

**MORAL DILEMMAS FOUND IN ROALD DAHL'S  
*FANTASTIC MR. FOX***

**A SARJANA PENDIDIKAN FINAL PAPER**

**Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements**

**to Obtain the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree**

**in English Language Education**



By

Elisabeth Prasasti Setyabumi

Student Number: 181214057

**FACULTY OF TEACHERS TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

**SANATA DHARMA UNIVERSITY**

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Caecilia Tuttyandari, Ph.D.

Date

24 April 2023

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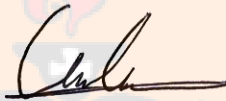
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I honestly declare that this thesis/final paper, which I have written, does not contain the work or parts of the work of other people, except those cited in the quotations and the references, as a scientific paper should.

Yogyakarta, 24 April 2023

The Writer



Elisabeth Prasasti Setyabumi

181214057

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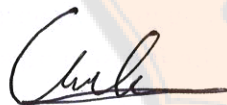
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## ABSTRACT

**Setyabumi, Elisabeth Prasasti (2023):** *Moral Dilemmas Found in Roald Dahl's Fantastic Mr. Fox*. Yogyakarta: English Language Education Study Program, Department of Language and Arts Education, Teachers Training and Education Faculty, Sanata Dharma University.

Dilemmatic situations range from something trivial up to something “life-and-death”. Moral dilemma, a situation where an agent is faced with two or more options that are conflicting one another, has no option that is neither completely right nor completely wrong.

The research was done by analyzing the main source using reader-response theory. These are the requirements that make a dilemma a moral dilemma: None of the options overrides each other, the options do not violate moral requirements, and the more extreme or obvious the morality of the choices are, the weaker the moral dilemma will be.

There are five moral dilemmas, found in the novella. The first one, Mr. Fox sacrificed his moral standard for his diet. The second one is the dilemma when Mr. Fox, needed to decide whether to continue stealing food, or stop doing so and be spared from the farmers' wrath. In the third one, Mr. Badger was stuck in a moral dilemma between stealing for the greater good of others or starving while being honest. The fourth one, Mr. Badger had to choose whether to help Fox on the heist or to leave him be. In the final moral dilemma, the three farmers can try capturing Mr. Fox and stop him from stealing again. The alternative, they can let Mr. Fox keep stealing from them. However, they had to face his heist from time to time.

Often, moral dilemmas are tough to face. However, it is crucial to introduce and get people, especially children, used to them. Moral dilemmas are prone to be experienced by everyone. They are expected to become critical thinkers through the exposure to moral dilemmas.

**Keywords:** moral dilemma, reader-response theory, qualitative research, literature, psychology



## **ABSTRAK**

**Setyabumi, Elisabeth Prasasti (2023):** *Moral Dilemmas Found in Roald Dahl's Fantastic Mr. Fox*. Yogyakarta: English Language Education Study Program, Department of Language and Arts Education, Teachers Training and Education Faculty, Sanata Dharma University.

Situasi dilematis mencakup keputusan yang sepele sampai dengan keputusan “hidup atau mati.” Dilema moral adalah suatu peristiwa di mana seseorang dihadapkan dengan dua atau lebih pilihan, yang mana pilihan yang tersedia saling berkonflik dan tidak ada yang sepenuhnya benar maupun salah.

Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menganalisa sumber utama dengan teori *reader-response*. Ketentuan yang membuat dilema moral menjadi dilema moral antara lain: tidak ada pilihan yang mengesampingkan pilihan lain, pilihan tidak ada yang melanggar ketentuan moral, serta semakin jelas pilihannya maka dilemanya menjadi lebih lemah.

Terdapat lima temuan dilema moral di novela kajian utama. Yang pertama, Mr. Fox mengorbankan standar moralnya demi dietnya. Yang kedua, dilema Mr. Fox untuk tetap atau berhenti mencuri dari para peternak. Yang ketiga, Mr. Badger terjebak antara memilih untuk mencuri demi kebaikan teman dan keluarganya. Yang keempat, Mr. Badger harus memilih untuk menolong Mr. Fox dalam misi pecurian atau meninggalkannya. Dalam dilema moral yang terakhir, tiga peternak dapat coba menangkap Mr. Fox dan mencegahnya mencuri ternak mereka. Di sisi lain mereka bisa membiarkan Mr. Fox, namun harus menghadapi aksi pencurian oleh Mr. Fox dari waktu ke waktu.

Seringkali, dilema moral sulit untuk dihadapi. Walau begitu, dilema moral penting untuk dikenalkan dan dibiasakan ke orang-orang, terutama anak-anak. Dilema moral rentan dialami oleh semua orang. Mereka diharapkan untuk menjadi pemikir kritis lewat pemaparan terhadap dilema moral tersebut.

**Kata kunci:** *moral dilemma, reader-response theory, qualitative research, literature, psychology*



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Firstly, the writer would like to express gratitude and appreciation towards God for His continuous love, blessings, and guidance. The writer believes God works in every individual and situation that the writer came across in her life. Through His might and strength, amidst the struggle and the hard time the writer was through, the writer can still strive and continue to finish this final paper.

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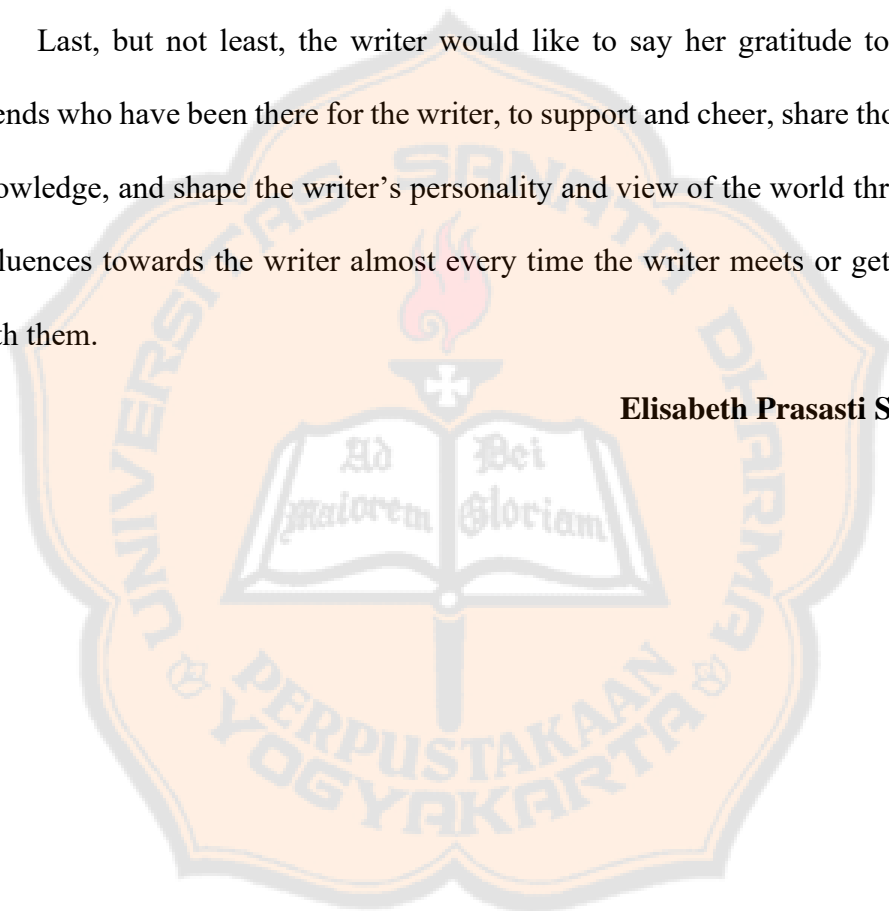
The writer is very thankful of all her lecturers, staff, and other employees of Sanata Dharma for teaching the writer five years of competence and thoughtful academic and social knowledge, including life lessons. The writer never thought that there are more than what the writer knew about the English Language and what the other knowledge has to offer, and thus through the years, the writer learned many new things, not only English, but also other knowledge and skills that the writer found useful for her future.

