

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Children's literature is defined as the written works that are produced for children and young adults. Reading children's books can bring back memories, bring satisfaction and inspiration, build creativity, and give readers of all ages the same experience. It can be in the form of books, novels, comics, or cartoons. Since its audience is different from any other kind of literature, such as adult literature, its content and writing must also be different. Baruah categorizes children's literature into two kinds of genres: those are traditional children's literature (myths, fables, legends, fairy tales, etc.) and modern children's literature (fiction, non-fiction, biography and autobiography, poetry, etc.) (2013:20). However, the context is written in a more appropriate way, as is how the authors of children's literature choose the words used in the story.

Children's literature nowadays contains a variety of values and positive messages in its stories, such as diversity, tolerance, family, society, norms, and then how we must care about something like preserving nature, getting along well with others, etc. Various messages or values are contained in a story delivered by the author through the use of literary devices. In a literary work, readers also need such imagery, which will allow them to explore the content in poems, stories, and dramas. The images can be found in "sights, sounds, smells, and touches" (DiYanni,

2007:779) that can make readers emotional because of the characters, settings, and actions contained in the work. So that through imagery, readers can create a picture in their heads about the literary work they read. Then they get a positive message from the literature they read, and they will use it in their daily lives as one of the guidelines for socializing.

Roald Dahl was born on September 13, 1916, in Wales. Roald Dahl is known as a famous author of Norwegian descent. His writing career began when he got to meet C. S. Forester and was then inspired by him. The Saturday Evening Post published Roald's first article, "Shot Down Over Libya," a story about his experiences during the war. Besides that, he also writes children's novels. For example, *the Magic Finger* (1966), *Danny, Champion of the World* (1975), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), *the Enormous Crocodile* (1978), *the Witches* (1983), *Matilda* (1988), etc. Roald Dahl uses lots of humor in his writing to make his readers engaged. Reading a children's book is enjoyable, entertaining, and inventive. Children are able to create new worlds, adapt to different environments, and explore their emotions. Through their new experiences, they also grow in empathy and sympathy. Children can quickly understand the story's concerns because of the interesting language and unique imagery.

The author chose two Roald Dahl children's novels for this research. Those are *The Magic Finger* and *Danny the Champion of the World*. The first children's novel written by Roald Dahl that will be analyzed in this research is *The Magic Finger*. It is a story of an eight-year-old girl who lives on a farm in the English

countryside, next door to the Gregg family, and who enjoys hunting. The title "*The Magic Finger*" relates to such a talent she has that activates accidentally whenever she becomes rather enraged. The finger shoots a beam of energy that pretends to focus on finding out who has upset the girl, with unexpected consequences.

The second novel is *Danny the Champion of the World*. This story is about a boy named Danny who lives only with his father, William, since his mother died when he was four months old. In order to support Danny, his father works by repairing cars and goes hunting for waders. They live in a gypsy caravan next to his father's filling station. The solidarity between Danny and his father as a community of workers along with the humble townspeople who work hard and help each other is very different from the reviled land owner, Mr. Hazell, a wealthy man who is disliked by the people. Both of these novels discuss the issues with which the characters, whether they being people or animals, appear and how they relate to nature. Different strategies are used by these characters to adapt to and endure their surroundings. To solve their difficulties, they choose to save or destroy nature.

In each of his works, especially children's novels, Dahl always conveys moral messages in an organic way. Not only in what is told (content) to give or teach a lesson but also through how the story is told (form). Organic unity in these works includes the use of literary elements that combine to reinforce the theme and moral message. In the novels *The Magic Finger* and *Danny the Champion of the World*, according to the author, it is very suitable to discuss the issues of content of nature because both of these stories have elements that are closely related to the surrounding

environment, which often contain messages about the importance of natural balance and human responsibility for the environment. This helps readers develop awareness and respect for the environment through the stories. This makes nature issues very interesting and important for everyone to discuss, as every aspect of human activity has the potential to impact the environment. Then some content about nature will be found through this research in both of Dahl's novels. Through the formal elements contained in Dahl's works and used by Dahl, it is another goal of this research to find out the organic unity contained in his works. Finally, the title of this research is "Formal Elements and Content of Nature in *Danny the Champion of the World* and *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl's: A New Critical Analysis."

1.2 Identification of the Research

I believe that Roald Dahl has a unique style that contributes to the enjoyment of reading his works, which may have something to do with the formal elements he uses in his writing. For instance, he frequently uses formal elements in all of his works. His use of more of irony and paradox in *The Magic Finger*, in particular the power of *The Magic Finger* and its effect on characters who have confrontations with animals, helps to illustrate the interaction between humans and nature. Meanwhile, Dahl also employs a lot of irony and tension in *Danny the Champion of the World*, to illustrate the relationship between nature and humans, particularly in stories about hunting and rural life. Ambiguity and paradox are also present in *Danny the Champion of the World*, but more as complements to deepen the themes and messages conveyed in the story. The work's greatest strength is his masterful use of

formal literary elements. Therefore, the author wishes to make known the kinds of formal elements found in these novels as well as the ideas they want to get through to the reader.

