

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Background of the Research

Nowadays, the public is worried about coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic, which has been spread all over the world. It is normal that people feel sad, angry, scared, worried, or confused in this time of the pandemic. However, as sentient beings, we should be able to get the positive side of this pandemic. One positive impact from the covid-19 pandemic is that the earth seems to be able to take a break from the pollution caused by human's activities. The way humans live on earth has caused the quality of many things on the earth. Therefore, humans need to ask themselves about what they can do to keep the earth safe. Through his books for children, Roald Dahl shares his ideas about how people's responsibility to maintain, care for and preserve nature.

Roald Dahl is one of the most famous authors in the history of English literature. Dahl, born on September 13, 1916, is a British novelist, short-story writer, poet, screenwriter, and pilot. Dahl had written seventeen children's novels. His novels are special to children. All of his experiences in life serve as inspirations for his works. Dahl is also well-known for his dark humor. According to Ronald Carter and John McRae in *The Routledge History of Literature in English* (2001), "It was Dahl who brought children's writing into the late twentieth century with a punch. His story often features how cruel and nasty children can be, antagonizing their parents and

making fun of vulnerable characters. Dahl's ability to combine the unspeakable with the everyday has ensured his enduring popularity with young and adult readers"(406).

Dahl encourages children to use their imaginations while reading his stories. He also uses realistic situations that children may relate to it. He shares humor and issues about family, love, and friendship through his works. Baratz and Hazeira state in their article "Children's Literature as an Important Tool for Education of Sustainability and the Environment"(2012) that through the means of narrative and poem messages were conveyed that the society wished to convey. Children's literature is operated to distribute the basis of faith, whereby if there is a place for effective links between literature and society, then it will naturally be found first in children's literature (33). Children's novel is interesting, funny, and imaginative to read. Children can imagine a new world, adapt to a new environment, and explore their feelings. They also develop their empathy and sympathy through their new experiences. Through the interesting text and unique pictures, children can understand the issues of the story easily. Thus, it can be utilized to promote the issues of nature. Children of all ages are able to get the point of the story while reading the novels. By reading Roald Dahl's children's novels, children know the good effect when they maintain and care of nature. Otherwise, they also know the bad effect when they ruin nature. The important thing is how these novels make children responsible for everything they do toward nature.

In conducting this research, the writer selects two children's novels by Roald Dahl. They are *The Twits* and *Danny the Champion of the World*. These two novels

have different style to describe about nature and its relationship with living things. *The Twitstells* about an annoying couple who always tortures the animals around them. *Danny the Champion of the World* tells about a man and his young boy who embarrass an arrogant and rude landlord. These two novels describe the problems of the characters as human or animal and their relation to nature. These characters have different ways to adapt and survive their lives and surroundings. They maintain or ruin nature to face their problems. The issue about nature is important to introduce in children's literary works because caring for nature needs to be taught as early the age as possible.

1.2. Identification of the Problem

Nature gives all resources that are necessary for living. Some people save and maintain it. Some careless people try to ruin it. Two out of seventeen Dahl's children's novels; *The Twits* and *Danny the Champion of the World* are taken as the object of this research. The writer argues that these two novels show the issues about nature and humans' responsibilities especially children as the young generation to keep the earth safe through the characters, their activities, and action in relation to nature.

1.3 Scope of the Research

This research focuses on the issues about nature and the responsibility of human beings to keep the earth safe. It especially looks into how Dahl presents the role of the young generation in saving their natural environment from destruction. The works

chosen are *The Twits* and *Danny the Champion of the World*. The research involves the analysis of the main characters and their activities and action in relation to nature.

1.4 Research Questions

The writer has to limit the discussion by focusing on answering the following questions:

1. What are problems about nature presented in Roald Dahl's children's novels?
2. How do the characters react to the problem?
3. What are messages about children's responsibilities related to nature delivered through the novels?

1.5 Review of the Previous Studies

Humans have a great contribution and influence on all the problems that exist in nature. The balance of the relationship between humans and other things is very much needed to create harmony in all living things in nature. Literary works as a media representation of views, responses, and the world of imagination, have the potential to express and describe the problems that occur at this time, especially environmental problems. Through literary works, people can think critically about all the problems in the environment. Humans as intelligent creatures should be able preserve nature. There are some number of articles related to nature and literary works.

Firstly, an article entitled "An Analysis of The Children's Characters in Roald Dahl's Novel: *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*" (2012) was written by Wan

Syakira Meor Hissan. This article uses thematic analysis and Gibbs' Revisionist Model in order to analyze the mature and immature morality of the children's characters. The writer argues this article is interesting and quite similar to the writer's research because this article analyzes the characters in children's novels. This article explains Roald Dahl's work has influenced children to become a socially responsible person through experiences and encouragement from elders. In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, the punishment to the bad characters serves as a way to correct their immature behavior. On the other hand, this article provides only a few personal opinions and only cites sources from the related source of the material.

