

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Dave Pelzer was one of the three most severely abused children in the history of California in which the other two are dead (Derksen, 2000). He is an American author, best known for his book of childhood abuse, *A Child Called "It"*. Pelzer is the son of a San Francisco fireman, Stephen Joseph Pelzer and Catherine Roerva Christen Pelzer. Pelzer was born on December 29, 1960 in Daly City, San Francisco, California.

As quoted in his author's note, Pelzer is a retired air force United States who had ever taken part in the operation 'Just Cause', 'Desert Shield' and 'Desert Storm'. While still active in the air force, he was involved in activities in Juvenile Hall and various programs related to 'Youth at Risk'.

In 1990, he was the recipient of the J.C. Penney Golden Rule Award, making him the California Volunteer of the Year. Pelzer has been recognized through a number of awards, as well as personal commendations from Presidents Reagan, Bush, and Clinton.

In 1993, Pelzer was honored as one of the Ten Outstanding Young Americans. He joins a distinguished group of alumni which includes: John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Anne Bancroft, Orson Welles, Walt Disney and Nelson Rockefeller.

In 1994, Pelzer was the only American to be honored as one of The Outstanding Young Persons of the World. He also carried the coveted Centennial flame for the 1996 Olympics. Pelzer was paid tribute as the recipient of the 2005 National Jefferson Award. Other alumni of this award include Colin Powell, Sandra Day O'Connor and Bob Hope.

In *Life Coach Mary* (2007), Pelzer was illustrated as an author a number of books such as: *A Child Called "It"* (1993), *The Lost Boy* (1995), *A Man Named Dave* (1999), *Help Yourself* (2001), *The Privilege of Youth* (2004), and *Help Yourself for Teens* (2005).

A Child Called "It", *The Lost Boy*, *A Man Named Dave*, *Help Yourself*, were nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. *A Child Called "It"* has been on the New York Times Best Sellers List for over 6 years and Dave's books have been on the same Best Sellers List approaching 13 years combined.

Plotz (2000) said that this book is currently translated in nearly forty languages and has been read by millions throughout the world. In addition, *A Child Called It* has sold 1.6 million copies and *The Lost Boy* has sold a million. As an author, Dave is the first to have four #1 International Best Sellers and to have four books simultaneously on the New York Times Best Sellers List.

Pelzer's books have grown many responses from the readers including positive responses and the negative one. Olesha B, Kate Lawrence, and Colin Forbes stand in positive response. Olesha B is interested in the character of David. She likes 'A Child Called it' because David never gave up to reach what he

wanted and David always had courage to stand up from his mother's punishments. In addition, Kate Lawrence sees the book from the content of the book. She likes the book because the book taught her about courage and hope. Colin Forbes has different opinion about the book. She likes the style of writing Pelzer used. She likes his first – person style. She also likes that the ending was put at the beginning so there was hope in the book.

However, controversy about the books appears. Icappytan (2010) quoted three family members of Pelzer who deny the abuse. They are Stephen Pelzer, Richard Pelzer, and his grandmother. Pelzer's younger brother, Stephen, denies any abuse took place, and thinks David was placed in foster care because he started a fire and was caught shoplifting. And his brother Richard Pelzer, who wrote the book *A Brother's Journey*, argues that there was abuse in the family but disputes many of David's claims and questions his ethics and marketing tactics. Adding to the controversy, his grandmother, Ruth Cole (born in 1910) remembers him as a disruptive kid, only interested in Adrian Fortiz, with big ideas of imagination and comfort.

The trilogy books namely *A Child Called it*, *The Lost Boy*, and *A Man Named Dave* are well known as memoir. Among three books tell David's true story in certain ages such as *A Child Called it* was David's story at the age of four to twelve, *The Lost Boy* was twelve to eighteen years old, and *A Man Named Dave* was above eighteen. A memoir tends to be focused on a period of time or a series of related events, rather than encompassing the story of a life from

childhood to adulthood. Zuwiyya (in Mr. Diamond's English Club) said that a memoir is a piece of of autobiographical writing, usually shorter in nature than a comprehensive autobiography. It means that memoir can be called as autobiography because it belongs to autobiography. Cocopreme (2011) said that most autobiographies are written from the first person singular perspective. This is fitting because autobiography is usually a story one tells about oneself.

However, Pelzer uses exaggeration to attract the reader. Pelzer illustrated his mother by "her voice changed from the nurturing mother to the wicked witch" in *A Child Called It*. It is a hyperbole that David called his mother as a witch.