For the loving Eyang Uti, Om Didik, Bulik Tatik, and Dik Tata, the writer is highly grateful of them, her family. She would like to give big thanks and honors

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**Elisabeth Prasasti Setyabumi**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE.....	i
APPROVAL PAGES .....	ii
STATEMENT OF WORK’S ORIGINALITY .....	iv
<i>PERNYATAAN PERSETUJUAN PUBLIKASI</i> .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vi
<i>ABSTRAK</i> .....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	x
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION .....	1
A. Background.....	1
B. Approach of the Study .....	15
CHAPTER II: DISCUSSIONS .....	18
A. Introductory .....	18
B. The Dilemmas And Findings.....	19
1. Double Standard and Escapism .....	19
2. Badger Had a Moment of Moral Dilemma .....	27
3. Morals From the Crooks.....	36
CHAPTER III: CONCLUSIONS .....	42
REFERENCES .....	45

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background

Literature and readers cannot stand alone. Both interact and “mature” together. The readers gain valuable experiences, such as learning from the characters and the way the story is presented. Usually, the character(s) would develop as the story gets deeper. The characters’ dynamics will continue to grow, and at the end, their conditions would usually transform for the better or worse, in hope that the readers will learn and grow as well.

Reader-response theory stood up for the concept where the readers are actively contributing meanings through their interactions with the text, based on their own perception and comprehension. Paraphrased from Browne, Chen, Baroudi, and Sevinc on 2021, it is all under the influence of their ability, culture, gender, and overall experience. Literature on reader-response theory is heavily based on the readers’ perspectives and their individual backgrounds, whereas each person has different backgrounds. Under this principle, the text will be rich in meaning and unique to each individual reader, and thus every time they interact with the text, it becomes “alive”, since they lived off to the readers’ active contribution to the text, such as in the form of interpretations.

Take an example of a joke that can be lost in translation. Several jokes or puns can be understood in one language, but not on others. The writer could give an example of a pun “*berrylicious*”. If you examine it closely, you will see that it is

a pun of the words “*berry*” or “*very*” and “*delicious*”. This wordplay cannot exactly be used in other languages, such as in Indonesian. The words in the translation are distinct from the original ones and the combination between the words would just simply not make sense. This proves how relatively subjective and varying the meaning of a literature can be.

Albeit, novels do not commonly have illustrations, the good ones “show, do not tell”. It means that the language used in the story does not blatantly tell what is happening by directly saying what happens, rather they show how it happens. Even though some aspects like direct visuals are limited —or may be not present at all— and ambiguous in most novels, through the language, the readers are challenged to imagine each situation implied in the book through the words, and are brought to the world of their own interpretations, triggering their skills of comprehension and imagination. These are most likely to be influenced by the readers’ cultures and experiences. As a result, the story may be interpreted in many ways and it may make the content “different” from one reading experience of one person to another. From here, together, any reader can weave connections and learn different things from different people. The writer found it interesting that a part of a story’s plot or concept can be richly interpreted to represent many things, especially when the writer used a reader-response theory approach.

The writer intends to explore more about how to face moral dilemmas. The term “moral dilemma” was actually something new the writer never thought of, prior writing this paper. The writer found this important, not just for the writer herself, but also for others as well, especially young people.

There are some prominent and noticeable characters that contributed in the novella. They are Mr. Fox, Mrs. Fox, the four unnamed fox cubs, Mr. Badger, and the farmers, namely Boggis, Bunce, and Bean. Not much of a choice, but Mr. Fox, along with Mr. Badger and the three farmers have the most frequent appearance and contribution to the story, that their personalities are delivered and presented clearly.

Seeing on how the characters acted toward the environments and were described by the narrator, the writer could figure out what dilemma they might get themselves into. Mr. Fox was prideful and liked to steal and consume the farms' produces for the greater good. Mr. Badger was the character that has highly respectable and tough moral standards who got dragged into Mr. Fox's heist plan. The farmers were stubborn and aggressive. They took great extent into pursuing their wills, specifically ill-wills, no matter what. The writer found their descriptions, actions, and thoughts put hints of the characters whose dynamics might be prone to get tangled in moral dilemmas.

The objective of this paper is to find moral dilemmas in *Fantastic Mr. Fox* novella. In our lives, we may encounter moral dilemmas—almost every day. It can vary from the conflict about whether to report bullies at school up to the decision of life and death. In the first conflict, we can choose whether to report bullies in the school and risk getting targeted by the bullies or staying silent, staying out of their threats, but living in fear and being used by them. In the second conflict, life-death decisions can be in the form of letting go, like having to choose to stay alive with life support while enduring the pain every day or choose to peacefully pass away without life support and no worry of living every day in pain again.

Through moral dilemmas, people are invited to be knowledgeable about various topics, balancing logic and feeling, and considering others and self. They are faced with the world's turmoil and inner struggles, where sometimes, morally correct or justified behaviors are hazy. With a strong moral principle, people can be firmer and more confident in making decisions, because they know how to act through it and what to choose. Accordingly, the question the writer wants to address is what the moral dilemmas in *Fantastic Mr. Fox* are.

GradeSaver stated that Roald Dahl, the author of *Fantastic Mr. Fox* novella, was a British author of novels, poems, short stories, and even screenplays. He was known for his children novellas in which some had adapted into full-feature movies, namely *Wily Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *Matilda*, *James and the Giant Peach*, and *BFG*. Based on GradeSaver, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* novella was inspired by Roald Dahl's home and surroundings in Buckinghamshire, England. In the countryside, there was a 150-year-old beech, known as the "Witch's Tree" by the locals. Sadly, it did not stand anymore. Dahl imagined that there was a clever fox family beneath the tree trunk. From there, the story of Mr. Fox was starting to come to life.

*Fantastic Mr. Fox* offers a light, children's story that contains moral dilemmas, both the one that already exists and those that are writer-interpreted. The novella follows the story of the witty Mr. Fox who stole food from three mean and nasty farmers, in the hope to survive and keep his family well-fed, especially after the farmers wanted them dead.



If you were in the position of Mr. Fox, what would you do? Would you steal from others, or would you let your family starve to death? By reading the novella, the writer hopes that people are given the big picture on what moral dilemmas are, through a light and easy-to-understand story, so everyone could learn to make solid and critical decisions more easily in their lives, especially amidst moral dilemmas from the characters.

The writer found it interesting because she related it to her condition in real life. She thought that all this time, she was almost constantly under the pressure of dilemmatic problems, and she struggled with how she should face them. The writer hoped that this paper would be beneficial, not only to the writer herself, who uses it for focusing on self-reflection, study, or just as a general reference; but also for anyone with similar problems.

The story itself is not focused entirely on moral dilemmas. Instead, it is only a snippet of the themes that caught the writer's attention. There is only one moral dilemma that is explicitly presented in a small portion of one chapter of the book (Chapter 14: Badger Has Doubts). However, it does not stop the writer from doing an exploration, to open up the possibilities of other potential moral dilemmas. Thanks to the approach of reader-response theory, there might be events that are influenced by the readers, such as when they reimagine a setup where new moral dilemmas could possibly take place in the readers' perspective.

