

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Earth, the blue planet as we know it is billions of years old. It is created out of space dust and gas floating around its gravitational epicenter. Countless asteroids and other floating materials constantly hit the Earth at the beginning of its formation and made it grow larger. The last gigantic impact by the space object on Earth spewed enough gas, rock, and dust into space and ended with the creation of the moon. Then, this planet goes through some phases including the process of where water and oxygen were created as the fundamental resource of life.

The Earth is arguably the only floating rock in the infinite space that hosts living things that we know of. This planet provides all the key ingredients and elements to support a thriving ecosystem. Water and oxygen help all living creatures to exist on this planet. From the simple life form that begins from the ocean to the complex ecosystem that depends on each other, the Earth helps life evolve and flourish. The abundance of Earth's mineral and natural resources is also beneficial for the continuity of any form of life especially human civilization. In other word, this makes humans heavily dependent on Earth's rich natural resources. Therefore, maintaining a positive "relationship" between Earth and her dwellers is absolutely crucial for the continuation of life for a lengthy period of time.

For ages, the relationship between humans and Mother Nature has been a source of contention amongst society. We know for a fact that one of the Earth's most impactful inhabitants is human. How humans act and behave has determined the sustainability of this planet for centuries. Since the dawn of industrialization, humankind has been extracting natural resources on an unprecedented scale. By the late 1800s, railroads were responsible for 20 – 25 percent of the lumber consumed in The United States, which resulted in the massive destruction of forestland as well as 15 million acres of forest were cut in 1900 alone to build railroads (WWF, 2024). Agriculture is the main driver of deforestation, and inadequate infrastructure also plays a big role in the worldwide deforestation matter.

According to the 2023 Forest Declaration Assessment, the globe has lost more than 16 million acres of forest in 2022, an area larger than West Virginia. Hence why the Industrial Revolution pushed mankind's ability to extract and process natural resources much further compared to the preindustrial era. In that case, certain individuals or groups of people really dig this game-changing era as an opportunity to deepen their pockets. As an impact, the exploitation of natural resources resulted in damage to Mother Nature as severe strain of symptoms started to come up while perpetrators only cared about the profit and benefit of themselves. Thus, one of the most prominent factors of ecological deprivation is anthropocentrism.

Anthropocentrism is a term used to describe any position, point of view, or concept that regards humans as the center or norm (Garrard, 2004). This

ideology has been viewed as the relationship between humankind with surrounding nature and its impact on climate. Violence and brutality towards other human beings are also regarded as anthropocentrism. Some people view their surrounding nature as existing to fulfill their necessities and they have no regard for the effect of exploiting and harming other living things habitat. Land clearing for agricultural needs that destroys the forest that already existed for hundreds of thousands of years is one of the examples. It led to the loss of endemic animal habitat and threatened the existence of the ecosystem in that forest. In addition, several forests are home to various indigenous people who already reside in that forest for generations. This can create a dispute between those two sides and bear a bigger anthropological problem.

Disputes over territory like what happened in Palestine and Ukraine is the illustration of an implementation of anthropocentrism where one side claims to be the rightful owner of that territory. These conflicts displaced millions of native and indigenous people causing a long-term humanitarian crisis. Other than the land to settle, territorial disputes can be conceived by the desire to harness the natural resource. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (2015), the exploitation of natural resources whether valuable ones like diamonds, gold, minerals, oil, or rare ones like fertile land and water has been the driving force behind at least eighteen violent wars since 1990. On top of that, natural exploitation might also be the result of capitalism ideology.

Capitalism arose and replaced the feudalism era which can't withhold the rate of human productiveness. Ever since the steam engine was discovered by James Watt, the small-scale home industry was replaced by factories that could produce way more goods. With the expanding rate of production, demand for raw materials become increasingly substantial. Then, this was followed by the demand for coal as the main fuel for steam engines. The expanding rate in the amount of factories using steam engines led to an immense need for coal. Coal was the new staple material at the birth of the industrial revolution. Making it almost as valuable as oil and it keeps increasing in terms of price. The blueprint of this new era makes European countries increasingly aggressive in carrying out colonialism movements to find new markets for their massive factory production. On the other side, the momentum of the industrial revolution and capitalism pushes the overall prosperity in the UK and many other European countries.

The quality of life was significantly improved by capitalism, which also resulted in extraordinary levels of economic advancement. Advancements in communication, transportation, and commerce resulted in increasingly complex corporate practices. As a way of generating capital, banks, and other financial institutions, including stock exchanges, became crucial pillars of industrial output. Cities grew as an impact of the increased economic prosperity that attracted many individuals from rural areas to work in the industrial sector. However, capitalism led to long-term natural deprivation and other ecological problems.