Pelzer also told in author's note that *A Child Called it* was written based on child's perspective at the age of four to twelve. In fact, it is not. In *A Child Called it*, the little David didn't afraid being jailed whereas almost children would be afraid to be sent to jail. It means that it is not little David who spoke but a man who had high thinking that everything would be well and he did not afraid of jail.

In addition, Pelzer divides his story to be three books. The story, however, will be more practice if the author compiles the story into one book. It is such a marketing tactics.

Based on reasons above, the books are not real autobiography but rather novel. In Encarta dictionary, novel is defined as "a fictional prose work with a relatively long and often complex plot, usually divided into chapters, in

which the story traditionally develops through the thoughts and actions of its characters." In conclusion, these books belong to autobiographical novel; novel that based on self autobiography.

Dave Pelzer shares his unforgettable story of many abuses he suffered at the hands of his alcoholic mother in his first book *A Child Called 'it'*. Firstly, David's family was fulfilled with love and care. Until one day his mother's character changed from good to be bad. David got some kinds of punishment such as 'corner treatment', 'mirror treatment', and treated as 'prisoner of war'. David was also being beaten, broken his arm, punctured his stomach, forced to swallow Clorox and inhale ammonia, even forced to eat the baby's diaper. However his father defended David but then he just became quiet and pretended not to see David to be tortured and even blamed David for causing all the chaos. At last, his teachers at Thomas Edison Elementary School helped him, reported his case to police and then set him free from his mother.

The Lost Boy, Pelzer's second book, was David's story as foster kid who was looking for the love of family. He moved from one home to another home until five times. Those are: Lilian Catanze and Rudy Catanze, Harold and Alice Turnbough, Joanne Nulls and Michael, Vera and Jody, and the last John and Linda Walsh. Later on, he worked to earn money and dropped from Senior High School then joined the U.S. Air Force.

The third book, *A Man Named Dave*, is a story of success and strength to forgive. The figure of a child who had never had a name now changed to be an

adult named David who had joined the U.S. Air Force. His dream in childhood that supposed him flying as a Superman finally became true by flying the plane. The book tells the presence of the first female figure in David's life, Patsy. They stayed together, had a son, and divorced. David tried to figure out the source of why he was getting bad treatment from her mother. He did not entirely blame her mother but forgave her and insisted on breaking the cycle of abuse by being a good father for his son. At the end of the story, David found 'a princess' who was the editor of his book and then became his wife. That was Marsha.

Pelzer's trilogy *A Child Called It*, *The Lost Boy*, and *A Man Named Dave* are good books. It can be seen from two aspects: the author and the work. For the author aspects, there are two reasons why the books are important to read. The first is David's bravery in writing the books about his bitter experience for being abused child. When David was in childhood, child abuse had not got meaningful attention from the public. Most of society supposed that it was parents' right to discipline their children by any manner. The act of this disciplinary was not included in child abuse at that time. What was happening in the family was a secret that must be saved. However, some victims of child abuse would only keep silent with no action to escape. By these three books, Pelzer tries to face his problems, take benefit from the problem and create his own behavior.

The second is David's purpose to break down the circle of abuse. Most child abuse was done by the people who had been the victim of it. The victims

were only quiet when they got the abuse then some day they would apply the same act to their children. This act is the circle of abuse because it will occur from generation to generation. Through his third book, *A Man Named Dave*, Dave searches the cause of abuse and tries to avoid it to break the circle of abuse. David is success in breaking the circle of abuse by being good father for his son. Besides, David is also active in some programs dealing with child abuse prevention.

The second aspect is from the work or the books. Beside the books have been New York Best Seller for over six years, translated into some different languages, and read by millions, the books are interesting in the content. The first book, *A Child Called it*, gives information about one child's courage to survive from abuse. The second book, *The Lost Boy*, tells about a foster child's search for the love of a family. The third book, *A Man Named Dave*, is about the triumph and forgiveness. In summary, the books give the readers inspiration to survive from the worst condition and to be the best. They are inspired by David's never – ending hope for his own future.

The issue appeared in the books is child abuse in California, San Francisco, United States. Van der Kolk et al (2001) said that childhood abuse and neglect is a serious problem in the United States; each year, over three million children are reported abused or neglected. Myers reported (2008) that by 1974, some 60,000 cases were reported. In 1980, the number exceeded one million. By

1990, reports topped two million, and in 2000, reports were around three million. In the early – twentieth first century, reports declined but remained high.

