

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

We know that zoo is a pleasant place where we can see kinds of exotic animals which we rarely see around us. When we were a kid, our teachers at school taught us about how to live together with nature. They introduced us to the animals; taught us how to love them like family, and many more. We went to the zoo to see how they live with their family and feed them with our snacks. We taught that it was their real life, their natural habit. In fact, many zoos simulate the animals' natural habitats. Grove and Newell (1993) are emphasizing the suggestion that animal education could with advantage be fully replaced by the use of film and video, so it will not inflict any parties.

Through the zoo, we can also get a lot of knowledge about animals, about how they adapt, instead we can also interact with them closely. Most people said that zoo includes as a place for education. Meanwhile, according to Bostock (1993), "Animals should not be confined in zoos for any reasons, including education, if by 'confined' we understand 'kept in a way which does not ensure their well-being'".

The exhibition of wildlife animals in the midst of civilized societies is clearly fascinating people. They reveal unknown worlds and diverse life forms. People are also attracted by animals in captivity, because they symbolized the

intentions and actions of human societies towards wildlife and towards nature such as hunting and collecting the endangered animals. Those actions have evolved and finally displaced one another as societies' point of view have shifted. In many countries, in a day, a zoo ranks among the most popular of leisure pursuits, both because zoos attract such a varied public and because they do so in greater numbers than most cultural or sporting activities. For example, in Canada in the year 1989, the number of people who visit zoo gained twice more than those who visit museum, even three times more than libraries (Baratay and Fugier 2003).

Animal possess rights because of their nature as conscious beings. Peter Harrison (1991) stated that, if we had no good reason to suppose animals could feel pain or suffer in any other ways, there would still be aesthetic reasons for not treating them brutally or vandalistically. In 2010, Bousefield and Brown stated about animal welfare that animal welfare is however, not only about ensuring an animal to be not treated cruelly or caused unnecessary pain or suffering, but also about ensuring that an animal's physical state, its mental state and its ability to fulfill its natural needs and desires, are considered and attended to (Roleff 53).

Some people think that it is straightforward to interpret the dispositions of specific animals, as it often appears possible to 'read their minds'. Since we would feel pain on being exposed to boiling water and would rapidly retract an exposed body part, it could seem reasonable to assume that an animal that shows a similar reaction on being exposed to boiling water would feel a similar kind of pain. By using this familiarity, empathy and methodological observation, many humans

believe that they can assess accurately the dispositions and needs of animals. But sometimes these beliefs, however strongly held, may have little or no factual basis, and what appeared to be a self-evident truth may prove to have been an inappropriate ascription of a human form of behavior or disposition, and a case of a simplistic *anthropomorphism* (The Capacity of Animals to Experience Pain, Distress and Suffering).

The violation of animal's rights is easily found in our daily life. It is hard to recognize that animal is also a part of our living hood. We only care about ourselves, our rights and our dignity. We often put our necessity above them (animal) just because we hardly recognize that they also have rights to be respected.

One of the examples that appear lately is the endangered of tigers and other big cats in Wynnewood, Oklahoma. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has released the results of an undercover investigation into an Oklahoma exotic animal park, where an investigator recorded tiger deaths, unwarranted breeding and dangerous incidents involving children and adults. HSUS discovered video footage taken at GW Exotic Animal Park in Wynnewood, Oklahoma. In the summer and fall of 2011, it shows potentially illegal actions that threaten both animals and humans. They let the public and the children interact with exotic animals to earn some money. The interaction that happens repeatedly with no long gap sequence made them stressed and finally acts wild to the visitors. These tigers behavior happens because the owner of the zoo was not an expertise. He and his crews do not know how to treat them well, how

to feed them. They whipped them (tigers and others big cats) on the nose when they did not obey the command and feed them with inappropriate food(Pacelle).

People rudely think of themselves about the new world for human instead of animal. Mostly everything has to be fit in human first than another; in fact we might not live without the existence of animal. We could unintentionally break the food chain and finally the causes will be affected on us. Therefore, there is a theory that talks about nature and the interrelation of human and nature called ecocriticism. Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment(Glotfelty and Fromm 1996).