Encyclopedia.com, powered by Oxford's University Press defines "moral" (adjective) as "(being) concerned with the principles of right and wrong behavior and the goodness or badness of human character." Psychology Dictionary, under

the article *MORAL* by N., Sam M.S., (2013), defines moral as the ability to identify something as good or bad. “Moral” as an adjective defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is said to be (something) related to principles of right and wrong in behavior (“Moral”). “Moral” in Cambridge Dictionary is defined as “relating to the standards of good or bad behavior, fairness, honesty, etc. that each person believes in, rather than to laws”.

Encyclopedia.com defines “dilemma” as “a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two or more alternatives, esp. equally undesirable ones.” On a smaller scale, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, defined a dilemma as a choice that is typically undesirable or unpleasant (“Dilemma”). The one defined by Psychology Dictionary, under the article *DILEMMA* by N., Sam M.S., (2013) is a condition where the option between desirable or undesirable alternatives need to be present.

These last two definitions sound different at first glance. However, if we compare and take a closer look at them, we will see that they complement each other. When the first definition concerns more about how the situation might make someone feel and the second definition tells the consequences of the situation. “*Dilemma*”, such as the one that is defined by Cambridge Dictionary, seem to almost complete the previous two definitions. It is defined as “a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two different things you could do” (“Dilemma”). What lacks in this definition is that the choices are undesirable.

However, there is still a difference between “*dilemma*” and “*moral dilemma*”. While a mere dilemma means a conflict where an agent is faced with

two or more options that are conflicting each other where they are all undesirable in general, a moral dilemma is a dilemma that concerns one's conscience and morality as the consideration and principal base its decision-making process.

Here, the writer tried to reconstruct the meaning of moral dilemmas from the previous definitions. She defines that a moral dilemma as "a situation where an agent is under an unpleasant pressure of choosing between prompts that have morally desirable and undesirable choices present in every one of them."

Furthermore, Kvalnes (2019), the writer of *Moral Reasoning at Work: Rethinking Ethics in Organizations*, defined moral dilemmas as the situation where the decision-maker has to choose between two or more moral values or duties but can only fulfill one of them; thus no matter what decision he takes, he will violate an important moral concern.

McConnell (2022), a Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in his article about moral dilemmas on Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy said it is a condition where the agent is morally considering each of two options but it is impossible for him to do both actions. Therefore, the agent would be condemned to a moral failure as whatever option he takes is stained with moral flaws.

As a comparison, from the two definitions of moral dilemmas by Kvalnes (2019) and McConnell (2022), there are several common elements that are present in both. First is that the agent is in a situation where he is faced with at least two moral decisions. Making a decision between choices is inevitable. Secondly, it is written in the sentences that in a moral dilemma, the agent: Firstly, can only choose

one decision; Secondly, it is impossible to do both actions. Thirdly, every moral dilemma will question one's morality. It is because there is no choice that is fully right nor wrong in it.

McConnell (2022), in his article, said the crucial features of a moral dilemma are that the agent is required to do each of two (or more) actions; the agent can do each of the actions; but the agent cannot do both (or all) of the actions. The previous comparison fulfills these requirements. Therefore, it can be considered as a moral dilemma.

Based on the definitions found, the writer can conclude that a moral dilemma is a situation where an agent is stuck between choosing two or more morally conflicting choices. He or she can only choose one of them. No matter what choice he or she makes, they are condemned into doing something wrong, as all of the choices are considered both morally right and morally wrong.

In this world, most things are not plain "black" or "white". Instead, they are in shades of "gray". And when they are around the middle of the shade, here, moral dilemmas come into play. Things can be seen from many perspectives by different people and this makes the guidelines or standards of what to choose hard to determine, as each person's point of view differs from one another. To some extent, some things are considered good to one group, but harmful to the others, vice versa.

Based on the writer's experience, the best decisions are usually made by being collected in weighing up the decisions, including the benefits and consequences. Therefore, mindfulness plays a crucial part in considering the "best" choice based on one's morals and ethics.

The writer was aware and grew up with the concept that most things are not considered fully right nor fully wrong, during her later years in middle school. This was then strengthened after the writer discovered the existence and concept of moral dilemmas, by working on this final paper about *Fantastic Mr. Fox* novella. Knowing how common this phenomenon is and yet important it is to the current generations, including the writer and other children, teens, and young adults, had sparked her interest to understand more about the topic and how it could contribute to one's life.

Moral dilemmas are quite common to be encountered by an individual. They may happen so often that they are overlooked. Some of them can happen such as in deciding everyday-tasks, facing and contributing to ourselves or communities, deciding what is prioritized, and the list keeps going on. Therefore, seeing how common a (moral) dilemma can be, everyone is prone to be exposed to this phenomenon at some point in their lives. As the saying goes "experience is a good teacher," it means that by having experiences, people can learn from them. Stixrud, W. & Johnson, N. (2018b) stated that if children were given the chance to decide by themselves, their brains learn to distinguish an act or event as either good or bad, or alternatively right or wrong, and thus they learn how to make hard choices.

Stixrud and Johnson (2018a) in their book entitled *The Self-Driven Child* (p.12), stated that parents' crucial role is to push or let and encourage the kids to decide for themselves. It is expected that the children develop the ability to consider and judge things by themselves. Hopefully, they can succeed, not only throughout school, but also their lives.

If the parents insisted on controlling the children, shaping the way the parents wanted them to be, the parents would be likely to stress less. However, it would make the children more controlled, rather than self-controlled.

The proper exposure of moral dilemmas helps them reduce the stress of helplessness or dependent control by someone else (Stixrud & Johnson, 2018b). Thus, it is important to give chances for them to make their own choices, while giving them controlled freedom, not too strict and not too loose.

Paraphrased from the same book, children should not be isolated from stressful situations, or else it will only make their anxiety worse. They should form resilience through exposure. This will train the brain to handle stress better, and in this context, to be “in control” instead of feeling “controlled”.

Morality is concerned towards how the world ought to be and how people ought to act. It would be likely to be successful when people use their critical thinking to the fullest. Thinking critically about the moral issues will help people hone their moral compass, the ability to judge whether things are right or wrong, accordingly. They will be able to face moral dilemmas better and wiser in their everyday lives.

As a result of thinking critically, people can minimize stress, anxiety, and doubts that can make them overthink and get stuck, even when they face simple moral problems, which can last long enough in effect, significantly when they have grown older. In order to make one succeed, they will need to control and balance their rights and their obligations, so they will not be driven by their ego and make rash decisions.

Making a story personalized relates more to the readers from similar backgrounds and embraces diversity of how people think about something. It may make people feel respected, accepted, and even hooked to the story to find out more with certain characters they got attached to.

For example, a story features characters that relate to another character such as Winston — the main character of *1984* (Orwell, 1949)— who happened to share the same view of the world with a young woman, Julia. Together, they formed a resistance against the tyranny that stifled their beliefs about life and freedom, the way it should have been.

Winston himself is portrayed as an ordinary person with his own flaws. He is meant to be generic so that there would be more empty space the readers can fill and add to the character, as the story progresses, leading to people in understanding and connecting with him more easily. He lived a rather mundane life in a not-so-mundane world, but he did not do big things or complete big achievements in the story. However, he had a burning passion for freedom of speech. Just like us, we all dream of it. If we are lucky, we would live in the country that supports it.

It seems that in this modern era, it is a right. However, there are countries like North Korea that chose to remain isolated. Those who oppose the government would be sent to labor camps or worse, publicly executed.

As Indonesians, most of us might relate to Winston, especially with his dreams and struggles. Based on the previous study the writer had in middle school, Indonesians had passed a stage of —somewhat— a tyranny under Soeharto's regime, after he unwillingly resigned from his position as the second president of



Indonesia. We entered the Reformation Era on May 21<sup>st</sup> 1998, leaving the New Order Era which scarred the 60s-90s generations, both physically and mentally. Back in the regime, there were such things as mysterious shootings (*Petrus*), the persecution of some ethnic groups and ideologies, people disappearing, and the absence of freedom of speech.

