

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with research background, statement of problems, research objective, research significance, previous studies and also definition of key terms related to the topic.

1.1 Research Background

As well as adults, children also have interests, skills, needs, and knowledge about the world because of their growth. The child is someone who needs all the resources, attention, encouragement, and strength to make it possible to grow healthy and become self-reliant and mature. Therefore, the children's world is a place where children are undergoing an emotional and cognitive process of growth and development through what they experience and learn. It is our obligation as adults to fulfill one of the rights of the child. The child has the right to acquire such things in terms of developing his own identity and personality.

In this case, children's literature comes as an alternative to study and entertainment. According to Saxby in Nurgiyantoro (2018:6) *"If imagery or metaphor of life described is within reach of the child, whether that involves the aspects of emotion, feeling, mind, sensory nerves, as well as moral experience, and is expressed in language forms that are also accessible to and understood by children's readers, the book or the text can be classified as children literature."*

As stated by Burhan Nurgiyantoro (2004), children's literature is not just a story about the world of the child. Instead it tells about anything that involves life, whether human life, animals, plants, or other life including creatures from another world. However, whatever content of the narrative is told must be based on the child's point of view and treat something, and it must be within the child's reach of emotional understanding and mind. Besides, the language used in children's

literature is based on simple characteristics, simplicity in vocabulary, structure, and expression

Among other literary works, film plays a significant role in visualizing the realities of life. It is said to be dominant in socializing certain values concerning all the visuals that enable the literary work to serve as a veritable playground for marks that can represent the realities of the establishment.

The film has the capability to represent just about anything we can imagine or perceive. The film even surpasses drama in its unique capacity for revealing various points of view, portraying action, manipulating time, and conveying a boundless sense of space.

Some films, through both action and dialogue, focus on the clear delineation of a single unique character. Although the plot is important in such films, what happens is significant primarily because it helps us understand the character being developed. The major appeal of these characters lies in the qualities that set them apart from ordinary people. The theme of such films can best be expressed in a brief description of the central character, with emphasis on the unusual aspects of the individual's personality.

The film is one of the cultural products that grow in a particular region, which cannot escape the norms of society. Such as religious norms, law norms, and decency or custom. These norms are presented not merely - the outward appearance of reality, but the result of reality in every behavior and social relation.

As the smallest community unit, family has a very strategic role in shaping the behavior or character of children. Mida Wida Wulan and Leli Kurniawati in the *The Independence of Young Children in the Care of Working Mothers* (2021:293) stated that family is the first institution in shaping the character of a child. Becoming a parent, perhaps first and foremost, is a functional status in the life cycle that includes removing & protecting as well as caring & representing their offspring.

A nonviolent family is one of the effective solutions for making a child feel comfortable, at peace, at home safe, but in recent times parents tend to educate their

children with high emotions, lack of attention and even neglecting them. Such a superior attitude has unwittingly led parents to put themselves in the dominant position, thus feeling that parents are the arbiter of the truth over their children's attitudes and behavior without giving them freedom of room. That's the way the symbolic violence occur in a parent and child relationship.

Basically, symbolic violence takes place because of ignorance and recognition from the oppressed. Thus, the logic of this domination can work because of the symbolic principle that is known and accepted by both the domination and sub-domintaion. These symbolic principles include language, lifestyle, thinking, acting, and peculiar ownership of certain groups based on their need.

The power of symbolic power is a magical power that can make individuals, groups or communities obediently follow the symbolic mobilization. When they take it for granted, they are not aware of the coercion that is implanted through the symbol, then at that time, the practice of symbolic power works. Ifa Musarrofa mentioned (2015) symbolic power is the power that works through language symbols to lead those who are dominated to follow meanings that are produced based on the interests of those who dominate.

