CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the introduction of the study which covers background of the study, research purposes, research questions, significance of study, limitation of the study, clarification of key terms, organization of paper, and concluding remark.

1.1 Background of the Study

"The more you read, the more things you know. The more that you learn, the more places you will go." Those words quoted from Dr. Seuss' *I Can Read with My Eyes Shut* points out how important reading is. Reading is a vital activity in human's existence because reading is not only important for learning things but also important for individuals as well as for society. Therefore, educators see reading as the central of mental and social development for young people. In line with that, the act of reading should be taught to children in their early age so they can understand how to make sense of words, sentences, paragraphs, and text as a whole. However, being able to read is not the same thing as being able to comprehend the text. One way that can be used by readers to comprehend the text is by deep reading. On the other hand, deep reading cannot occur without appropriate decoding and comprehension skills. Moreover, it is believed that the skill to decode and comprehend the text are not something that readers are inherited with, they are something that should be accomplished, learned, and trained.

Fiction offers a perfect field to train young readers' skill to comprehend the text. It is because fiction requires the readers to respond the text in terms of context, events order, and probably moral message. Reading fiction can also train the readers to respond to the text by filling the "gaps" in the text because no matter how detailed the text is, it won't be able to describe every action, situation,

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or character in exhaustive detail. In reading fiction, this "gap-filling" activity is seen by Iser, the well-known theorist of reader response criticism as an "interaction" between the text and the reader. So, the readers will fill the gaps in the story by talking about what the story does not tell us. However, Rosenblatt (1985) sees reading as a "transactional" process who involve the reader and the text as "equal partners". Rosenblatt (1986) remarks that the "physical text is simply marks on paper until a reader transacts with them." It means, she believes that the text has no meaning, it is the reader who makes the meaning in the process of transaction.

In pedagogical field, educators who adopt Iser's value of literary understanding will give slightly more credence to the power of the text while honoring students' interpretation (Sipe, 2008). Also, like what have been stated before, those who value Iser's understanding will help students to fill the "gaps" in the story by talking about what the story does not tell us (Sipe, 2008). Those who adopt Rosenblatt's view of literary understanding will honor readers' initial aesthetic responses to a story and reference back to the text of the story, encourage readers to modify, refine, and extend their understanding by being influenced by other readers' interpretations as well as by the reference back to the story itself (Sipe, 2008). Whether adapting Iser's or Rosenblatt's view, reader response criticism acknowledges that different people see literature works differently and their interpretations change over times. Thus, it also tends to make interpretation highly subjective and consequently does not provide sufficient criteria for judging between two or more different interpretations of the text.

Nikolajeva (2014) states that comprehension "involves the ability to make meaning of texts on the level of provoked or unintentional encounter with the text; a signal that the reader has received the message." Therefore, she believes that comprehending the text reveals only "surface understanding" because there are several steps of more advance meaning-making, including "issues of ontology, and epistemology, fictionality, referentiality, intentionality, and ideology that demands subtle analytical tools to asses" (Nikolajeva, 2014). She confesses that judging readers' cognitive and emotional engagement with the text are more

problematic. If fiction is claimed as an adequate tool to enlighten the reader, to convey knowledge, and more importantly to train the readers to socialize, then how does it work?

To approach such question, there's a relatively recent cross-disciplinary area that addresses the issue of readers' cognitive and affective engagement with fiction: cognitive criticism. Cognitive criticism is also known as cognitive literary theory, cognitive poetics, cognitive narratology and literary cognitivism. There may be a slight shade of difference, but cognitive criticism is chosen to be the term that will be used consistently in this research. Cognitive criticism is a cross-disciplinary approach to reading, literacy and literature that suggests rethinking the literary activity (see Stockwell 2002: 1-11), including interaction between readers and works of literature. Cognitive criticism also explains the ways literary texts are constructed to maximise, or perhaps rather optimize reader engagement (see further Stockwell 2009; Boyd 2010; Burke 2011; Armstrong 2013). Nikolajeva (2014) as a cognitive criticism theorist believes that literature can increase understanding and gain insight of this world, people, and ourselves. She further states that literature affects our beliefs and opinions (Nikolajeva, 2014). However, fiction is after all only a representation of the actual world. Fiction is a linguistic construction that probably cannot affect our senses the way the actual world does. Though, cognitive criticism supported by neuroscience (see Zunshine 2006; Keen 2007; Vermeule 2010), has shown that through recently discovered mirror neurons, the brains reacts to fictional worlds (descriptions, events, characters) as if they were real. In other words, reading fiction makes the brain simulate cognitive and affective responses to the actual world, and therefore, as David Comer Kidd and Emanuele Castano's (2013) research shows, can improve our understanding of the actual world.

Another available research of brain functions conducted by LeDoux (1996) and Evans (2001) assert that brains are evolutionary wired to respond to emotional stimuli in two ways: low path and high path. First, through the very quick "low path". Responding emotional stimuli through this "low path" is short-cutting the rational part of the brain. This phenomenon happens when, for

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example, reader feels anxious or scared when directly interact with images that convey danger. That anxious and scared emotions triggered in subject's brain by the image itself is called extradiegetic emotion. Second, through more accurate "high path" where language is situated. This phenomenon happens when as soon as the readers acknowledges the fictionality, the emotional engagement is switch over to the fictional characters, focusing on their knowledge about each other's existence. As already pointed out, the brain still responds to the image through the super quick "low path" as if it were real, before the rational part of the brain decides that it is not. Likewise, it shows that a visual stimulus is not only quicker, but stronger than a verbal one. Since visual perception is evolutionary hard-wired in our brain, while language is not, it should logically imply that reading images comes naturally, while understanding verbal statements, whether oral or written, must be learned.

