

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*“We are fundamentally historical and cultural beings and our views of, and knowledge about, the world are the ‘products of historically situated interchanges among people’” (Gergen)*

*“Interrogating ‘the problem’ [whether is concerning gender variance, teenage mother discourse, or anything] could provide an opportunity... to ‘learn to what extent the effort to think one’s own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently’” (Feder) [the writer’s comments are in brackets]*

*“...how the exercise of thought could... ‘show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that... can be criticized and destroyed’” (M. Foucault, Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault)*

#### 1.1 Background Of The Study

Concerning teenagers, there are always things and topics to discuss.

The dynamics, the fun, the trending topic, their social life, and even the problems of teenagers are worth-discussed or, even better, considered as social phenomena. One of it is teen pregnancy. Teen pregnancy is a problem in and for the society. It is a problem faced in lots of countries in the entire world, especially since more teenagers do sexual intercourse compared to the past eras. Sexual intercourse is considered more as casual things nowadays, not like in the past times when sexual intercourse was only *allowed* to be exercised by married couples, after the marriage ceremony, of course. Nearly one million teen girls get pregnant each year and four out of ten young women get pregnant at least once before they turn 20. (National

Campaign To Prevent Teen Pregnancy) This, then, also results in the rise of Government Spending, about \$40 billion budget came out annually of federal government's pocket to help families that began with a teenage birth. (Flinn and Hauser) The context of this research is focused primarily in The U.S. because: first, the film production is originally from The U.S. and, secondly, concerning teen pregnancy statistics, the U.S. have a higher teen pregnancy rate than other countries, by a long shot. Though, it is declining recently (Curtin and Martin), the U.S. has the highest rates of teen pregnancy, birth and abortion in the industrialized world—teen pregnancy and birth rates are nearly double Canada's, at the least four times those of France and Germany, and more than eight times that of Japan. (Singh and Darroch) Bubbling government spending, rising birth rates or rising abortion rates are merely several number of negative effects of teen pregnancy. Despite those two, there is one particular negative effect of teen pregnancy, i.e. teenage mother, rarely taken into account. The nature of teen pregnancy is most likely unplanned. The teenage sexual intercourse is most likely planned, yet the aftermath—i.e. the pregnancy—isn't. However, let's focus on the teen pregnancy and childbearing first. This has become an important issue for the government. In the U.S., Teen pregnancy is discussed in Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) Today, CDC is one of the major operating components of the Department of Health and Human Services and is recognized as the nation's premiere health promotion, prevention, and preparedness agencies. ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) Teen pregnancy and

childbearing bring substantial social and economic costs through immediate and long-term impacts on teen parents and their children. (www.cdc.gov) reducing teen pregnancy and promoting health is CDC priority.

*Discourse* is a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world—including knowledge, identities, and social relations—and thereby in maintaining specific social patterns (Jorgensen and Phillips)

This analysis's object study is *Juno* movie by Jason Reitman, which was released in 2007. (Reitman) In sum, the overall story is that *Juno* movie is about a high school girl, a teenager who happened to experience an unplanned pregnancy and while going through her everyday life, she's bombarded by society's judgments on her. In this movie, presented clearly, particularly through comments, dialogues, pictures and scene's settings, what is called by *dominant discourse* of teenage mother and how that *dominant discourse* is used to judge Juno's 'unordinary' circumstances. Those phenomena are the main reasons why the writer started this analysis.

Discourse and Juno film fits perfectly. Seeing Jason Reitman's Juno, produced in 2007, we can see that it tried to represent the way discourse operates (communicated-circulated-internalized-judge). Juno is a movie portraying the life of a high school girl, Juno, which gone through an unordinary life track—experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. The focus here is on how the surrounding society judges her altogether with her *uncommon* situation. This is a perfect example of how discourse works. As stated by Foucault (M. Foucault, Pengetahuan dan Metode Karya-Karya

Penting Foucault), discourse is as a system of signification governed by rules that structure the ways in which we classify and divide its different meanings. The function of discourse is to make certain ideas and values present, while others are made to be absent. Discourse is an exclusionary mechanism that allocates power and knowledge to those whose ideas are included and made present at a given moment in time, but at the same time exerts power and knowledge over the excluded/absent. (Storey)

Discourse is mostly understood as “conversation,” “the subject of talk.” Everyone does that daily. Topic A (can be e.g. ideology, values, perspectives, etc.) is communicated (written or spoken), then it circulated in society, and in the end of the day, discourse is produced. After it is produced in the social world, at least two things come out as the response, people seconds it or denies it. However, discourse in society mostly ends up being accepted without ever being filtered first.