Secondly, an article entitled "An Eco-criticism Reading of *The Call of the Wind*" (2015) written by Gao wen-ting and Liu Jin-xia. Wen-ting and Jin-xia use ecocriticism to explore people's attention to the relationship between humans and nature. They explain that ecocriticism does not only pay attention to nature, but also human development from different ages. Human existence and development depend on all the parts of the whole ecosystem. The balance of the ecosystem is very much needed to create harmony in all living things in nature. This research shows the disharmonious relationship between humans and animals. Humans think they are masters of nature and they have right to do anything they want to satisfy their desires. Humans should be able to respect and treat all living things appropriately. Not all animals and plants are dangerous and harmful to human life. Nature provides living and non-living things so that the balance of nature is maintained. This research is quite similar to the issues in the writer's research. In this research, animals have to

face their problems with humans even with the other animal. In the writer's research, the problem just focuses on the relationship between human and animal, and human with human.

Thirdly, an article entitled "An Ecocritical Approach to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God*" (2014) was written by Gitanjali Gogoi. Gogoi uses Postcolonial Ecocriticism to present nature that acts along with the human characters. Postcolonial studies have come to understand environmental issues not only as central to the projects of European conquest and global domination but also as inherent in the ideologies of imperialism and racism on which those projects historically- and persistently-depend (Huggan et al. *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*6). Nowadays, the environmental problem is a sure result of the practice of exploitation of nature for the benefit of human civilization. Humans get everything they want even by destroying nature. They only think about the benefits for the long term without thinking about the impact of all the events that they do. This research is interesting where Gogoi explains Postcolonial ecocriticism can contribute to global justice and sustainability by exploring environmental problems that was inspired by the principle of colonial rules, which did not believe in the spiritual bonds between nature and human beings. Spiritual practices that occur in society have many meanings for humans who do it. Not all people believe in the existence of spiritual bond that are carried out by certain groups. This research is a little bit different from the writer's research. This research focuses on the relationship between environmental problems and colonial rules. On the other hand, the writer's research just focuses on the

relationship between human and human, and human and animal without colonial rules. This research is also quite confusing because this research only focuses on more information about *Things Fall Apart* and only slightly discusses the problems in *Arrow of God*.

Fourthly, an article entitled “An Ecocritical Analysis of Young Adult Dystopian Novel in Veronica Rossi’s *Under the Never Sky*” (2017) written by Rofi’atulAzizah and Sufi IkrimaSa’adah. Azizah and Sa’adah use ecocriticism to describe the representation of nature and the interaction of the main characters with nature in a young adult dystopian novel. Dystopias mean a society that is counter-utopia, a repressed, controlled, restricted system with multiple social controls put into place via government, military, or a powerful authority figure. Nature is sometimes dangerous, but it is always inseparable with humans. It depends on how people act to adapt and survive in nature. This research is easy to understand where the writers explain every single important point in detail. This research focuses on some dominant concepts namely wilderness, pastoral, and apocalypse. Pastoral shows natural environment including place and society, wilderness is mostly experienced by the dangerous place or situation, and apocalypse expresses the imagination of the end of the world that will happen someday. Although this research analyses young adult dystopian novels, it also shares the same environmental issues where nature and surroundings show that every human has their way to survive with adaptation to nature power. People can get the benefit when they know how to treat nature well. Otherwise, nature gives a bad impact to people who ruin the nature constantly. This

research also shows how people need to think about the future of nature through environmental issues.

In addition, the writer gets two theses from the faculty of humanities library entitled *The Impacts of Human's Behavior on Nature as Reflected in The Chronicles of Narnia: The Magician's Nephew* by C.S. Lewis: *An Ecocritical Reading* (2017) written by Syakinah. Syakinah uses ecocriticism to show the morality of humans seen from the way they are treating the nature. This research describes that the novel stands as the opposing tool against any exploitations of nature and protest against the negative behavior of humans in treating the nature. Using the same approach, this thesis gives the writer more information about human behavior in treating nature and the impacts of their actions. This research shows the problem in nature that full of magical creatures and full of magic. This situation becomes an important part to promote the environmental issues that are interesting to children to know when reading literary works. This research is quite easy to understand because the research explains that people have different ways to treat nature, how children grow up with a lesson that they have to save nature, but the adults ruin it for several reasons.

Another thesis is *The Influence of Nature Towards Self-Realization of The Main Character's Identity in David Malouf's An Imaginary Life: An Ecocritical Reading* (2017) written by Faridz Al-Anshari. Anshari uses ecocriticism to analyze the meaning of the symbols that can affect one's life. This research explains the struggle to restart life and reshape identity in a new natural environment. Nature gives the reflection of what people are; the way people think and act to nature. This research is

interesting where human beings have a strong bond with nature. Nature constructs the relation between society and identity. This research also gives more information about the varied symbols of nature such as the symbol of hope, the symbol of life and death, and the spirit of freedom. These symbols exist to be the major part of one's identity. People try to realize who they are and try to be good ones constantly. Using the same approach, this research and the writer's research have a quitesimilar style to analysis the problem of nature. This research more focuses on the influences of nature towardsself-realizationand the writer's research focuses on responsibility toward nature.

1.6 Objective of the Research

The objective of this research is to explain about nature and humans' responsibilities especially children as the young generation to keep the earth safe from destruction. Firstly, this research exposes some problems which might happen in nature. Secondly, it will explain how the characters react to the problems, which are their action to solve the problems. The last is to reveal Dahl's messages delivers to the young readers about their responsibilities toward nature as the young generation and inheritors of the earth.