I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

In the dynamic situation of real-life social interaction there are so many aspects which could affect the social interaction. Social power, economic power, physical power, class exploitation, politic power, and many other things that relates to power relation. Foucault's perspective of power is that it is not something that is exclusively owned by certain dominant group over others, but a pervasive and embedded in every level of society, shaping knowledge, behaviour, and institutions, "Power is everywhere" and "it comes from everywhere." (Foucault, 1990). Power is not something that is used to directly impact someone but subtly and silently through various social institutions (Foucault, 1977). Thus, power is spread like a network between individuals and institutions that affects society, and the interactions lies within.

During social interaction where situation is not ideally conducive for everyone, there are numerous aspects which could affect one's ability to defend their own right. This affects the disadvantaged party that limit them to be from being able to defend their own right by themselves. In modern world where law has been made, now government and the responsible authorities provide protection and justice, however, they sometimes fail to (Donnelly, 2013). The people that should be protected are exposed to danger when the authorities fail to protect. The public is now prone to crimes that harms one's right.

As a response to governments failure, the culture of vigilante rises. Vigilante is the act of taking action to impose justice in response to an inadequate action from the authorities to provide protection and justice (Robinson, 2015). Vigilante often happens when a member of a society believe that the authorities are not sufficient in providing justice and take matters into their own hands.

The Batman (2022) is a film that brought up the topic of vigilantism. In which the main character, Bruce Wayne is taking the mantle of Batman to fight crime and bring justice to Gotham City. Batman is portrayed as a vigilante who operates outside the law, using his wealth and advanced technology to take down criminals. However, the film also explores about the consequences of vigilantism and the ethical and moral dilemmas of taking the law into one's own hands. The film also shed light on the other side of vigilantism in which the public are afraid of the potential for abuse of power. While Batman may have a more morally acceptable approach to vigilantism, on the opposing side The Riddler is ruthless and limitless. Riddler never hesitates to torture and kill his target of vigilant act while Batman tries to restore the procedure of justice by returning the target to the authorities. While Riddler is highly influenced by Batman as the city's vigilant crusade, Riddler serves as the other side of the coin. Batman portrays the restrained and justified vigilantism while Riddler is the condemned self-driven and unrestrained form of vigilantism. Between the polar opposite of Riddler and Batman, stood Catwoman. Catwoman is a self-driven vigilante that acted as a response to her own history of vigilantism and

acted to take advantage for herself. The 3 mentioned characters are the main characters that has the most influential role in the film's portrayal of vigilantism. *The Batman* digs deep into the complexities of vigilantism and its effects which are beneficial for the audience to be able to learn from the moral values offered by the narrator.

Unfortunately, act of vigilantism is a double-sided sword. On one side they are trying to protect their rights and possibly preventing the violator from violating other potential people. On the other hand, they are also harming the right of the violator, and vigilante does not act based on law and rules that prevent them from overdoing the "retributive justice". Retributive justice is an idea that Immanuel Kant proposes where he proposed that the wrongdoing should be punished proportionally to what they had done wrong, to what crime that they have committed (Kant, 1797).

This iteration of Batman film differs from the previously released film as it introduces us to the rarely appearing yet unique character named Riddler as the polar opposite of Batman despite being influenced and inspired by Batman's approach to vigilantism. The Riddler introduces the other side of Vigilantism which is rarely discussed. *The Batman* (2022) by Matt Reeves is also a relatively new film that has not been covered very well in academic studies. Therefore, the writer used this specific Matt Reeves' recreation of Batman as the source of data.

To analyse various elements of the film that contributes to the overall portrayal of the vigilantism issue, the writer utilized Boggs' concept of The Art of Watching Films. In which he talked about numerous aspects of film that each of its own has their own function in conveying the message the director intended. The elements of the film that will be analysed is both visual and verbal elements. Visual element is something such as a picture, photograph, or piece of film used to give a particular effect or to explain something (Cambridge Dictionary). While verbal elements refer to written or spoken language, according to Nelson & Shaw as cited in Dewitri and Marantika (2023). Films as a medium that is rich with visual and verbal elements, thus, Boggs' film study approach is a concept that could be used to give a thorough understanding of film.

In this study, the writer analyses the verbal and visual elements using Boggs' Art of Watching films, to show how Power is being depicted in the film, to then discuss Public Distrust shown by the characters in the film, and how the other characters respond to that, in this case, Vigilantism. There is also a limited number of research with this specific edition of Batman film as their source of data. Therefore, the writer aims to bring this issue to the surface and hoped the result could be beneficial for other literature enthusiast. Previous study by Frame in 2021 which brought the topic of vigilante in Geriaction films discusses more about the Geriaction instead of the vigilante (Frame, 2021). Thus, the writer tries to fulfil the field in the gap with this study.

1.2. Research Questions

This paper is focused on the cultural and socio-economic aspects of the social occurrence of "vigilantism". Therefore, the writer aims to answer the following questions.

1. How does *The Batman* film portray vigilantism?
2. How do characters in *The Batman* involved in vigilantism?

1.3. Purpose of The Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how the film *"The Batman"* (2022) portrays public distrust in institutions such as law enforcement and government, as well as how different characters in the film respond to public distrust and vigilantism. By analyzing these themes, this study aims to explore the film's underlying message regarding the relationship between the public and the authorities, as well as the use of vigilante justice. This study seeks to shed light on the complex dynamics of power and justice in society, and to provide insights into the role of popular culture in shaping public attitudes towards these issues.

1.4. Scope of The Study

This study focuses on analyzing the visual portrayal of public distrust and vigilantism in the film *"The Batman"* (2022), with a particular focus on the three research questions. The analysis is based on a close examination of the film's

verbal elements, characters, and visual elements, as well as literature review on the relevant topics of public distrust, vigilantism, and popular culture.

1.5. Limitation of The Study

The study did not include an analysis of other media adaptations of *the Batman* character, nor a comparison with other films beyond what is necessary to contextualize the analysis of *"The Batman"*. The study also not include a survey or analysis of audience reception or reactions to the film.

1.6. Significance of The Study

This study will contribute to people's understanding of the topic. We also hope this study will guide readers of how popular culture shape public attitudes towards the government. The writer also aims to shed light on the topic of public distrust and vigilantism. In Indonesia where the study was written, public's distrust was increasing as a respond to the respective country's questionable decision making towards cases of legal violations. Therefore, we hope related authorities are interested in making changes to increase public trust as a response to vigilantism.