In this study, the writer chose Danny DeVito's film, *Matilda* (1996). It is based on a writer's interest in social relations matters in society. After repeated watching, the writer can understand that the film contains unbalanced social relations within the family circle and education where symbolic violence prevails. The film itself entitled *Matilda* (1996), as a part of children's literature, this film is considered as a good children's film since the main character in the enlightenment center includes. According to Brown (2017):

“There are several features that good children's films should have which are as follows: 1. children's films usually discuss and describe social connections between children with parents, friends, and communities; 2, children's films usually highlight children's

experiences; 3, children's films introduce rule and order in the concepts of justice; 4, children's films should reduce inappropriate scenes such as sex, nudity, violence, criminality that often found in films in general; 5, children's films should provide with upbeat and emotionally uplifting endings”.

Matilda (1996) is a film by Danny DeVito in 1996. The story was originally a novel by Roald Dahl, it was published in 1988. Both of these literary works, whether film or novel, have the same plot of conflict and contain symbolic violence issues that occur within the family realm. The conflict of the story had begun when the birth of a second child named Matilda, an unwanted presence from her family called the Wormwood family.

The film contains the issue of symbolic violence. In symbolic violence, through language, the dominant attempts to cultivate a certain habit of obedience to norms, norms or submitting to certain ideologies, reinforcing certain cultures, habits, lifestyles, and so on. For the dominant, the discourse with language symbols used as a medium of communication certainly plays a significant role in leading, directing, influencing, controlling the target or its victims as sub-dominant. According to Haryatmoko in Ulya (2016) habitus is often understood as the result of skills that become practical actions that must not necessarily be recognized. This practical act became an ability that seemed natural and developed in certain social circles, including the family.

The Wormwood family is a reflection of a family that is not ideal for creating growth and a better environment for children. Matilda's father, Harry Wormwood, owned a tricky car salesman. Her mother is Zinnia Wormwood, who always plays bingo. And her brother named Michael, has a hobby of playing.

Matilda (1996) tells the story of a child named Matilda. She is an independent child with a brilliant mind. Matilda is a central character in Danny DeVito's film. Being a daughter born to the Wormwood family was an unpleasant experience. Matilda is a girl who has a sad story among children in general, when

she was born she did not get the affection of her parents because Matilda's birth was undesirable for them. Since she was two years old she was always alone in her house. Then, Matilda studied what most children learn in their early teens. She learns how to be responsible for taking care of herself.

At the age of four, her hobby was reading books, and she secretly went to the library. One time she was caught by her father when reading a book, and at that moment her father tore and threw the book. In addition, another unnatural act when she's old enough to go to school, the first response from her parents refused and considered Matilda to be four years old.

Matilda's intelligent personality was opposed by her family treating Matilda arbitrarily. She is forced to follow the rules and habits of her family; she is despised so that she cannot show her ability in front of her father.

In the end, after Harry Wormwood meets the redoubtable Trunchbull. He announces that he has found the right school for Matilda. But her cleverness and uniqueness got Matilda into trouble. At school, she faces the principal named Mrs. Trunchbull who is very cruel. The personality of the principal is threatened and gives punishment to children who do not obey her rules.

Thus, Matilda's struggle and resistance arose against her family and school environment, involving her friends and teachers. Matilda's fight aims for having the right to freedom of choice, to be treated well by adults, and to get a safe and comfortable environment for her.

The following will illustrate the existence of symbolic violence in *Matilda* (1996) through the screenplay below:

“A nurse picks up the newborn Matilda from her crib and shows her to her father, Harry Wormwood, who groans in disgust and walks away to come and collect her” (scene minute of: 00:00:48).

“They get to their car, Harry places the basket of his newborn daughter in the trunk of the car without bothering to strap her up and closes the door” (scene minute of: 00:01:07).

“To read? Why would you want to read when you got the television set sitting right in front of you? There's nothing you can get from a book that you can't get from a television faster” (scene minute of: 00:20:00).

In the case above, there was symbolic violence committed by Harry Wormwood to Matilda. This symbolic violence is shown by Harry as the dominant, and he tries to instill a habit and lifestyle of the Wormwood family. Meanwhile, Matilda was not aware of the symbolic violence perpetrated by her father.

“Trunchbull: Quiet! Get to class before I throw you all in the Chokey” (scene minute of: 00:27:38).