Harris (2010) said that when a parent or caretaker acts, or fails to act in a way that presents imminent risk of serious harm to a child it is considered abuse. Violence & Injury Prevention Team defines child abuse as causing or permitting any harmful or offensive contact on a child's body; and, any communication or transaction of any kind which humiliates, shames, or frightens the child. Some child development experts go a bit further, and define child abuse as any act or omission, which fails to nurture or in the upbringing of the children. Harris (2010) added that most of the States recognize four types of abuse: emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Child abuse is an interesting issue in America society in the late twentieth century. Therefore, the researcher is interested in the way Dave Pelzer portrays child abuse in that time. It can be analyzed through Sociology. In addition, the personality development of main character is also interesting. David's personality development here can be seen from his behaviors. Therefore, the researcher will also analyze the trilogy through Behaviorist perspective. In this paper, the researcher decides to conduct a research focus on child abuse in Dave Pelzer's trilogy *A Child Called It*, *The Lost Boy*, and *A Man Named Dave* by using Behaviorist approach and Sociological approach. The title taken is **CHILD ABUSE IN DAVE PELZER'S TRILOGY *A CHILD CALLED IT (1993)*, *THE LOST BOY (1995)*, AND *A MAN NAMED DAVE (1999)*.**

B. Previous Studies

The writer finds several studies on child abuse. The first study is from Irish journal of applied social studies with the title *Child Abuse and Neglect and American Indians* (2008). This journal is authored by National Indian Welfare Association (NICWA) namely Terry L. Cross and David Simmons. The object of the study is child abuse and neglect. This study is specific to American Indian population. While the type of research is grounded. The research shows that a range of psychiatric symptoms and disorders in child-and adulthood are associated with early trauma, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, borderline personality disorder, substance use, suicidality, self-mutilation, somatization, sexual behavior problems, dissociate disorders, and learning disorders.

The second study comes from article entitled *Child Abuse in America: Slaughter of the Innocents* (1977) written by James W. Prescott. This study is limited in physical abuse and the source is American abused children. The type of the study is grounded. This article tells about the various means by which adults murder their infants and children: shooting, stabbing, bludgeoning, burning, poisoning, strangling, suffocating, and using explosives.

The third is about sexual abuse in Ireland. It is from Irish journal of applied and social studies entitled *Child Sexual Abuse in Ireland: an Historical and Anthropological Note* (1998). The writer is Kevin Lalor. The type of research is grounded, the object of the study is child sexual abuse and the source is Ireland

children. The journal explores about few references to child abuse in Ireland exist. The evidence is found in the penitentials of the early Christian period and also found in the Brechon Law Texts.

The fourth comes from journal of emotional abuse. The title is *Effects of Emotional Abuse in Family and Work Environments* (2005). It is written by Rachel E. Goldsmith and Jennifer J. Freyd. The study is about emotional abuse and the source is from family and work environment. The type of reserach is grounded. This study investigates links between emotional abuse and emotional awareness.

Furthermore, the writer also foud a handful of researches about Dave Pelzer and the books. The first is written by Yuniati Kholifah (2011) entitled *A Child Struggle to Survive in A Child Called It Novel by Dave Pelzer (1995): A Humanistic Psychological Approach*. The study uses qualitative method with child struggle as the object of the study, novel *A Child Called it* as the source data and Humanistic Psychology theory to analyze. This paper examines how child struggle to survive reflected in *A Child Called It* book by Dave Pelzer. From the analysis, the writer concludes that Dave can only complete the first basic need by his struggle.

The second is written by Johan Rifqi (2008) entitled *Anxiety In Dave Pelzer's The Lost Boy: A Psychoanalytic Approach*. The study uses qualitative method with anxiety as the object of the study, novel *The Lost Boy* as the source data and Psychoanalytic approach to analyze. This paper examines how the major character overcome his anxiety in *The Lost Boy* by Dave Pelzer. The

outcome of the study shows that David encounters conflict that encourages him to anxiety and mostly uses rationalization as the defense mechanism.