Considering the result of the brain function research pointed out before, a research regarding how readers' cognitive and affective engagement with a selected picturebook addressed to young reader is conducted. Picturebook is chosen exactly because in real life, mind-reading depends heavily on visual perception such as actions and reactions, facial expressions, body language and other external signs. Selected picturebook that will be used for the research is *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak. This research is expected to fill the gap in the research of readers' cognitive and affective engagement with picturebooks. Furthermore, the result of this study is also expected to give contribution and inputs for development of literature in Indonesia in particular and for those who are interested in investigating cognitive criticism.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of the study explained above, the researcher formulates the research question as follow.

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What are the extradiegetic and diegetic emotions that appear when students read selected picturebooks?

1.3 Aim of the Study

Based on the research questions formulated above, the aim of the study is presented as follow.

To investigate readers' diegetic and extradiegetic emotions that appear when students read selected picturebook.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This present research can be seen through several significances for theoretical, practical, and professional aspects.

1. Theoretical aspects

   This research is expected to fill the gap in the research of readers' cognitive and affective engagement with picturebooks. Furthermore, the result of this study is also expected to give contribution and inputs for development of literature in Indonesia in particular and for those who are interested in investigating cognitive criticism.

2. Practical Aspect

   The research findings will contribute to the application of the classroom activity. The importance will be useful for the teachers and for those who are interested in using fiction as a classroom activity especially for the teachers who want to train students' mind reading and empathy.

3. Professional Aspect

   The research problem and the result later can be useful to help teachers prepare such learning activities to improve their students' engagement with fiction .

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study uses Nikolajeva's cognitive criticism as the main theory and is aimed to find out the extradiegetic and diegetic emotions that appear when students read *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak through written responses and interview.

According to Nikolajeva (2014), extradiegetic emotion is a term that describes emotion triggered in a subject's brain by the image they are reading. Extradiegetic emotion happens when the emotional stimuli goes through the very quick "low path" which short-cut the rational part of the brain. A brief example of this phenomenon is when subjects are encountered with a scary image of a monster that makes them feel uncomfortable and anxious because the image is built on the premise that the representation of the scary image affects them just as if they were real. On the other side, diegetic emotion according to Nikolajeva (2014) occurs when subjects acknowledge the fictionality of the image through the more accurate "high path" part of the brain where language is situated.

The participants of this study were 31 tenth-grader students in a High School in Bandung. The scope of this study is limited to what the students write on their written responses and the transcripts of the interview.

The limitation of this research is that it only appeals for when students read picturebook. Picturebook is believed to be a right tool to improve students' cognitive and affective engagement because it contains pictures which can help students in acknowledging the characters' state of mind through facial expression, body gesture, and other external tokens. Using other narrative form such as novel or even poetry require advance understanding and meaning-making that might not be suitable to be applied to high school students.

1.6 Research Methodology

Descriptive-qualitative method is used in employing the research. In terms of subject of the study, this study involves 31 10th grade students in a senior high

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school in Bandung. This study uses Nikolajeva's (2014) concept of diegetic and extradiegetic emotions in analyzing the data.

1.7 Clarification of Related Terms

In order to comprehend the notions underlying the title of the study, some terms are clarified below.

1. Reading

According to Anderson (1984), reading is a process of creating meaning from written text. Nuttal (2005) defines reading as the process of identifying written or printed text to understand its meaning.

2. Cognitive Criticism

Cognitive criticism is a relatively recent cross-disciplinary area that addresses the issue of readers' cognitive and affective engagement with fiction. Cognitive criticism is a literary criticism that applies the principles of cognitive science to the interpretation of literary texts (Nikolajeva, 2014). Cognitive criticism also explains the ways literary texts are constructed to maximise, or perhaps rather optimize reader engagement (see further Stockwell 2009; Boyd 2010; Burke 2011; Armstrong 2013).

3. Extradiegetic Emotion

Extradiegetic emotion is emotion triggered in a subject's brain by the image they are reading. This happens when emotional stimuli goes through the very quick "low path", short-cutting the rational part of the brain. Such phenomenon happens when, for example, reader is encountered with a scary image of a monster that makes her feel uncomfortable and anxious. Another example is horror films that are built on the premise that representations of scary image affect the viewer just as if they were real.

4. Diegetic Emotion

Diegetic emotion occurs when subjects acknowledge the fictionality of the image through the more accurate "high path" part of the brain where language is situated. As soon as subject acknowledge the fictionality, the emotional engagement is switched over to the fictional characters, focusing on their knowledge about each other's existence.

5. Picturebook

There are various theoretical definitions of picturebook, one of it is by Schwarez and Schwarez (1991) who comment that picturebook is the type of book "where text and pictorial narrations accompany each other, alternate, and interwine. A similar brief definition is also presented by Nodelman in his *Words About Pictures* (1998) who clarifies that picturebook is "book intended for young children which communicate information or tell stories through a series of many pictures combined with relatively slight texts or no text at all."

1.8 Organization of the Paper

This paper is organized into five chapters: introduction, literature review, research methodology, finding and discussions, conclusion and suggestions.

Chapter I: Introduction

It encompasses the information on the background of the study, research questions, aims of study, significance of the study, scope of the study, clarification of related terms and organization of study.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter discussess the theoretical foundation that elaborates relevant theories to the study.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter provides the methodology of the study, research procedures, and the resources of the data.

Chapter IV: Finding and Discussions

The fourth chapter provies the report of the research. It discussess findings and the data discussion.

Chapter V: Conclussion and Suggestion

The last chapter discusses conclusions and recomendations for future research.