There are a lot of movies that talked about animal and their rights, such as the sequel film of *Free Willy* (1993), *Free Willy 2*, *Free Willy 3*, and *Free Willy: Escape from Pirate's Cove*. But, the writer chooses *We Bought a Zoo* by Cameron Crowe to be analyzed. This movie has been nominated in many movie festivals. In 2011, it was nominated as Best Live Action Family Film in Phoenix Film Critics Society Awards, Best Original Song in Satellite Awards 2011, Choice Movie Actress and Actor in Teen Choice Awards 2012, Best Performance in a Feature Film in Young Artist Awards 2012, and finally won the awards from BMI Film & TV Awards 2012 as The Best Film Music.

We Bought a Zoo is a true story about the endangered animals in Rosemoor Wildlife Park. The condition of the zoo is really apprehensive. There are many animals that are not well-cared by the previous owner and causing other damages. One day Benjamin Mee, the main character, was looking for a new house to have a new future with his family since his lovely wife passed away. The

house his bought was really complicated. Complicated here does not have any relation with the payment or money thing but this house actually is a zoo, so if Benjamin wants to own the house he has to take a responsibility to the zoo too. As a consequence, he has to fix the zoo and take care of the animals so he can own the house.

In this movie, zoo is described as a place to protect the animals. On the other hand the establishment of zoo itself has already seized most of the rights of animals to live free. *We Bought a Zoo* is one of movies that shows anthropocentric point of view inside the zoo. The happy life of human being covers up the captivity of animals. The portrayal of zoo in this movie deceives us from the loss of animal rights in living free.

The issue has been discussed previously in three theses that also concern about animal rights. The first is a thesis from Evie Triana, which is a fresh graduate student in English Department of Airlangga University. The title of her thesis is "*Animal Rights in Sara Gruen's Water for Elephants: An Ecocritic Study*". Triana's thesis is discussing about the rights of the animals in circus that had been carried away by the one who is in charge of the railroad circus show, August. Through this novel Triana found that this story could reverse the hierarchy which human and animal is equal.

The second is a PhD thesis from Syned Dale Makani Mthatiwa titled "*Human-Animal Relationships and Ecocriticism: A Study of the Representation of Animals in Poetry from Malawi, Zimbabwe, and South Africa*". Mthatiwa's thesis analyses the manner in which animals are represented in selected poetry from

Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa. It discusses the various modes of animal representation the poets draw on, and the ideological influences on their manner of animal representation.

And the last is the work of Marie Blosh titled *The History of Animal Welfare Law and the Future of Animal Rights (2012)*. This thesis is focused on the moral and legal status of animals. She concludes that animal rights theory could build on the precedent set by the anti-cruelty laws if legal rights for animals are used as a shield to protect animals from the excesses of property rights rather than as a way to elevate animals out of their status as property.

However, there is a similarity among those studies. All of them discussed the same issue about animal rights. The first study analyzed the establishment of animal rights law, the second study analyzed the representation of animals from three different poetries, and the last study analyzed the unfulfilled basic needs of animal railroad circus. The difference between the previous studies to this thesis is this thesis attempts to analyze the representation of zoo in *We Bought a Zoo* movie which have not been discussed before by the previous studies. People attend to think that zoo is a good place for the animals, in the other hand the establishment of zoo is deceive us from the loss of animal rights in living free. This is the reason why the writer chooses *We Bought a Zoo* movie as the object of her analysis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Due to the background above, the writer comes up with this following research questions:

- How is the animal rights depicted in *We Bought a Zoo* movie?
- What is the ideology constructed in the movie?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems, the aims of the analysis are:

- To examine the animal rights depicted in Cameron Crowe's *We Bought a Zoo* movie.
- To give the explanation of the ideology constructed in the movie.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research examines the loss of animal rights in a movie *We Bought a Zoo*. Therefore, the significance of the study is to acknowledge the reader that there is rights of animal that have been ripped away in this movie. This movie classified as a family movie, so the children could also see this movie and as we know the children tend to follow what they watch. The writer expected to raise the reader's awareness (especially to the children because they are easily to catch the meaning of moving pictures) of the endangered animals. The writer also hopes that this research could be a useful and helpful source for scholars, especially for scholars in Universitas Airlangga who are interested in this issue.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

- Animal rights: Rights for animal to be equal with human being.
- Anthropocentric: Human as the centre of the nature.
- Violation: The act of violating or the condition of being violated.
- Wild life: A place where there is no rules and boundaries.
- Zoo: A place to exhibit animals to the public.