The quote above is a description of the power of a school principal who arbitrarily carries out his duties. Besides, Mrs. Trunchbull's motto is “My school is a model of discipline! Use the rod, beat the child. That's my motto”. The motto of a principal should be to protect and provide safety for children. This is the opposite. Because there is an unnatural element in the content of his motto, this is one indication of the existence of a perpetuation of power that is interesting to study academically.

The main reason why the writer examines *Matilda* film by Danny DeVito is related to the reasons for choosing the material object and the reason for choosing the formal object.

Firstly, the writer wants to find an object centered on a child as the main character in a story. The film of *Matilda* was chosen as the object of research. From the storyline of this film, it describes a family that is not ideal. The social relations that are built between parents and children are not well established. Besides that, parents are depicted as not caring and not giving children the right to grow and develop properly. This film also describes an educational institution that is not ideal

and is full of children's intimidation. Reinforced by the characters in the family and educational environment, the adults are domineering and authoritarian. So, what happens in this film definitely has an influence on children. The second is *Matilda* (1996) received 3 awards and 7 nominations. In 1996, the winner of the category "Audience Award" at Cinekid. In 1997, the winner of the "Starboy Award" category at the Oulu International Children's Film Festival, and also the winner of the "Young Star" category at the YoungStar Award. This data is used as reinforcement that, at that time, *Matilda* (1996) had become a public conversation. Even though this film was released in 1996, the storyline contained within is still very relevant in today's life, such as the image of a family that is not ideal and educational institutions that are restrained. These ideals place children as victims. The third is this film captures the whole essence of the novel well, such as not changing the core of the story. The selection of characters in the film is in accordance with the illustrations contained in the novel, so that when visualized they have similarities. Even the properties in the illustrations are visualized well, for example, the arrangement of spaces in Wormwood's house. This film also tries to revive the issue of family, which is currently a very closely related issue in society.

Secondly, there are two reasons the writer examines the literary theory of Pierre Bourdieu's perspective as a formal object, among others, as follows. (1) Pierre Bourdieu's theory is able to reveal the reasons for certain events. (2) Pierre Bourdieu's theory is quite applicable in literary works.

This study will describe symbolic violence and the perpetuation of power in *Matilda* (1996) by Danny DeVito. The discussion was conducted to reveal the forms of symbolic violence and the perpetuation of power that occurred in the realm of family and educational toward the child characters in *Matilda* (1996) by Danny DeVito.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Literature has the power to build meaning about things through representation. The same is true when it comes to presenting symbolic violence,

especially to children. The few portrayals of children in literary works tend to be passive, the habitual rule and prohibition of adults without considering the children's abilities or allowing concessions to children leave them without the freedom of procreation, innovation, and freedom.

The practice of symbolic violence in its meaning is a model of cultural and social domination that takes place unconsciously in people's lives which includes acts of discrimination against certain groups, races, ethnicities, and genders. The power of symbolic power is a magical power that can make individuals, groups or communities obediently follow the symbolic mobilization.

In this discussion, the writer uses Pierre Bourdieu's critical social theory about symbolic violence and the cinematic elements approach. These theories and approaches are the right choices to examine and reveal things that are real and happening around us, yet we are often unaware of them.

Based on the research issues outlined, research questions are obtained as follows:

1. What is the social relation that caused symbolic violence in *Matilda* (1996)?
2. How are the symbolic violence mechanisms of perpetuating the power depicted in *Matilda* (1996)?

1.3 Research Objective

Based on questions above, the purposes of this research are:

1. To classify and identify the social relations caused in symbolic violence of *Matilda* (1996).
2. To investigate how the symbolic violence of perpetuating the power depicted in *Matilda* (1996).

1.4 Research Significances

The results of this study are expected to provide significances benefits, both for the author and for several parties.

a. Theoretical Significance

The results of this study are useful in the field of literary scholarship, especially in the world of children's literature research. This research is expected to add to the treasures of using Pierre Bourdieu's theory in the field of literary studies.

b. Practical Significance

As for practical, first, matters discussed and analyzed in this study reveal that symbolic violence has been operating in all areas of life. Indirectly any unbalanced social relations can be assured where symbolic violence erupted. Second, it is expected to increase appreciation for the works of Danny DeVito.

