scene*, which is the settings and sets of the film-making and how they contribute to scenic and atmospheric realism (Corrigan and White 2012).

The writer uses several reviews to obtain perspective about *The Lodge*. The first review is from rogerebert.com, an article written by Monica Castillo (2020). The article states that spooky ambiance and terrifying plot handle most of the scares in *The Lodge*, making it more unpleasant than scary. The next review is written by Benjamin Lee (2020) on theguardian.com. He states that *The Lodge* is not a wholly unexpected twist, but it's a clever, cunning, and nefarious way to end the picture, taking it to a place that's both terrifyingly grim and tragically sad, by showing perspectives on the inevitability of a fate defined by where we come from and what's already inside us.

Furthermore, the writer has explored some previous research regarding religious fanaticism issues in film. The studies are entitled *Films and Religion: An analysis of Aamir Khan's PK* (Qadri and Mufti 2016), *Religion and Violence in Popular Film* (Stone 1999), and *The Sanctification of Fear: Images of the Religious in Horror Films* (Stone 2001). The first study discusses how cinematic depictions of religion have often been critically protested by the religious conservatives in India. Moreover, conservatives also insist that their approved vision is the only vision that could be portrayed in films. The second study finds that religion is rarely depicted in popular films as a force to prevent violence. In reality, it is the opposite.

The third study argues that whether religion is on the rise or on the fall in our culture has little bearing on the persistence of the religious in film.

The gap between this study and the previous studies are about the specific context of the issue. The previous studies focus on the portrayal of religion in film which usually involves violence. On the other hand, this study focuses on the relationship between religion, violence, and fanaticism. In other words, this study wants to reveal if fanaticism in religion could cause violence based on the narrative. In addition, the previous studies do not utilize narrative structuralism as an approach.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the study, these are two statement problems:

1. How do the actants schemes and functional models describe religious fanaticism in *The Lodge*?
2. To what extent does narrative in *The Lodge* signify the problems of religious fanaticism in American society?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

From statement of the problems, here are the objectives of the study:

1. To identify how *The Lodge* shows the narrative of religious fanaticism through the connection between *actants* and functional models.

2. To reveal how the narrative in *The Lodge* signifies the problems of religious fanaticism in American society.

1.4 Significance of the Study

For this study, the writer expects that this study will be beneficial for everyone who is curious about the phenomenon of religious fanaticism, especially ones that are portrayed within a movie. The writer also hopes that this study will be able to show the narrative of religious fanaticism as a representation of the same issue specifically in American society. Furthermore, the writer hopes that this study will provide a decent knowledge for the readers who want to seek and analyze this issue further, specifically for English Department students.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope and limitation of this study will focus on the religious fanaticism issues that are portrayed by the main characters within *The Lodge* movie. Furthermore, the main character of *The Lodge*, Grace, becomes the main focus of this research. Growing up in a religious cult led by her father, she became the only living witness of a mass suicide of all the members instructed by her father when she was only 12 years old. Grace comes to the story as a girlfriend of a recently single dad, Richard, with two children, Aiden and Mia. Aiden and Mia will be analyzed to identify how to properly treat an ex-religious fanatic. Through narrative structuralism theory by A.J. Greimas, the issues of religious fanaticism will be revealed from each sequence of the film. For the narrative aspect, the writer will

identify the significant dialogues from every sequence. For the non-narrative aspects, camera movement will be the best aspect to reveal the hidden meaning by looking through different expressions and perspectives.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the study which contains the background of the study which explains a story about religious fanaticism and the aftereffects of that practice to the ex-fanatics. Then, the writer states two statements of the problem, which are how do the actants schemes describe religious fanaticism in *The Lodge* and how does the functional scheme depict the narrative of religious fanaticism shown in *The Lodge*. In the objective of the study, the writer wants to reveal the narrative of religious fanaticism in *The Lodge* using actant scheme and functional model. The significance of the study is to provide knowledge for people who are interested in similar issues.

Chapter two is a literature review which explains several theories used within the study such as Greimas's narrative structuralism and religious fanaticism. Then, the writer also reviews previous related studies to seek the research gap that needs to be filled by this study.

Chapter three is the method of the study which explains the research method, data collection method, and data analysis method.

Chapter four is the result and discussion which reveals the analysis of religious fanaticism issue in *The Lodge* using Greimas's narrative structuralism and several theories about religious fanaticism.

Chapter five is the conclusion which covers the concluded statements from chapter 1 to chapter 4.

1.7 Definitions of Key Terms

Actant: the smallest concept in a text. (Greimas 1983)

Helper: helps the subject obtain the desired object. (Greimas 1983)

Opponent: hinders the subject's way to gain the desired object. (Greimas 1983)

Receiver: benefits from the junction between subject-object (Greimas 1983)

Religion: All those who adhere to a cohesive system of beliefs and practices about sacred things, things set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices that unify a people into a single moral community (Durkheim 1947).

Religious fanaticism: Being religiously fanatic, or having an unreasonable passion for one's religion or beliefs (Hornby 1995).

Sender: the one who initiates the junction between subject-object or sparks the desire in subject to obtain the object. (Greimas 1983)

Subject: the one who has a desire toward the object. (Greimas 1983)