

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The important role of adults, including parents, in raising the children is significantly crucial since all of parents wish to deserve the best future for their next generation. It logically makes sense when parents prepare the best for their children. Parents are considered to know more about their children's needs dealing with their future, started from newly born, adolescent, teenager, to young-adult. It is also supported by David J. Herring, a sociologist, who argues that children have required, usually both fathers and mothers, to provide care and nurturance (35). However, this idea has led us to the dichotomization of parents' inclination against children's incapability to refuse their parent's hopefulness. It is the competence of the parents, if it is compared to children, which puts the adults in higher position in the society's hierarchy. Another term for this condition is called 'adult-child transcendental hierarchy'. Therefore, it is vividly labeled that adults are superior than children.

When a discussion dealing with superiority takes place, it automatically and implicitly emerges the issue of inferiority. Children, who are considered as dependant, play a few roles of the family because they mostly only do what their parents ask them to do. This issue is also raised by Orson Scott Card in one of his novels, *Ender's Game*. Orson Scott Card, a creative author who writes best-seller novels of numerous genres, is well-known for his science-fiction's novels; one of them is *Ender's Game*. Card has been interested to this genre since he was very

young. In 1981, he took literature's doctoral degree in University of Notre Dame. He considered the idea of becoming teacher or writer, but he finally decided to discard the course to be focused in his writing fiction, which was published in 1985 as *Ender's Game*. He won both awards of science-fiction literary works, Hugo Award, in 1985, and Nebula Award, in 1986 for his great work in *Ender's Game*. Later, he continued this novel into a sequel *The Ender Saga* which consists of *Ender's Game* (1985), *Speaker for the Death* (1986), *Xenocide* (1991) and *Children of the Mind* (1996) (Pulse 1).

Ender's Game tells about a condition that earth is about to be attacked by the aliens. Instead of facing the attack by their selves, the adults prepare many children to be the commanders to face the attack. It shows that adults depend on children's capability to save them and the whole earth. Instead of having care and nurture from adults, children are prepared to protect the earth or the adults. This condition then seems deconstruct adults' position who is supposed to be in a higher position than children related to adult-child transcendental hierarchy. In this novel, the role of children turns to be very important compared to adult that in the same way, putting the children in higher position than adults.

From the story of the novel, it is inferred that this novel discusses about children's life. However, after (re)reading it, the researcher cannot find the phase of childhood through the character of the novel. Furthermore, the games played by the children are not supposed to be played by children, which trigger a question about the meaning of those games itself. In addition, instead of giving nurturance to the children depicted in the novel, the adults prepare the children as soldiers to

have combat with alien. It means that there are many missing sequences in the novel which are related to the adult-child transcendental hierarchy.

Card's deep intelligence of science-fiction genre has led him to think out of the box even too far toward the main character of the novel Andrew "Ender" Wiggin. He creates the character of Ender as a gifted-child, who is not only brilliant in his academic subject, but is also psychologically mature as, in the end of many chapters, he is always be the leader of groups whose members are older than him. The perfect description of Ender has apparently constructed a new meaning of children's characters in general.

However, throughout of this novel, Ender is depicted as a gifted-child who has skillful capabilities, yet is not really capable to control his own wrath. In fact, he is very often engaged to many rivalry clashes, for example, with his classmates, his brother, and his friends in the fleet. Those characteristics of Andrew Ender Wiggin's character allow the researcher to analyze it deeper by considering the ambiguities of his manner.

In the very beginning of the novel, Ender is firstly introduced as just a six-year-old child; but he is portrayed to think tactics and strategies even better than adults including his own parents, his siblings, his older friends on the fleets, even the government. On the other hands, he suffers a lot of predicament triggered by his poignant emotion that involves him into both spoken quarrels and physical fights. According to Luthar, Zigler and Goldstein's argument, the stereotype given to gifted-children is that they are often thought to be emotionally troubled and unable to get along with their peers. In reality, gifted youngsters tend to be more

mature than their peers and have fewer emotional problems (Kail 257). These statements have approximately authenticated to Ender's personal characteristic for he always becomes the winner for no matter how terrible the situations have trapped him. However, it does not mean that he has fewer emotional problems. Throughout the novel, sometimes he is depicted as a child who requests guidance from adults, but sometimes adults are also depicted as the ones who require Ender's aid to help them. For this fact, adults consider him as their hero. From this information, the portrayals of adults' superiority toward children are being reversed logically. Thus, it can be seen that the construction of adult-child transcendental hierarchy has any contradictories and inconsistent assumptions. Therefore, this study is conducted to reveal how the adults' superiority toward children in the society is portrayed in the novel *Ender's Game*.

Furthermore, this issue of superiority versus inferiority has led us into the born of such a particular concept: "The Importance of Childhood". All the time that people know, adults sometimes limit the childhood of children by giving too many responsibilities towards them. Thus, it gives impact that children will lose their 'real' childhood time because they have to fulfill their sudden-obligation, like it is portrayed in this novel. The image that children have so far represents their incapability to refuse adult's entreaty. This view is true in some cases; however there is also a possible opportunity of adult's exploitation over children. By giving children freedom to experience 'the real childhood', it will be better for them since they will grow in the way they are ought to be.