In addition, the research benefits for the writer is to gain insight toward the symbolic violence issue and realizing that the importance of creating wholesome social relationships to build character for children.

1.5 Previous Studies

The study of symbolic violence in children supported by literature studies. The study departed from research journals under the title '*Symbolic Violence in A Children's Book Entitled The Giver By Lois Lowry*' (2017) written by Nor Islafatun. The study is a study of the impact community and parents strongly dominate their children. The study revealed five types of symbolic effects on The Giver's story, some of which were incidents of violence to repress journalists, to personalities individuality, to hide history, and to end one's life.

'*Symbolic Violence in Mata Di Tanah Melus by Okky Madasari*' (2019), written by Wikan Satriati dan Dhita Hapsarani. This article adopted the symbolic concept of Pierre Bourdieu and theory of adult's aetonormant by Maria Nikolajeva. According to the findings of this study, there are numerous forms of symbolic violence perpetrated by adults against children, one of which is the dominance of adults who are unaware that children have their thoughts and wants. Children are silenced and lose their voices as a result of such dominance.

The study of child abuse that supports this study is not only made available through international journals, but also in national journals, there are many studies of child abuse. '*Symbolic Violence Against Women in Indonesia Short Story Sepasang Mata Dinaya yang Terpenjara*' (2018) written by Tomi Arianto. The analysis finds that the short story illustrates several issues relating to the social structure disparity between men and women in Balinese society, which has been shaped by a structured and continuous culture that is anchored down to the lowest social structure in the family. Symbolic violence, to use Bourdieu's concept, arises from the contradiction of these structures.

The Perpetuation of Power in The Novel Kubah di Atas Pasir by Zhaenal Fanani (2012) written by Bramantika Wahyu Laksana. This analysis focus describes power abuses through capital, habitus, domains, classes, and trajectory.

In addition, there is a study that uses the same object, the Matilda film. The title is '*The Construction of the Main Child Character's Identities in Matilda (1996)*' (2018) written by Chitra Yunia Mahmudah. This analysis uses theories of identities from Burke and Stets that reveal another side of a child who has lost a parent figure. Matilda is classified as a non-mainstream construction based on this analysis. She is shown as more mature than other kid characters, yet not necessarily as innocent

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Children Literature is any literature enjoyed by children. It is not children's literature, just because the main character or a narrator is a child. The age range of children Literature is from 0 to 12 or 14. Between that literature most appropriate for children and that most appropriate for adults lies young adult literature. Usually, young adults are more mature in content and more complex in literary structure. Children's literature must be written in a simple way.

The study of children's films is a complex and demanding issue, involving a range of critical, educational, psychological, cultural, institutional, and textual aspects. 'Children's films' can be a broad and ambiguous term: there are films

aimed at children, films about childhood, and films children watch regardless of whether they are children's films or films targeted toward adults.

Symbolic violence is the power that works through language symbols to lead those who are dominated to follow meanings that are produced based on the interests of those who dominate. The concept of symbol violence leads to a social mechanism in which communication relations are interconnected with power relations. The power system perpetuates a position that is dominated by dominating the communication media, the language used, the meanings exchanged and the interpretation of meaning (Bourdieu, 1991:42).

Habitus is also a lifestyle, values, character, and expectations of certain social groups. Bourdieu states that habitus is a mental structure used to understand the social world. This mental structure is the main product of the internalization of the structure of the social world.

Capital occurs because the class structure in society is a direct result of differences, divisions, inequalities, inequalities or imbalances, or distinctions. There is a distinction in society due to the factor of capital ownership. Ownership of capital by certain parties results in some parties being considered superior on the one hand and others being marginalized on the other.

The field is a certain social space or universe as a place for social agents/actors to compete with each other. Within the realm/arena, agents compete for various sources and symbolic power.