“It was constituted by all that was said, in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it, traced its development, indicated its various correlations, judged it, and possibly gave it speech by articulating, in its name, discourses that were to be taken as its own.”

(M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*)

This, then what appeared to be the start of the problem. After internalizing some certain discourses, those discourses are able to act (or in other words, being used by the society) as the *law/norm/parameter* to judge everything happens in the society. This is what Foucault means when he said that discourse refers to socially and historically situated domains of knowledge

or ways of constructing the world. (M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*).

“It is important to note that the concept of *discourse* in this usage is not purely a ‘linguistic’... it is about language and practice. It attempts to overcome the traditional distinction between what one *says* (language) and what one *does* (practice).”

(S. Hall, Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse)

Well, if discourse is, practically, the judge, it is safe to conclude that discourse is the determiner of everything exists? Moreover, the notion of discourse cannot be dissociated from the notion of power. They have a very tight relation, recalling that those holding power have the chance in starting, communicating, circulating discourse, therefore shaping *the social world*, which in line with Foucault’s theory that discourse, knowledge and power are interrelated and both are productive of and constraining of “truth” (Strega) and thus, every human relationship is a struggle and negotiation of power (M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews And Other Writings*). The tracing back of how those responses (the social discourse) towards Juno is the beginning discussion of this paper. The discovery of the discursive practices occurred in Juno, is the first step to do this study.

“The idea that ‘discourse produces the objects of knowledge’ and that nothing which is meaningful exists outside discourse, is at first sight a disconcerting proposition, which seem to run against the grain of common-sense thinking”

(S. Hall, Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse)

Well, from the start, this common-sense thing that are going on too much in society, the ‘taking things for granted,’ is what the core problem that need further discussion. Foucault does *not* deny that things can have a real,

material existence in the world, but what he utters is that ‘nothing has any meaning *outside* of discourse.’ (M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*) Laclau and Mouffe has a saying that seconded that notion Foucault was saying, too, that, ‘we use [the term discourse] to emphasize the fact that every social configuration is *meaningful*.’ (Laclau dan Mouffe) As Hall put it, ‘The concept of discourse is not about whether things exist but about where meaning comes from.’ (S. Hall, *Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse*) Discourse is the important key to understand the flow of power and that how in every knowledge there is power going on. As Foucault said it, ‘since we can only have a knowledge of things if they have a meaning, it is discourse—not the things-in-themselves—which produces knowledge.’ [Foucault in (S. Hall, *Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse*)]

Discourse, dominant social discourse and how those are shaped has always been the writer’s interest. *Juno* film came as the best suitable object in studying this topic.

Furthermore, this film is qualified in terms of general critics of Cultural Studies, specifically in the age and gender aspects and on the concern of Cultural Studies and its theoretical legacies, as Hall put:

“Nevertheless, the refiguring of theory, made as a result of having to think questions of culture through the metaphors of language and textuality, represents a point beyond which cultural studies must now always necessarily locate itself...There’s always something decentred about the medium of culture, about language, textuality, and signification, which always escapes and evades the attempt to link it, directly and immediately, with other structures. And

yet, at the same time, the shadow, the imprint, the trace, of those of other formations, of the intertextuality as a site of representation and resistance, all of those questions can never be erased from cultural studies.”

(S. Hall, Cultural Studies And Its Theoretical Legacies)

In this respect, we can see the intersection between the important critique of Cultural Studies and postmodern perspective—which see the world as a contestation of a lot of fragmentations. Foucault, in this intersection, certify that cultural studies is a discursive formation. (S. Hall, Cultural Studies And Its Theoretical Legacies)

“Cultural Studies has multiple discourses; it has a number of different histories. It is a whole set of formations; it has its own different conjunctures and moments in the past.. it was always a set of unstable formations. It had many trajectories; many people had and have different trajectories through it; it was constructed by a number of different methodologies and theoretical positions, all of them in contention.”

(S. Hall, Cultural Studies And Its Theoretical Legacies)

As the original idea of this thesis is to propose teenage mother discourse presented by Juno film as a contending discourse to the dominant discourse of teenage mother long-established in society,

“The idea that physical things and action exist, but they only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse, is at the heart of the **constructionist theory of meaning and representation**”

(S. Hall, Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse)

Foucault’s notion of discourse, and particularly of the power-knowledge—comes in handy. Foucault focuses on:

“the relationship between knowledge and power, and how power operated within what he called an institutional **apparatus** and its **technologies** (techniques)... conception of *the apparatus* of punishment, for example, included a variety of diverse elements, linguistic and non-linguistic—

‘discourses, institutions, architectural arrangements, regulations, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophic propositions, morality, philanthropy, etc.... the apparatus is thus always inscribed in a play of power, but it is also always linked to certain co-ordinates of knowledge... this is what the apparatus consist in: strategies of relations of forces supporting and supported by types of knowledge’