The gradual depravation of Earth is seriously affected by how humans behave in interacting with their surrounding nature. Pollution, animal extinction, forest fire, and flood are some of the few cases of how real this phenomenon is. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (2023), the impact of human activity has drastically changed 75% of Earth's land surface, including 85% of wetlands area. Human activity also affects 66% of the ocean surface, including pollution and fisheries. Those stats implicitly highlight one of the most impacted elements of Earth, the one that we use daily and depend on our life on it. That element is water.

Since water makes up about 70% of our globe, it is reasonable to assume that it always be abundant. However, freshwater, or the substance that we consume, bathe with, and use to irrigate our farmland is very limited. According to WWF (2023), approximately 1.1 billion people globally do not have access to clean water, and 2.7 billion experience water scarcity for at least one month out of the year. Numerous water system that supports thriving ecosystems and provide food for an expanding human population are under stress. Aquifers, rivers, and lakes are dying because they are too contaminated to be used. Global poverty is also made worse by water inequality since people who lack access to clean water find it difficult to raise their level of living. Nevertheless, water scarcity is rarely discussed, even though climate change has received a lot of attention lately. That's probably because of the lack of awareness amongst society.

Despite the factual data and scientific findings that conclude human activity could lead to a larger catastrophic event, society tends to ignore the signs of the deprivation of nature that put billions of lives at stake. In order to solve this problem and allow communities to collaborate and make sure that this problem will not get worse in the future, awareness building is essential. Humans can adjust to environmental difficulties and lessen the worst effects by switching to sustainable land use for agricultural practice, sustainable use of resources, and widespread adoption of water conservation techniques. The growth of the economy should not ignore the importance of natural preservation and tolerance towards other humans or non-human beings. It needs a lot of effort to be done.

There are several institutions, non-profit organizations, and some groups of people who have already tried to save the planet and its endeavors. Nevertheless, it is not sufficient to solely rely on some friction of people. A wave of action from all elements and layers of society is required to safeguard the sustainability of our habitat. An involvement of authority is decisive in regulating policies to combat the degradation of nature with the consideration of its possible upsides and downsides for humanity. But that's not enough. Literature can be utilized as one of the weapons to combat natural deprivation caused by human activity and help create awareness of the actual source of natural deprivation.

Literature can redefine our relationship with nature, help us come up with fresh solutions, and inspire our compassions toward nature. A humanistic

approach to policy which helps leaders to understand human culture and our ecosystem has been absent from the climate issue. Talking about the environment and literature implies talking about ecological issues in literary work (Nadhiyah et al, 2021). The study and analysis of ecological matter is then referred to as ecocriticism. By reading ecocriticism literature the readers are encouraged to embrace nature by learning how it functions in accordance with its own laws and how, with proper care, it will benefit other living things. Humans, as beings that interact with nature, are aware of the significance of protecting nature through their awareness of it, its mechanism, and the advantages it offers. In addition, literary work can also be adapted to other forms of medium.

The most common literary adaptation is through audiovisual mediums such as movies. Since the beginning of the 20th century, movies have been widely used as a medium to entertain and express human creativity. The adaptation of literary work to movies and TV series can also be traced to as early 1900s. Now, the development of the internet and streaming platforms has completely changed the way that movies and TV shows are made, as well as opened up a wider global audience through these platforms. Movies have been shown to be the most effective storyteller and narrative distributor in the modern world. Instead of turning into competitors, literature, and movies have created a partnership that strengthens one another within society. Hence, movies have emerged as significant storytelling mediums, much like novels, short stories, and plays (Tan, 2022). A novel is a literary work with the most

movie adaptations. One of the most successful literary adaptation movies in recent times is *Dune*, a movie based on a science fiction novel by Frank Herbert.

Dune (2021) is a Science Fiction movie directed by Denis Villeneuve. This is the first installment in a two-part adaptation of Frank Herbert's 1965 novel series of the same name. It was released on cinema and streaming platforms in 2021. This movie was widely praised as it won six awards at the 94th Academy Awards and was nominated for Best Picture. The movie depicts ecological as well as anthropological issues. The essential real-world foundation of *Dune*'s fictional universe is environmental science. Although, on the surface, *Dune* might look like an interstellar politics opera, the message about the environment is implied clearly.

The *Dune* universe is a large ecosystem where everything is interconnected. It is also filled with allegory, encouraging the audience to draw comparisons with the environmental problems in real life. In terms of environmental issues, *Dune* is not only highly metaphoric but also highly predictive. *Dune* is a story about Paul Atreides, a young man born into a tremendous destiny beyond his comprehension, who must travel to the universe's most hazardous planet in order to secure the future of his family and people. This artwork portrays that the most valuable resource in the universe is in exclusive supply, and the conflict erupts as evil forces surge to fight over it.

The researcher chooses to use an audiovisual medium for the object of the research. Since movies use visual concepts rather than written ones, they

are more effective and influential than books at bringing out display content. Other than that, reading books takes so much time. The movie tells an entire story within a short span of time. It is easier to remember motion pictures rather than written text like books. A movie makes it easier to picture the scene rather than stimulate the imagination and become immersed in the story. One frame in a movie can contain tons of information that can easily revisited when necessary. Many books actually have numerous unnecessary scenes, characters, and plot lines that might be removed from the movie while maintaining an entire story cohesively. The movie is also more environmentally friendly than a book.