At first, there might be fear among the students. A dilemma, even. They can choose to put their lives at stake by protesting the government, while fighting for their nation's sake; or decide to stay silent, repressing their yearning for freedom, especially of their thoughts, while staying safe by obeying to the nation's dictatorship. Thankfully, the students were brave enough to riot against the government. Instead of helping Soeharto, some of his former supports, such as the military, eventually supported the people and turned its back against their once-big-superior. (Suryadinata, 1999)

Louise M. Rosenblatt (1982), the pioneer of reader-response theory, described reading as “a transaction, a two-way process, involving a reader and a text at a particular time under particular circumstances.” In this way, the text's message how it is perceived depends on the experience of the readers. The literary reader's experience depends on how the stories are presented or told. Therefore, it is important to show and make a connection between the story with the readers. Therefore, they would understand and connect better with the story.

As it was cited from McConnell (2022), in Book I of Plato's Republic, Plato used an example of a situation, where one is in debt of returning his friend's weapon, but he was not in the right mind. From this point on, we are faced with

two, conflicting moral norms: to repay the debts, or to protect others from harm. Socrates stood by protecting others, rather than repaying the debts. He can repay his debt later when everything is settled down, so that there would not be victims.

About twenty-four centuries later, around the first half of the 20th century, Jean-Paul Sartre came up with a description where the resolution of a moral conflict was less obvious to the earlier Platonic conflict. He told the example of a student who wanted to avenge his brother's death on the German offensive of 1940, by fighting the forces that he saw as evil. However, he had his mother living with him, and he was the only consolation in her life. The student was then torn apart between going to war and contributing to the fall of injustice (wider scope, but uncertain efficacy), or to be with his mother, devoting his life to her fully (limited scope, but certain efficacy). This is not the only ideas of moral dilemmas. There are many others, but the most cited ones are the examples from Plato and Sartre.

Ethicists identified moral dilemmas as a case where an individual (agent) has moral reasons in each of two actions which he or she can do each, but cannot do both. (McConnell, 2022). There are some crucial features of moral dilemmas:

The agent is required to do each of two (or more) actions; the agent can do each of the actions; but the agent cannot do both (or all) of the actions. The agent thus seems condemned to moral failure; no matter what she does, she will do something wrong (or fail to do something that she ought to do)" (McConnell, 2022).

The writer found two more batches of moral dilemma characteristics and restrictions. The first one is taken from McConnell (2022) and Mason (1996), and the second one is from Chaffee (2023). On the first batch:

- A genuine moral dilemma's conflicts never override each other. Otherwise, it would only be classified as merely a conflict (McConnell, 2022).
- If the agent has no moral reason for choosing and doing a morally unacceptable behavior, it means that he or she is violating moral requirements and he or she is not in a dilemma (Mason, 1996 (p.48)).
- The more extreme or obvious the morality of the choices are, the weaker the moral dilemma will be. A strong moral dilemma is any situation in which the agent cannot avoid violating some moral requirements, because each of the moral choices are both morally right and wrong at the same time (McConnell, 2022).

On the second batch, according to Chaffee (2023), moral dilemmas can be found in everyday life. The choices in moral dilemmas that we face each day shape our lives and create who we are. In each case, the choices involved share the following characteristics:

- The choices involve on how you act toward others.
- There is no absolute "right" or "wrong" answer, and thus, the dilemma can be discussed and debated.
- It is likely that the consequence of any action or choice brings both positive and/or negative consequences, depending on the choices taken.
- When an agent considers about the choices, he or she will be guided by their own conscience which reflects the values that he or she is committed in and moral reasoning processes that make the agent choose what he or she choose.

- The choices involve the concept of moral responsibility, which means that the agent which made the choice is expected to be responsible of his or her decision, especially when the result gives significant outcomes to those who are involved.

When we take a look at Plato's case, many would undoubtedly choose not to take a risk of violence. The choice to protect others is obviously more important than returning borrowed weapons, even if the owner demanded it. A moral dilemma is a conflict when none of the choices overrides the others. In this case, the first choice would override the second one, and thus the case is not a genuine moral dilemma. It is simply a conflict. A genuine moral dilemma's conflicts never override each other.

As it was stated in the article by Terrance McConnell in 2022, Sinnott-Armstrong (1988) said that "Further, if the agent cannot adopt both alternatives, the moral reasons for each alternative cannot both be overriding, since these moral reasons conflict in order to have a genuine moral dilemma it must also be true that neither of the conflicting requirements is overridden".

## **B. Approach of the Study**

The writer uses the theory of reader-response to analyze the problems. (Woodruff & Griffin 2017) said that in the learning environment (especially reading subject) of high school children and alike are challenged to interpret a text using the knowledge that they have, varying perspectives, and individual experiences. The goal is not only aimed towards one's ability in thinking about a text, but also

to uncover ideas and interpretations using their textual evidence (verified text or documents that support a thesis or argument).

Reader response theory approach hones people's minds to be critical thinkers, as it pushes people to analyze and interpret the story in their own ways. Analysis and interpretations challenge and explore one's ability in seeing the story from their point of views and opening one's eyes to the other possibilities of the story's meaning, be it from himself or from the others'.

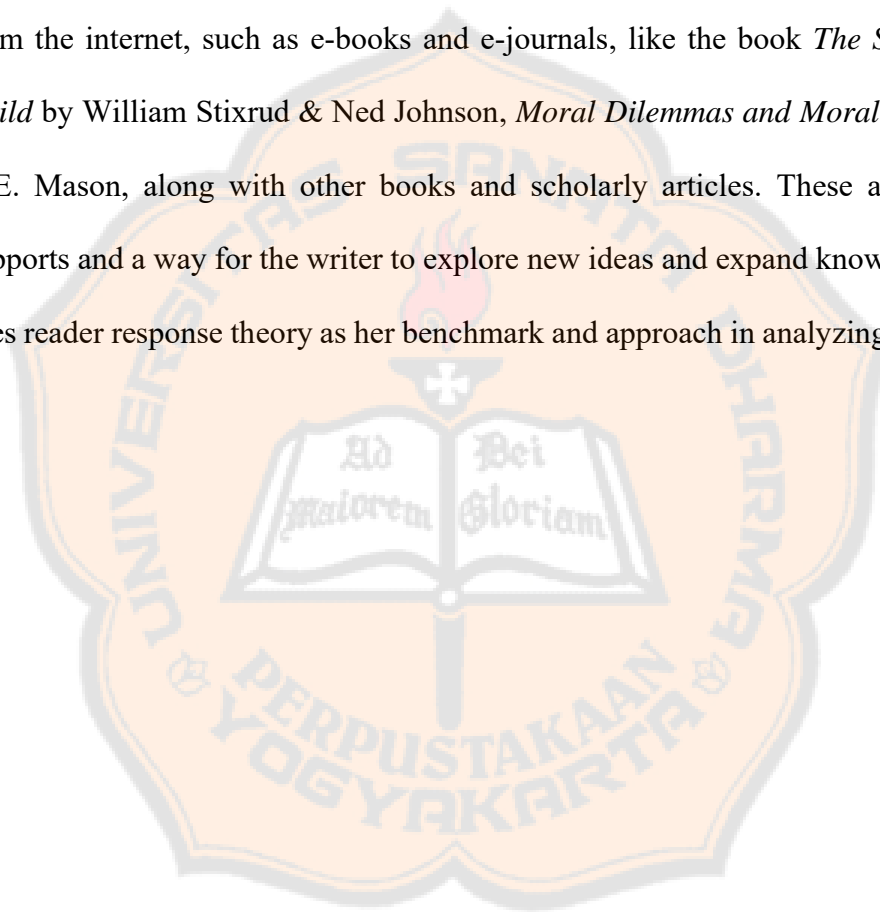
The kind of research that was going to be used is qualitative research. It would be focused on the non-numerical data, such as thoughts and opinions, as the findings. It would primarily subjective in approach. It was seen from many perspectives that the writer could find from online sources (e-journals and sometimes articles), including on what the writer had in mind.