(M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews And Other Writings*)

This power/knowledge enables the ‘new’ discourse of teenage mother portrayed by character Juno to matter, and to come up as a challenge to the dominant discourse of teenage mother. As Hall put it, ‘this approach took as one of its key subjects of investigation the relation between knowledge, power and the body of modern society, and it saw knowledge as always inextricably enmeshed in relations of power because it was always being applied to the regulation of social conduct in practice. (S. Hall, Foucault: *Power, Knowledge and Discourse*) Foucault noted that, ‘not only knowledge is always a form of power, but power is implicated in the questions of whether and in what circumstances knowledge is to be applied or not, and that the question of application and *effectiveness* of **power/knowledge** was more important than the question of ‘truth.’ [Foucault in (S. Hall, Foucault: *Power, Knowledge and Discourse*)] The big impact of this relation of power and knowledge is very interesting, because it happens everyday in our life. Foucault adds ‘knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of the ‘truth’ but has the power to *make itself true*, also, all knowledge, once applied in the real world, has real effects, and in that sense at least, ‘becomes true’; knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others,



entails constraints, regulation and the disciplining of practices, thus, there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations.’ (M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*)

## **1.2 Statement Of The Problem**

Based on the background of the study, the main points to be analysed in the movie: “How is teenage mother discourse offered by Juno film differed from the dominant teenage mother discourse?”

## **1.3 Objective Of The Study**

The objective of this analysis is to find out how teenage mother discourse offered by Juno film differed from the dominant teenage mother discourse exists.

## **1.4 Significance Of The Study**

Watching films, we rarely realize that what illustrated or portrayed in them is actually inspired or taken from the true events in life. We are lead to immerge in a film so deeply that we, then, laugh so hard because the film is so funny or start to cry because the film is so touching without even have to bother to filter it and just go along in line with the way of thinking offered by the films. If we watch a film character that is uncommon and acted in

opposition to the common social norms and values we know, we tend to oppose that film character, too, right? In short, *Juno is* that kind of character.

In this film, we can see that there are two opposite discourses is being presented—i.e. the dominant discourse of teenage mother exist in society (and preserving over time) and the contending ‘against the *dominant stream*’ teenage mother discourse offered by *Juno* film. Through dialogues, shots of the scenes, and everything else, we can see it emerged in the film—which in the end we call them all as discourses. Those discourses, then, shaped the overall social condition in the film.

This analysis is intended to be able to contribute a new angle on the object study *Juno* film, and on the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, too. And, Second, it is expected to give valuable contribution to English Department students of Airlangga University which concentrate in Literary and Cultural Studies major.

## **1.5 Thesis Structure Outline**

The first chapter of the paper consists of background of the study, statement of the problems, objective of the study, significance of the study, theoretical background, thesis structure outline and definition of key terms—which will be the guidance in doing and reading the study.

The second is Chapter 2, Literature Review. This chapter contains theoretical framework and reviews of the previous related studies. Specifically, this chapter will establish the elaboration of the theory and will

also present narrative and non-narrative analysis—as the core film analysis. In the last section of this chapter, there will also contain the reviews of previous studies that are related to this analysis. The previous studies are very helpful not only in helping the writer understand the issues even more, but also, to find what has not been done by the previous analysis—preventing overlapping happening between one research and another. In short, this chapter is all about the tools in conducting this study.

The third is Chapter 3, Methodology. It deals with every step done in making the analysis. It starts from choosing the data, gathering them and then analysing them. This chapter provides the ways of the study.

The fourth is Chapter 4, Analysis. This chapter will focus on the analysis so as to answer the statement of the problem of the study.

The fifth is Chapter 5. This chapter contains conclusion and summary of the entire study.

## 1.6 Definition Of Key Terms

*Discourse* : a group of statements which provide language for talking about—a particular topic at a particular historical moment, about the production of knowledge through language, and a social practice which entails meaning and meaning shape and influence what we do—our conduct. (S. Hall)

*Power/Knowledge* : the unseparable combination between power and knowledge which indicates wherever knowledge is, there is power—that knowledge can only exist with the support of arrangements of power. (Feder)

*Power* : a force which creates subjects and agents—that is, as a *productive* force—rather than as a property possessed by individuals, which they exert over others (Jorgensen and Phillips)

*Knowledge* : the tail end of social interaction in which we construct common truths and compete about what is true and false (Jorgensen and Phillips)

*Teenage Pregnancy* : Pregnancy experienced by young females below age 20, right after they start entering pubertal age

*Teenage mother* : Teenage females who decide to give birth to the child within