Since the novel contains much binary opposition, inconsistency, ambiguity, and ambivalence features, this study applies Derrida's Deconstruction theory appropriately. Deconstruction believes that language is dynamic; allows a reader of certain text to take another meaning of it, by proving that the text is unstable and has already deconstructed itself from the very beginning (Tyson 258). Therefore, the researcher uses this theory as her fundamental strategy in making interpretation of the text.

1.2. Statement of the Problems

Considering the background of the study above, the problems are designed as follow:

1. How is the portrayal of adults' superiority towards children in the society deconstructed in the novel *Ender's Game*?
2. How is the concept of "The Importance of Childhood" implicitly being delivered throughout the story in the novel?

1.3. Objective of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to answer the research question and destabilize the book, Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game*, by doing these qualifications:

1. Showing, identifying, and revealing how the portrayal of adults' superiority is deconstructed in the society throughout this novel.
2. Revealing the concept of "The Importance of Childhood" that is implicitly being delivered throughout this novel.

1.4. Scope and Limitation

As an effort to answer the problems of the study that have been stated above, the analysis of this study is focused on the portrayal of adults' superiority towards children in the society throughout the story in the novel written by Orson Scott Card entitled *Ender's Game*. The analysis is particularly focused on the main character named Ender; while the analysis on other characters is used as supporting explanation related to the problems of the study.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The expectation of conducting this study is that this research might be able to become an input for further studies, especially in English Department, Universitas Airlangga. By doing this work, the researcher hopes that the readers will be more conscious to mankind roles division in the public society, especially the role of parents, children, and even the government too. This study is done to be one of references that concerns about the overtaken role by adults towards children, thus, people might be able to rethink about the roles that they ought to play in the real society to avoid the overlapping roles among them. In conclusion, the researcher believes that this study is unique, because it sees one phenomenon from other's perspective; a phenomenon which is likely to be seen from adults' perspective and placing adults as the superior, is now being seen from other's point of view which puts children to be higher than adults in social hierarchy. Moreover, the researcher also hopes that this study can be an input to help readers for analyzing other works which have any similarities with the issue.

1.6. Method of the Study

The research uses qualitative methodology. Denzin and Lincoln state that qualitative method involves an interpretative and naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in natural, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people to bring them. (Qtd.In "Qualitative Research" 3). There are merely three elements in qualitative methodology; those are the data, the analysis, and the arrangement of written report.

The steps done in conducting this research are follows:

1. Collecting and classifying data. The action of collecting and classifying data happen in the same time while the process of reading the main object is done. Whereas the data is collected through the dictions and expression which are written in the novel, it automatically emerges classification according into what feature it might be categorized into, which features are described as follows:
 - a. Revealing the notion of absence appears in the text.
 - b. Revealing the binary-opposition appears in the text.
 - c. Revealing the inconsistence appears in the text.
 - d. Revealing the ambiguity appears in the text.
 - e. Revealing the ambivalence appears in the text.

After collecting and classifying the data based on Derrida's Deconstruction theory's features, the writer uses these data to analyze the deconstruction of adult-child transcendental hierarchy to reveal the adult's

superiority toward children in the society. Any other references as secondary sources, such as journals and articles, are used to support the issues raised in the statement of this problem in this study.

2. Analyzing Data. This action is conducted by applying Deconstruction theory according to the collected data. The first analysis is to answer the first research question that is, how the notion of absence, the binary opposition, the inconsistency, the ambiguity, and the ambivalence deconstruct the adult-child transcendental hierarchy in the society in this novel. In this step, the researcher involves her further interpretation toward the data analysis to gain deeper understanding in deconstruction of adult's superiority. The purpose of Deconstruction is that to destabilize the primal construction that previously has been built, and produce new construction of which is different from previous construction believed by society. Therefore, by having the analysis, it can be seen how the process of deconstruction happens.
3. Further Data Interpretation. This final action is conducted relating to the emergence of such new concept that can be found beyond the new construction built after the process of deconstructing is done. This analysis is to answer the second research question about how the concept of "The Importance of Childhood" is implicitly being delivered, related to adult-child transcendental hierarchy. It is hoped that researcher could finally find not only further interpretation on deconstruction of adults' superiority but also digging deeper understanding on concept behind it.

4. Finally, the writer concludes her result of analysis, completed by suggestion for the next following study.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

1. Deconstruction: The act of taking apart the assumption of a text which involves the dismantling of the hierachical binary opposition and reveals the controlled meaning within a text by subverting the hierarchy. (Baker 76).
2. Superiority: The state of being superior, while the ‘superior’ itself is understood as higher rank, status, or quality of high standard and quality, of greater power; and having or showing an overly high opinion of oneself.