The writer would base the data on secondary research, such as research materials published in research reports and online journals. She would be using the data that had already been collected by someone else to base her criticism, knowledge, and understanding of the issue being discussed. What she meant by "using the data that has already been collected by someone else" referred to online journals that has already been created and the references used in it.

The writer read the novella and analyzed the pattern of the event in every morally dilemmatic action that the characters did in the story, in hope to identify moral dilemmas and understand the situation when the dilemmas took place in the story. Instances of the resources that are going to be used are e-books, e-journals,

and organizational, educative, and non-profit websites. When it is necessary, the writer also added several articles.

The writer uses Fantastic Mr. Fox children's novella, written by Roald Dahl, as her main source of reference and the object of study. There are also some side materials being gathered in the form of collected data and information, obtained from the internet, such as e-books and e-journals, like the book *The Self-Driven Child* by William Stixrud & Ned Johnson, *Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory* by H.E. Mason, along with other books and scholarly articles. These are used as supports and a way for the writer to explore new ideas and expand knowledge. She uses reader response theory as her benchmark and approach in analyzing the novel.



## CHAPTER II

### DISCUSSIONS

#### A. Introductory

*Fantastic Mr. Fox* is a children novella written by Roald Dahl. The story featured anthropomorphic animals and their struggle to survive against all odds. From being hunted by raging farmers whom Mr. Fox stole produce from, up to angering the farmers enough to destroy the whole fox's hill and other animals' home that they had to hide in the burrows, Mr. Fox carried on the guilt, burden, and responsibility to fix what he started.

He stood up and decided what is best for his friends and family. He decided that it would be "for the greater good" to steal from the three farmers through the burrow and provided them food to feast together as one big family, every single day. This way, they will still be well-fed, even without the need of leaving the underground burrow that sheltered them from the farmers.

In this chapter, the writer discusses what she collected during her process of research and the process of writing this paper. Her intention is only to identify the moral dilemmas that occurred in the novella and explore it to broaden the point of view and why the characters chose to act in certain ways. She also analyzed the drive behind the characters' perspectives, mindsets, and their judging abilities.

On a side note, by referencing the relation of the moral dilemmas to real-life happenings, especially in Indonesia, she hoped that this paper can be used to



shed light and familiarize others to the nature of moral dilemmas. The writer expected them to be aware of one and act more wisely towards it.

## **B. The Dilemmas and Findings**

### **1. Double Standard and Escapism**

#### **1.1. Overview**

Earlier in the book, the readers were introduced to Mr. Fox, a clever hunter who was the enemy of three neighboring farmers. Mr. Fox always stole from them, killing and consuming their poultries. When Mr. Fox, his kids, and Mr. Badger were about to go to Bean's cider cellar, Mr. Badger was having doubts about stealing. Down below were Mr. Fox's responses:

"Boggis and Bunce and Bean are out to kill us. You realize that, I hope? But we're not going to stoop to their level. We don't want to kill them. We wouldn't dream of it. We shall simply take a little food here and there to keep us and our families alive. Right? If they want to be horrible, let them. We down here are decent peace-loving people." (p. 59-60)

Mr. Fox did not have to steal from the three farms, and thus he would not spark conflicts toward the farmers; but where should they go and relocate the farms' alternative? Where, when, and in what condition should the animals hunt? New territories may not be safe, either. It might be occupied by other humans or animals that might be aggressive toward foxes like him and his family.

## 1.2. Why It is Considered as a Moral Dilemma

Based on the restrictions that make a moral dilemma a moral dilemma on the first chapter of this paper, the writer considered those possible situations as genuine moral dilemmas because both dilemmas do not override the other alternative choices. From the first two moral dilemmas, Mr. Fox risked his life to feed his family. Between the risk of getting killed, or starving to death, he chose the first one.

As of the second moral dilemma, Mr. Fox is faced with the idea to kill poultries and consume them for survival. However, doing so will result in breaking his moral standard and creating a double-standard as Mr. Fox demonized the farmers for wanting to kill the animals, while Fox himself kill and consume poultries, which are animals as well. He never seems to put this in consideration, as the writer does not find him having a remorse over it.

Regardless of the contradiction, Mr. Fox still has a strong sense of moral standard, proved in how persistent he was throughout the novella. He kept his image well and would do big things to repay for his own fault in order to clean his name. He was prideful when he hunted to feed and provide for his family, but he then learnt to humble himself and threw a feast as a way of paying back for what he did in the past. From these two examples (provides for his family

and truly apologetic of his mistakes) we can conclude that he was responsible and was taking great extent to protect his image in front of others.

What also makes the dilemma stronger is because the agent has a moral reason for doing a morally unacceptable behavior. It was the conflict between two opposing ways of needs and survival. Even though one of the possible choices contains stealing (which is morally wrong), Mr. Fox had a moral reason to do the act: to provide for his family.

### **1.3. Writer's Response**

What is the first thing the readers get to think of when they hear the word “killing”? They may think of crime, immorality, cruelty, evilness, heartlessness, and so on. Mr. Fox identified killing or hunting, specifically, as something "horrible" while they, the animals, were "... decent peace-loving people." as he was saying. It seemed contrary to what Mr. Fox was doing in the past and in the current heist, where he killed chickens and geese to be eaten later, and thus this puts him into two overlapping dilemmas that he had to choose. The first dilemma that might pop up in Mr. Fox's mind would be to kill poultries to feed his family and break what he said about victimizing the animals and demonizing the humans; or he could stand by his moral standing, but it would mean that the foxes

will be malnourished. The second dilemma would be to keep hunting and stealing farm animals, but raising the tension between the farmers and the foxes and risking being killed, or starving but having lives away from the farmers' touch.

The readers might have agreed with Mr. Fox when he is against killing as if it is the killing of his kind. However, what if the writer says that this is the killing of poultries? Will the readers still think the same?

Mr. Fox complained about the farmers' actions toward him, his family, and his friends. They destroyed the animals' burrows and habitats. As a result, they were trapped underground with no food or water. If they dared to approach the light, they would be shot dead. They were scared of being killed and thus they strived for their lives by killing the farmers' farm animals: poultries.

The readers may be the other Mr. Foxes. They are against killing, but when it comes to poultry or other usual meat products, they have mostly no problem consuming them. Farmers raise them, but in the end, they end up getting butchered and mass-consumed.

People eat poultries in many forms, and most of them don't have moral remorse over it. It is normalized and is one of their usual diets as humans. Just like Mr. Fox, he had to consume them since it

was a part of his diet. Eating poultries, in general, does not make them horrible people.

Vegans, however, see this in an opposing point of view to the previous statement. Donald Watson, the co-founder of The Vegan Society which was founded in 1944 defined that Veganism is a way of living that seeks to exclude, as far as possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing and any other purpose. Vegans stood by the principal that animals are not food. They see that the animals are oppressed and abused by humans, especially in farms and slaughterhouses. Therefore, they see that consuming animals is unethical; and thus, they don't eat dairy and any other animal-based products.