1.3 Review of Related Literature

In order to conduct this research, the author has read a number of research journal articles, theses, and other relevant studies written by professionals and recent college graduates. These summaries of relevant research will serve as a roadmap for this research and help improve the author's analysis.

The first related study is a thesis by Sherly Dwi Putri entitled “Monstrosity and Humanity in Frankenstein by Mary Shelley: A Formalistic Reading (2020)”. Her study examined two opposing personalities: monstrosity and humanity. She examines paradox, irony, tension, and ambiguity using Cleanth Brook's New Criticism. After that, she examined the intrinsic elements and discovered organic unity as well. According to her studies, both humans and monsters have positive and negative qualities. She claims that, while monsters aren't always vicious, people aren't always nice. Ultimately, her approach improved my understanding of how to establish organic unity, assess formal elements, and apply New Criticism. This thesis relates to the topic of this research, and it gives additional insight about the topic.

The second related study is a thesis written by Aftiyari Nisak entitled “Love as Represented in John Donne's Love's Alchemy (2016)” from State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga. In her thesis, Nisak applies Cleanth Brooks' new criticism

theory to analyze the subject of her research. Because the same theory is applied, this thesis serves as a guide for the author. In order to understand the meaning of love in John Donne's *Love's Alchemy*, Nisak examines the subject of her research by developing the formal elements identified by Cleanth Brooks, such as tension, irony, paradox, and ambiguity. According to her thesis, it helps the author in learn more about the latest Cleanth Brooks critique and how it relates to literary works. Nisak does not, however, examine the fictional components in relation to her research object. In order to improve understanding of the subsequent analysis and to strengthen her arguments, the author believes it would be preferable to incorporate the examination of these components as the preliminary analysis of her thesis.

The third, related study is an article written by Emha Novel Maulana, entitled “Resolving the Nature in Jeanne Duprau's novel *The City of Ember*: New Criticism Approach (2016).” In this study, he applied New Criticism to examine how nature is portrayed in the novel and how humans interact with the environment. He conducted close reading using New Criticism. He was then able to understand how the novel's basic elements related to one another. He was then able to understand how the novel's basic elements related to one another. Ultimately, he discovered that all of the events that occurred in the novel setting were represented in literature as examples of nature, and these scenarios included formal characteristics like character, location, narrative, and so forth.

The fourth related study, a theses written by Elisabeth Inatyas S.W., also supports this research, entitled ”A Study of Character and Plot to Convey the Theme

as seen in Amy Tan's *The Kitchen God's Wife* (2010).” Finding Winnie Louie's description, understanding how the plot is presented in the narrative, and examining how the plot and characters work together to express the story's theme are the three primary goals of the research. In order to gain a thorough understanding of character and plot, the researcher also employed the New Criticism method. She discovered via the method that, as the story's central idea, happiness can only come from patience and persistence. Elizabeth uses the more substantial formal components of her material object (plot and character) in this research to create the theme. This relates to my research, in which I will examine the formal elements of the two novels to find their specific themes and main messages.

The last related study is an article written by Andrian Nasser and Muhammad Fatih Suhadi entitled, “Moral Values in Roald Dahl’s Novel *Danny the Champion of the World*” from *Journal of Language*. The purpose of this article is to examine the moral principles in *Danny the Champion of the World* that are supported by the theories put forth by Schwartz and Boehnke. In this study, the moral qualities of honesty, responsibility, modesty, and bravery are examined. This article finds in its analysis that most of the characters shown in the novel present the moral principle through the plot. Nasser and Suhadi argue in the conclusion of the article that moral principles can help people feel aware of the things they have and teach them valuable lessons about life.

Based on some previous studies, I came to the very interesting conclusion that this research is relevant since children's novels have interesting formal elements and

are suitable objects to analyze how content of nature adds to the topic, atmosphere, or major message of both novels. I found some research related to the two novels, but the urgency of the research and the theories, according to the experts used, are also different from the ones the author analyzed. Furthermore, I draw the conclusion that this research is a novel idea that will apply Cleanth Brooke's New Critical approach to examine the formal elements used by the author in this work as well as the messages the elements send to the readers.

1.4 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explain how formal components in both novels work to communicate the topic or content related to nature. The analysis will be focused on the questions that follow:

1. Which formal elements (tension, irony, paradox, and ambiguity) does Roald Dahl employ in *Danny, the Champion of the World* and *The Magic Finger*?
2. How does content of nature become supported by these formal elements?

1.5 Scope of the Research

For the purpose of analyzing the concerns about content of nature in two selected Roald Dahl children's novels, the author only focuses on the formal components, elements of fiction present in both novels. The new criticism by Cleanth Brooks, concentrating on the relationship between tension, irony, paradox, and ambiguity in two particular children's novels to build their organic unity, is the basis

for these formal elements. On the other hand, the elements of fiction are the elements that the author identified through close reading. It functions as a foundational analysis that gives a clearer foundation for understanding further analysis.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine how the formal elements in both novels cooperate to convey or form the meaning and narrative structure in both novels from the idea of nature (organic unity). More precisely, the author makes reference to the formal components of Cleanth Brooks, which concentrated on the tension, irony, paradox, and ambiguity of two selected Roald Dahl children's books. Conveying messages or values about the interaction between nature and humans is another goal of this research.