Meanwhile, the researcher selected this movie for a number of fascinating reasons. First, this movie is adapted from a highly influential Sci-fi novel as it contains ecological elements, and it won 6 awards at the 94th Academy Award. Second, this study examines ecocriticism, anthropocentrism, and capitalism within the movie which breaks new ground in the university where the researcher study. Third, this study examines modern issues such as ecological and anthropological issues as the researcher is eager to discover how human activity impacts the nature they interact with, in the context of Dune and how the researcher can draw parallel lines with the real world. The researcher hopes that the reader becomes aware of environmental and anthropological issues and ultimately becomes more compassionate towards nature and other living beings.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher uses the theory of Garrard through an ecocritical approach. According to Garrard (2004), strong association that ecocriticism has with ecology research sets it apart from other modern literary and cultural systems. Even though ecocritics lack the qualifications to participate in discussions regarding ecological issues, they still need to cross disciplinary barriers and go as far as they can in gaining their own "ecological literacy." The idea that literature and other forms of cultural expressions represent and interact with the natural environment is known as green theory, an ecocriticism hypothesis. In his book, Greg Garrard gives succinct explanations of a few significant environmental concerns that the modern world faces.

In conclusion, the state of the Earth has changed due to human civilization. The effect of anthropocentrism is felt through a lot of ecological layers. No one can deny that anthropocentrism is hard to avoid, but at least we, as an ethical and sensible being can try our best to minimize the negative anthropocentric repercussion. Some of us already made some attempts but it is not enough. For this reason, the researcher decided to take literature that focuses on ecocriticism as the subject of this thesis. The researcher wants to create more awareness regarding the state of our damaged ecosystem. Great literature work like Frank Herbert's *Dune* is interesting to dig in because the implication of ecocritic and anthropocentrism in this literary is immense. In 2021, the movie adaptation of *Dune* was released. So then the researcher

chooses to analyze *Dune* through the audio-visual medium using Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory.

B. Questions and the Scope of the Research

1. Questions of the research

Based on the background of the research, the problem in this research identified as follows:

- a. How are the critics over anthropocentrism depicted in the *Dune* movie?
- b. What are the effects of anthropocentrism concept reflected in the *Dune* movie?

2. Scope of the research

Based on the background above, the researcher limits the research only to examine the depiction of the impact of human activity on nature and other living things within *Dune*. This includes examining the effect of human activity and how anthropocentrism creates social and ecological problems within the movie *Dune*.

The scene and dialogue from *Dune* are used by the researcher for this analysis. The scene and dialogue that has already occurred were discussed with the issue of human impact on nature.

C. Objective and Significance of the Research

1. The objective of the research

- a. To illustrate the critics over anthropocentrism depicted in the *Dune* movie.

- b. To analyze the effect of anthropocentrism concept reflected in the *Dune* movie.

2. Significance of the Research

a. Theoretical Benefit

Hopefully, this research is useful for those with an interest in literature and the ecocritical approach. By using ecocritical theory to analyze a specific movie, this research contributes to the advancement of ecocritical discourse by emphasizing the practicality and the potency of ecocritical literary analysis. Furthermore, anyone interested in watching *Dune* movies can benefit from the knowledge gathered from this research.

b. Practical Benefit

This research offers insight into the ways that literature might motivate readers to be more compassionate and reconsider their interactions with the natural world and other living beings as well as engage in environmental activity.

D. Operational Definition

1. Literature

Literature is a written work to express the creativity and imagination of humans that has the value of aesthetics, morals, and concepts.

2. Ecology

Ecology is the scientific examination of the relationship and interactions between living things and their surroundings.

3. Anthropocentrism

Anthropocentrism is a philosophical stance arguing that humans are the most important or central beings in the universe.

E. Systematization of the Research

In this study, the systemization of this research is intended to make it easier for the readers to understand this research and to make this research in a good composition. The researcher divides this research into five chapters as follows:

Chapter I Introduction presents the personal and scientific background. Additionally, the researcher laid out the questions, scope, and objective of the research. Then the researcher discusses the operational definition, research systematization, goals, and importance of the study.

Chapter II Review of literature covers the aspect of the literature and movie. The researcher also covers the ecocritic theory and its key concepts. In addition, the concept of anthropocentrism and earlier research is also covered in this chapter.

Chapter III Research Methodology presents the research methods on how to gain data and analyze it. Then, the researcher also covers research types

and collection techniques. Additionally, the researcher presents the data resource and an example of the data.

Chapter IV Data Analysis describes data description, data analysis, and interpretation of the research findings.

Chapter V Conclusion and suggestion bring the conclusion of the research. This chapter also covers suggestions for the research. The suggestions are addressed to STBA JIA and future research.