What if the same happened to Mr. Fox too, albeit being a predator and a carnivore? It is very unlikely, as a vegan diet would not contain the proper nutrition that foxes need. To put it in an actual context, some people see hunting animals to be wrong. However, we cannot force everyone to have plant-based diets, especially in this case: animals.

Imagine if the foxes try to consume plant-based diets in the story. On the pro side, the farmers' produce will not be targeted by the fox and the farmers' anger could diminish, except if the foxes drink cider from Bean, one of the farmers. However, the

consequence is that they will be malnourished because they lack essential nutrients.

The novella portrayed the animals as anthropomorphic. They had human-like characteristics. They stood on their hind legs and dressed like humans. They mostly act like humans as well, under the exception of animal instincts in their blood. They still hunt and steal, and are good diggers, too. However, these behaviors are condoned by the animals, and on the other hand, condemned by men.

By keeping his animal behaviors — stealing and hunting —, Mr. Fox exposed his friends and family to danger. Mr. Fox wanted to fix his mistake by inviting the other affected animals for an underground feast. Perhaps, he might have a dilemma of choosing either stealing from the farmers and putting everyone else in danger, albeit getting food or letting the family starve but sparking no risk or conflict with the farmers.

Fox was risking his folks and himself getting killed by acting foolishly, being arrogant and not careful in the first place. However, after the tractor incident that costed the animals their home, Mr. Fox showed his integrity and responsibility down the road he took his friends and family with, by stealing food. Mr. Fox did not have an ill motive. He only killed the farms' produce just to feed his family. Either way, the farmers can still live off with what they have, plus

they are rich. The novel itself, even stated that each of the farmers has thousands of livestock and resources (Chapter 1: The Three Farmers). They are not going to be that disadvantaged from a family of six foxes, are they?

"Bring us two fat ducks, if you please. One for you and me, and one for the children." (Mrs. Fox)

A very few poultries for a whole fox family of six. It causes at least one of the farmers to lose a small amount of his livestock, for the sake of the survival of the fox family. Sometimes, sacrifices have to be made. One (one of the farmers is disadvantaged) versus six (Mr. Fox and his family who were in need of food).

A fox's main diet is, of course, meat and the three farms provide it all. They decided to look for food on the farms and slowly become reliant on them because the foxes thought it was the easiest way of getting food. A food galore and paradise for the fox family.

The writer liked the novella because it did not only talk about double-standard and irony. It induced indirect moral dilemmas in the readers' minds, even though it is not stated or even existing in the story alone. The readers' interpretations and imaginations like this proves how powerful the readers are in influencing the stories that they read.

The writer understands why Mr. Fox strove to clean his name. He probably did it because he will carry on either his failure



or legacy for the rest of his life. He chose to continue and stand for his folks, instead of running away from his responsibility.

It is not even close to cyber identity where most people can do whatever they want, disappear, make up a new name, and start from scratch again and again. This way, it would be hard for many others to track who is who on the internet.

In this case, Mr. Fox is not going to be able to do that. Just like real life, once he introduced himself, that is him. He cannot go back and pretend like he never appeared in somebody else's life before. He did not want to carry the burden and blame, so he strove his best to reach the legacies of being a hero and deemed by his wife as "fantastic".

It was his decision and he needed to hold accountable for his actions. Mr. Fox would need to be responsible for stealing by controlling his animal instinct. However, it did not stop him from hunting down the farms' poultries for his family. He also got himself nearly killed after he brushed off his wife's warning. He belittled it and it costed his tail being shot off. This conflict raised awareness of being careful to make decisions.

## 2. Badger had a moment of moral dilemma

### 2.1. Overview

When Badger was aiding Mr. Fox and his children, he asked about the morality of stealing for survival. In Mr. Badger's perspective, stealing was wrong. Together with Mr. Fox and his children earlier, he was happy to take away the farmers' produce. However, later, when they were about to dig their way to Bean's cider cellar, Badger started to question their deeds. Especially about the stealing part.

Suddenly Badger said, "Doesn't this worry you just a tiny bit, Foxy?"

"Worry me?" said Mr. Fox. "What?"

"All this . . . this stealing."

(Fantastic Mr. Fox, p. 58)

He saw that stealing is wrong, so he asked Mr. Fox whether he felt the same. It turned out that Mr. Fox saw had an opposing opinion from Badger's.

The animals had two choices: to steal from the farmers while their family could continue to flourish and be well-fed, or not to steal while taking the consequence that their families would starve to death. There is also a morally dilemmatic condition that was faced by Mr. Badger, in particular. He had to choose between stealing for greater good while sacrificing what he believed was right in his morals, or going to drop off the heist, hurting his friendship with Mr.

Fox, while defending his moral standing or values. Even if Mr. Badger did the dirty work with Mr. Fox and his children, he seemed to stand still, keeping in his moral standard. His moral standard said that stealing is wrong, but he decided to carry the work on because Mr. Fox persuaded him into thinking that their actions were exceptionally right.

**"There's nothing wrong with being respectable,"** Badger said.

"Look," said Mr. Fox,.. (p. 58-59)

"We shall simply take a little food here and there to keep us and our families alive. Right?"

**"I suppose we'll have to,"** said Badger.  
(p. 60)

Based on the sentences in bold, he sounded disinterested, forced, and did not seem to agree and fully comply with Mr. Fox. However, he did not want to hurt his friend's feelings and hard work. It was also the last heist of the day, so he just brushed his worries off and continued with the plan.

It's rational that the fox would go to the nearest source of meat with less of a hassle. They are not some kind of robbers that would take the farms' livestock entirely in one night. They just wanted to survive by taking what they needed. In this case, the foxes prepared a feast for the other burrowing animals whose homes got scraped away by the farmers in Chapter 5: The Terrible Tractors. Mr. Fox was determined to pay for his own mistake with a feast.

## 2.2. Why It is Considered as a Moral Dilemma

If Mr. Fox decided to flee, he might get safer from the farmers, but if he did nothing to repay or give to the animals' society's well-being, Mr. Fox would be considered irresponsible. His name and reputation would be at stake too. The writer does not see any part of the choice overriding each other. Both captured equal their own pros and cons. The advantage of the first choice is that Mr. Fox's hard work will bring joy to the other animals, showing how responsible Mr. Fox can be. However, the consequence is not only his life would be in peril if he got caught by the farmers, but also his children and his friend, Mr. Badger. He was so eager to clean his name, so he took the hard way; that is by stealing from the farmers and making sure the animals were happy.

The animals preferred a safe and certain plan. In the farms, they could find plenty of food sources that they knew were enough to be thrown in as a feast. If they were looking for other food sources, the stakes are high. The humans who were ready to catch the animals once they surfaced had forced the animals to travel underground. They might end up lost as they entered new territories that they were not familiar with. Especially underground; where they had to rely on their animal instincts and senses. As a result, they chose an underground base under the farms and aimed for their existing and certain resources.

It is included as a moral dilemma because there are two options that conflict one another. The animals had to choose between killing to eat, or starving to spare lives. The outcomes of each option inherits consequences that will affect the characters related to the dilemma.

No choice overrides Fox's dilemma between keeping his image and profile high; while taking risks to pay for his wrongdoings, or deemed to be irresponsible while not taking the risk of being killed. On the other hand, one of the choices is morally questionable, since it involves stealing, even though it is done for the sake of others' survival. Both decisions are hard to make, since whatever the choice it was, Mr. Fox needs to sacrifice something important to him, including his dearest standard and morality.

If Mr. Fox, his kids, and Badger stole the farm animals, it would be a loss to the three farmers, but not as much as the animals'. There were many animals that relied on Mr. Fox. If he did not do something, then the others would be dying out of starvation, and thus the number of animals' deaths would be insurmountable, compared to the farmers' loss. Therefore, Mr. Fox decided to do something about it.