The illustration of the differentiations can be seen from the tabel below:

Studies on Child Abuse

	Object	Source	Approach
Terry L. Cross and David Simmons	neglect	American Indian population	grounded
James W. Prescott	physical abuse	American abused children	grounded
Kevin Lalor	sexual abuse	Ireland children	grounded
Rachel E. Goldsmith and Jennifer J. Freyd	emotional abuse	family and work environment	grounded
The writer	child abuse	trilogy <i>A Child Called it, The Lost Boy, and A Man Named Dave</i>	document

Research on Dave Pelzer and the books

	Object	Source	Theory
Kholifah	Child struggle	<i>A Child Called it</i>	Humanistic Psychology
Rifqi	Anxiety	<i>The Lost Boy</i>	Psychoanalytic
The writer	Child abuse	<i>A Child Called It, The Lost Boy, A Man Named Dave</i>	Sociology and Behaviorism

From the table above, the writer states that the paper she makes is different from others. The writer differentiates into the studies about child abuse and the researches about Dave Pelzer and the books. Part one is the studies about child abuse. The first study is about neglect, the second is physical abuse, the third is sexual abuse, the fourth is emotional abuse while the writer is about child abuse in general and limited in American society. Furthermore, the difference is also from the source of data. The first study is American Indian population, the second is American abused children, the third is Ireland children, the fourth is family and work environment while the writer uses trilogy *A Child*

Called it, The Lost Boy, and A Man Named Dave written by Dave Pelzer. In addition, four studies above collect the data groundly whether the writer uses document.

Part two is the researches on Dave Pelzer and the books. There is similarity in the type of research used that is qualitative. Otherwise, there are also differentiations. In the first research, Kholifah takes child struggle, in the second research Rifqi takes anxiety, and the writer takes child abuse as the object of the study. Next, Kholifah uses *A Child Called it* as the source data, Rifqi uses *The Lost Boy*, whether the writer uses trilogy *A Child Called It, The Lost Boy* and *A Man Named Dave*. Furthermore, Kholifah uses Humanistic Psychology theory to analyze, Rifqi uses Psychoanalytic, whether the writer uses Sociological and Behaviorist theory.

C. Problem Statement

The major problem of the study is the relationship between the trilogy and the American society at the end of the twentieth century. This problem can be broken down into three research questions. Those are:

1. How was the phenomena of child abuse at the time of the production of the trilogy?
2. How was the author's personal development influenced by the environment?
3. How was the author's reflection and criticism against the child abuse?

D. Limitation of the Study

The writer focuses this research on the theme of child abuse in Dave Pelzer's trilogy *A Child Called it*, *The Lost Boy*, and *A Man Named Dave* by using Behaviorist approach and Sociological approach. It is because the phenomenon of child abuse is alarming and the Dave Pelzer's books are good books that contain this phenomenon. In addition, personality development of the main character towards the abuse is interesting to study.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study of the paper are:

1. to identify the context of the production of the trilogy;
2. to analyze the influence of environment on the personality development of the author; and
3. to review the reflection and criticism of the author towards child abuse.

F. Research Benefit**1. Theoretical Benefit**

The theoretical benefit of this paper is to contribute the development of the knowledge, particularly the literary study on Dave Pelzer's trilogy *A Child Called it*, *The Lost Boy*, and *A Man Named Dave*.

2. Practical Benefit

The practical benefit of this paper is to give deeper understanding about child abuse in America that is reflected in Dave Pelzer's trilogy *A Child Called it*, *The Lost Boy*, and *A Man Named Dave*.

G. Paper Organization

This research is classified into seven chapters as below:

Chapter I is introduction. This chapter involves background of the study, previous study, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, research benefit and research organization. Chapter II is underlying theory. This chapter deals with some theory that the writer used to make this research. Those are: behaviorism, sociology of literature, and child abuse. Chapter III is research method. This chapter consists of object of the study, type of research , types of the data and the data sources, technique of the data collection, and technique of the data analysis. Chapter IV is social historical background of American society in the late twentieth century. This chapter shows the concept of the production of the trilogy that is American society at the end of twentieth century viewed from social aspect, economic aspect, political aspect, religious aspect, cultural aspect, and science and technology aspect. Chapter V is Behaviorist analysis. This chapter analyzes how environments influence author's personality development. Chapter VI is Sociological analysis. This chapter explains the Sociological analysis of the trilogy *A Child Called it*, *The Lost Boy* and *A Man Named Dave*. It also contains the author's criticism against the child abuse. Chapter VII is conclusion and pedagogical implication. The conclusion is the answers of the research questions and the implication is the contribution of the trilogy to pedagogy.