Mr. Fox stopped digging and stared at Badger as though he had gone completely dotty "-My dear old furry frump," he said,

"do you know anyone in the whole world who wouldn't swipe a few chickens if his children were starving to death?"

There was a short silence while Badger thought deeply about this.

"You are far too respectable," said Mr. Fox.

"There's nothing wrong with being respectable," Badger said.

(Fantastic Mr. Fox, p. 58-59)

From the passage, the writer sees that Mr. Fox tried to maintain his actions morally justified. Mr. Fox tried to assure Badger that stealing is okay, as long as it is for a "good" cause. This conflict exists in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of the novella.

"My dear old furry frump," he said, "do you know anyone in the whole world who wouldn't swipe a few chickens if his children were starving to death?"

"Look," said Mr. Fox, "Boggis and Bunce and Bean are out to kill us. You realize that, I hope?"

"I do, Foxy, I do indeed," said the gentle Badger.

"We shall simply take a little food here and there to keep us and our families alive. Right?"

"I suppose we'll have to," said Badger.

(Fantastic Mr. Fox, p.58-60)

The animal families would starve if Mr. Fox and Mr. Badger did not steal from the farmers, but Badger was "too respectable" (as referred to by Mr. Fox). He was stuck with his moral principles and considerations. However, in the end, Badger decided to open up his mind to Mr. Fox's opinion, and continue the final heist of the day. They were almost caught, but in the end, the heist went successfully and they got back to their families safely.

When the readers think about it, again, Badger was actually right. Stealing is generally an immoral thing to do. However, this dilemma can still be a genuine moral dilemma, since there was a moral reason behind Mr. Fox's heist: to feed his family and friends after being unsheltered because of the hill's destruction. It was all done for the greater good.

### **2.3. Writer's Response**

As can be seen in one of God's wills and commandments, it is stated that "thou shalt not steal" ("you shall not steal"). The writer herself thought that whatever the reason is, stealing is always wrong. It benefits group(s) while harms the other(s).

If a person would like to have something from others, he can just politely ask. He should be considerate to others if they decline his request. They have their own reasons and he cannot force them to agree with him. He should think for a while and put himself in the shoes of others. What would you do or think when somebody steals your stuff? Do you like to be forced into doing something against your will? "Do unto others as you would have done unto you."

It turns out that the people of Indonesia have the collective behavior of stealing. Even according to Adi Prawiranegara, the author of the news article Budaya 'Mencuri' di Negeri Kita (Our Country's Culture of Stealing) on WartaPilihan, it is no longer a

habitual issue. Instead, it is rather a cultural issue, as it is ingrained in people's mindsets.

Everyone knows that stealing is wrong, but they still tend to do it anyway, because they see stealing as an opportunity. One of the most infamous cases of stealing are the corruptions that are done by the authorities themselves. Even those who had power, such as officials, are often involved.

VICE Asia, an American-Canadian documentary channel from the parent company of VICE Media, on YouTube, featured the rise and fall of Soeharto's New Order Era in one of their videos entitled "*How \$35 Billion was Allegedly Stolen from Indonesia / The Big Steal.*" The New Order Era at first brought good news for Indonesia's economy. However, Soeharto's 32 year-long presidency "amassed the largest ill-gotten wealth in all of Asia," of \$35 Billion theft.

Another example of stealing in an opportunity is when there is a disaster like the flood in Palu, not many of the authorities, such as the police, would be around. The people use this "gap" to make it easier for them to do their actions, unrecognized. They raided and looted what was sold in the targeted stores, such as electronics stores.

Another common phenomenon, Indonesians often prefer piracy rather than being legitimate when it comes to cyber products.



Indonesia is one of the countries that has the highest digital piracy rates. (Arlı & Tjiptono, 2016) Stealing tangible items are considered to be illegal and socially unacceptable, whereas digital items' piracy is still socially acceptable, even though it is technically still illegal. They pirate software, movies, games, images, ideas, and even any other creations that are produced, either by big companies or even small content creators as well. They just simply do not want to buy. They want something quick and cheap, free even. They see piracy as an opportunity.

An article on CNN Indonesia written by Priherdityo (2015) stated that the government (of Indonesia) still has no strategy on combating piracy in the country. The law that supposedly protects creators against piracy in the country are seemingly overlooked by some people, unless somebody filed a complaint, only then Kominfo will act. The same policy is executed by Ahmad Ramli, Director General of Copyright of the Ministry of Justice. They (the copyright violators) can be dealt with firmly, but Ahmad would only act if there is an informant asking him to do so.

The writer wondered why the actions are dependent on people's complaints, instead of taken initiatives by the minister. Based on the same article, it turns out that the Indonesian government do not know how to face the problem. The minister himself, Rudiantara, admitted that he did not know what to do, so he

asked the people to report their complaints to him, even though Kominfo already has its right to do it without being told so.

Copyright infringement occurs when a copyrighted work is reproduced, distributed, performed, publicly displayed, or made into a derivative work without the permission of the copyright owner. (Copyright.gov (n.d.))

It means that every time people photocopy a book (some sells photocopied books at the book market), sell repacked or pirated contents (that can be found on Indonesia-based online shops and CD stands), or download from illegal sources (like pirated movie websites), they violate copyright laws. Sadly, it still happens every day, and yet we do not see it being tackled seriously. The citizens also have low sensitivity toward this kind of issue because it is “normalized” here, in Indonesia. Many people infringe copyright laws, and yet we almost never see the issue being brought up in the news.

The writer understood that they might do such acts because they needed to do it for a living, but they can choose to do something else, and continue on with their lives. Even though they don't get what they want in an instant, they can be seen as wise and honest, not as thieves. On the other hand, they can choose to steal and have the things they want or sell them to get money, while hurting and losing their moral conscience. As the consequence, slowly, people will not be aware that what they do or see is wrong.

This set of moral dilemmas taught us to be responsible and quick-witted, especially in urgent conditions. Mr. Fox acted really quick to come up with an idea and he is also a very good leader when it comes to wit. However, Mr. Fox also had some flaws. He was demanding (He insisted Badger into thinking that stealing for a “good” cause was okay; even though Badger was obviously feeling discomforted by it), stubborn (Once he had a will, he would do whatever he can to reach his goal, even though the choices could be morally questionable), clumsy (he was not careful and got his tail shot), and prideful (he liked to be on the top and center of attention). They all led into the demise of his whole neighborhood. However, he was good and kind by heart and is a considerate animal who was responsible and caring for others, in which the writer think are the selling points to his character.

### **3. Morals from the Crooks**

#### **3.1. Overview**

The farmers in the novella took revenge on Mr. Fox for stealing their livestock in the first place. They decided to use power shovels and destroy the animals’ homes, which affected not only Mr. Fox and his family but also the neighboring animals. The farmers dug up the hill until it turned into a crater. They were blinded by their ambition, rage, and stinginess. They chose to go with the plan of

violence by destroying the whole hill without considering the other innocent animals.

In the farmers' eyes, the foxes were seen as thieves that slowly became threats to their farms because they came to their farms to steal some of their produce from time to time. In order to stop them, they have to catch Mr. Fox and those who are involved in the heist. They even wanted them dead.

After the failed shooting the night before, the farmers could choose to continue their pursuit and destroy the thief's (Mr. Fox's) hill, in order to get a better chance of capturing the foxes. As an alternative, they can let them be and preserve the hill, while still getting stolen from, from time to time. It turned out the farmers do not like to get stolen from others, so they decided to go with the first choice: to destroy the hill.

### **3.2. Why It is Considered as a Moral Dilemma**

They had a choice to capture the thieving animals for justice but sacrificing the environment and the innocent ones, or make the environment flourish while having to deal with Mr. Fox's heist from time to time. The writer thinks that the situation is still considered as a morally dilemmatic case, since none of the choices overrides each other. We do not want our environment to be destroyed as well as we see that thieving is wrong.

When the people called the farmers “mad”, it made them become even more hostile and determined to catch Mr. Fox. They even vowed that they would destroy Mr. Fox and anyone else who happened to stand in their way. They even put dedication to the hunt and their hatred towards Mr. Fox that they were willing to leave their farms be (possibly unguarded) and being drenched in the rain, waiting for Mr. Fox to pop out from his hole.

Whereupon the three men all shook hands with one another and swore a solemn oath that they would not go back to their farms until the fox was caught. (Fantastic Mr. Fox, p.29)

The animals lost their home, but now that the farmers were busy guarding the fox hole, the animals were having a grand feast. Mr. Fox came to help them and responsibly repay for what he did when the hills were dug out by the enraged farmers. They made the innocents get sacrificed, only to catch Mr. Fox and his family of six, in the process.

Just because some farm animals were stolen, it does not necessarily mean that the farmers will go bankrupt because of it. Boggis himself ate around 3 chickens per day, Bunce ate his geese's livers which was referred to as “disgusting” in the book, and Bean kept drinking gallons of his cider supply as his horrible diet, anyways. They even consume way a lot more than the six foxes! And

yet, they were very stingy. They did not like things to be given out, let alone being stolen from.

### 3.3. Writer's Response

Through the eyes of the writer, the farmer characters did not have regrets nor moral qualms for doing questionable actions they thought were right. On the other side, the writer can understand why the farmers were furious. It is because the animals kept on stealing their produce up to their liking, which is rational. But why destroy a hill full of animals that did not have anything to do with the heist?

Their actions made the writer quite angry and sad at the same time. She was annoyed that the farmers decided to use violence instead of a peaceful approach, like if there is no other choice. They need to learn how to share and reside together, but in order to do that, the farmer must tone down their stinginess, gluttony, and greed, and decide to open up their hearts to the animals. The animals too, should learn how to weave a good relationship with the farmers and respect their hard work.

Sadly, both parties did not see this. The animals were stuck in the underground burrow so that they would not get caught by the farmers. The writer cannot describe how terrorizing it could be for someone to be stuck in uncertainty, and doomed just to see the sunlight. The animals did not deserve it, even after the heist. They

just wanted to survive, while the farmers splurged with what they had.

The farmers' action reminds the writer of the mentality of some people in Indonesia. Lynching is one of the issues that are still a thing, here. Many people who did not deserve to die were murdered. Some did not even do anything wrong to begin with.

One of the lynching that disappoints the writer toward young people is the case where an elderly man got wrongly accused of stealing the car he rode. It turned out that the elderly man did nothing but accidentally scratching a motorcycle. The mob was built up as the perpetrators screamed "Maling! Maling!" ("Thief! Thief!"). Eventually, the chase ended up with the elderly man getting killed by the mob.

Moral values need to be taught to students in order to decrease moral decadences. Education is the best way to teach moral values to the students (Sari, 2013). Therefore, we can see that it is very important to raise awareness and educate people about morality, away from doing such things. If it still does not work, allowing penalties might do it. A wrongdoer or not, we should face anyone with respect. Be humane and not be quick to judge.

In another news article of a different vigilante mob case, according to The ASEAN Post's website, the mobs do not bother to

call or turn their victims to the police because there is distrust between the two parties. “Those with power or money get special treatment. That’s why people refuse to trust the police and decide to take matters into their own hands.”

However, what the people did was way too much, like how the farmers took great extent into making sure Mr. Fox “paid” for what he did to them. Foolishly determined, they did not even bother being soaked wet in the rain, just to capture the foxes. They prioritized their obsession, rather than taking care of their well-being and thinking rationally. Sometimes, letting go is important.

This moral dilemma taught people to be considerate to others, instead of being egotistical. One should also be compassionate. “Do not let the sun go down on your anger” would perfectly sum up the situation, especially on the farmers’ side. One shall reflect what one did. Watch for your acts as they can as well be destructive whether they are to you or even others too. One needs to maintain self-control in order to improve.

However, the three farmers were ignorant and do not want to cooperate and improve for the better. They were stuck with poor mindsets and principles. It seemed that they cared on chasing down Mr. Fox more than caring about what might happen in the farm while they were away.



### CHAPTER III

#### CONCLUSIONS

Everyone is prone to encounter moral dilemmas regarding what they do in their lives. It varies from something small and trivial to the choices that are life-changing. The objective of the paper is to find moral dilemmas in *Fantastic Mr. Fox* novella.

There are five moral dilemmas that exist in three events in the novella, whether they are directly stated or implied. The implied ones can be found through reflections by those who read the novella, including the writer. The writer found at least one stated and four implied cases of moral dilemmas.

The first two moral dilemmas are experienced by Mr. Fox. In the first one, he needed to kill and consume farm animals. There is a possible moral dilemma of firstly killing and consuming the farm animals (their ideal diet) and breaking his own standard and what he said about victimizing the animals and demonizing the humans. However, Mr. Fox could choose to stop killing the farm animals (not fulfilling his ideal diet) for the sake of not breaking his moral standard and image, as an alternative.

The second dilemma would be to keep hunting and stealing farm animals, but raising the tension between the farmers and the foxes. Whereas by doing that, Mr. Fox risked himself and his family and friends being killed. Mr. Fox can choose the alternative, where he could be starving and having to find new source of food, which might be hard, not to mention a new place their lives would be filled with

uncertainty. They had to adapt to the new place, not to mention, they might encounter other problems. However, if they left, they might be safe, away from the farmers.

The third one is the dilemma of letting Mr. Fox's friends and family starve to death, while everyone was relying on Mr. Fox, his cubs, and Mr. Badger. In this part, Badger was stuck in a moral dilemma between stealing for the greater good of others or starving while being honest. However, he chose to continue participating in the heist.

In that event too, Mr. Badger seemed to be hesitant of his and Mr. Fox's action. This time, from Mr. Badger's words, it can be felt like he still did the dirty works because he did not want to hurt his friend's (Mr. Fox's) feelings. Mr. Badger chose not to sacrifice his friendship, shown by him getting along with Mr. Fox in the heist.

Finally, the last one is the dilemmas that might have been thought of by the three farmers in the story. The farmers could choose to capture Mr. Fox and bringing up justice for their farms' sakes, where none would steal from them; but sacrificing the hill, the animals' home. The second choice is to sacrifice parts of their produce for Mr. Fox to steal from, from time to time, while preserving the hill, where the animals resided.

Moral dilemmas are often hard to face, but it would be an important thing to introduce to children since they will encounter them eventually. Teachers can make a scenario of moral dilemmas, and the students are instructed to make their own decision and act on it. They are expected to explore the possibilities of their own

choices and be responsible of them. However, they should still be guided, so they will take their lesson the right way.

From an early education level to the later, each child has his or her way of learning under the teacher's guidance, let alone students who have different characteristics that make the teacher's suitable guidance strategies vary. Students need to learn to accept and face the consequences of their decisions. It would be nice for a teacher to give them "guided freedom". If they are to experience hardship or problems, the teachers will need to give guidelines that are constructive, not the ones that dictate them, so that they can grow their responsibility further and become better critical thinkers.

The exposure of moral dilemmas pushes children into making decisions that further their thinking skills and hone their ability to think in a more complex manner. They analyze the situation and decide the choice that they think is the best. Mistakes may happen, but what is more important is that they can choose things and learn to improve as they train their responsibility of choosing certain decisions.

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