

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Research

Environmentalism is an ideology, a social movement, a way of life with the issues of environmentalist concern. Being an environmentalist starts with awareness. Aware to share a common consciousness and a common goal of reducing our impact on the planet (Buell 13).

Through environmentalism caring about environmental preservation and improving, environmental health can be done so that nature is maintained. In essence, environmentalism is an attempt to balance the relationship between humans and nature. Because nature is a place where humans depend, so all of its components must receive appropriate treatment so that its sustainability is maintained.

This ideology makes the environment a public concern and an important research topic in some and in particular literature called ASLE. It is the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) in 1992. Their concern share an environmental issues with some medias such as novel and movies. Those medias are the alternative way to explain that literature is a product of nature where human cannot be separated to nature, it is best known as ecocriticism (Garrard 3). It simply put, ecocritism is a study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment.

In this research, I want to show Edward Abbey's view depicts in the novel. This research is essential to reveal how Abbey's struggle against environmental damage carried out by the United States government and personal experiences that affect the author's perspective on an issue. In this case, Abbey portrays John Vogelin who is strong enough to stop the environmental damage that the United States government has been doing.

On January 30, 1961, Abbey began a stint as a ranger at Petrified Forest National Monument in northeastern Arizona. Usually his spirits lifted when he went to work as a ranger, but this was perhaps his least favorite assignment during his long career in national parks and forests. On February 21 he declared that it was a "detestable chickenshit sort of place" and noted that he had already applied thirty-eight other sites (173).

Abbey was very glad to have his Petrified Forest job end on May 12, much preferring a new appointment that began on June 3 as a fire lookout on the North Rim in Grand Canyon National Park. His knee surgery the year before had prevented him from taking this job at that time and had helped provoke his shifting from earlier stints as a patrolling ranger ( as at Arches and Casa Grande) to jobs involving a lot more sitting ( Cahalan, 2001:83). Abbey cares about the environment so he wants to be a member of the ranger.

His novel *Fire on the Mountain* published in 1962, shows environmental

issues. The novel describes an environment that the government is taking forcibly from a farmer. However, there is a hero named John Vogelin, who defends his land from the United States government, who wants to expand the area of the bombing drill. I believe the novel *Fire on the Mountain* shows how the main character carries out environmental care to protect the environment.

James M. Cahalan, in his book entitled *Edward Abbey: A Life* (2001) mentions that Edward Abbey is a hero to environmentalists and the patron saint of monkey musicians, a man who loves the solitude in the desert. A misogynist, rude, and quarrelsome person, he still counts women among his closest friends and admirers. He attracted sect followers, but he often felt uncomfortable with him. Abbey is a writer who walks away from Home without actually starting there. James Cahalan has written the definitive biography of a contemporary literary icon whose life is a web of contradictions. *Edward Abbey: A Life* sets a straightforward record on "Cactus Ed" Edward Abbey gives something more to everyone who reads his work.

Furthermore, Deep Ecology movement recognizes the complex web of interconnections between all living entities and the centrality of biodiversity, arguing that humans do not have a right to "reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs" (Naess 50). Edward Abbey helped to popularize the movement as the author of some of the best-known writings about the American West, including *Desert Solitaire* (1968) and *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975).

*The Monkey Wrench Gang*, advocated violence against industrial machinery and other forms of sabotage that could end up injuring human workers. Later, in *Desert Solitaire*, Abbey acknowledged the difficulties of developing a sense of place and forging new relationships with the natural world. He once described the act of setting down roots in a region as akin to being stuck with the “same old wife every night” (155).

This research use ecocriticism theory. It is a critique of the physical environment as it is represented literature that has been developing since 1990. Peter Barry in "Ecocriticism" for the second edition of *Beginning Theory: Introduction Literary and Cultural Theory* (1995). States that several ecocritical experts determine the date of birth of the word. “ecocriticism” to William Rueckert, who in a 1978 essay titled *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism* wrote that ecocriticism entailed “application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature” (Rueckert 107).

For the explanation above, the writer wants to conduct this research by applying the theory of ecocriticism entitled "**Edward Abbey Environmental Consciousness Depicted in His *Fire on the Mountain*: An Ecocritical Reading.**

## **1.2 Identification of the Problem**

Environmental consciousness is concerned with the protection of land, water, plants, and animals. I argued that *Fire on the Mountain* shows environmental

consciousness towards nature is reflected by the characters John Vogelin. Besides that, I also assume that environmental awareness can preserve nature. I believe *Fire on the Mountain* had a fundamental message Edward Abbey wanted to convey to the reader. The author's underlying message will change the perspective of the readers toward this novel and real life.

### 1.3 Review of Related Literature

*Fire on the mountain* is a novel written by Edward Abbey as a form of criticism to the American government who wants to expand the area of bombing. Therefore, many articles discussed this novel. I review other studies conducted by other researchers to find different viewpoints and opinions to enrich the ecocritical analysis I used in this study.

The first article was from Williams Jerry and Parkman Shaun in their article entitled "People and Environment: The Role of Consciousness in Environmental Problems" (*Human Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2003), pp. 449-460). They discussed the relationship between humans and nature related to its human ability to solve large-scale environmental problems. Because confirms it humans are not unique in their relationship to nature; all species can escape resolving human existence in the world, thus creating problems for the environment. They also denied Human consciousness and rationality do not provide ready-made answers to problems that occur in nature today because human environmental awareness is lacking. I conclude that environmental problems occur because of the lack of awareness that humans have.

A big problem arises in the relationship between humans and nature, which can damage all heart species. But I think, they should add an article content that invites the public to protect the environment because environmental conditions worsen day by day. These conditions have directly threatened human life. The level of natural damage also increases the risk of natural disasters. The cause of natural damage can be caused by two factors, namely due to natural events and human activities.

The second article by Joanne Nazir and Erminia Pedretti has entitled "Educators' perceptions of bringing students to environmental consciousness through engaging outdoor experiences" (*Environmental Education Research* 22.2 (2016): 288-304). They said that environmental awareness could be connected from humans to nature, fostering concern for the existing environment. Moreover, they mention that: "Environmental education as a form of consciousness-raising is one possibility for how it can become so less" (16). They assumed that environment in education is one of the places where environmental awareness can be raised. I think they should bring students out into the open and invite students to repair the nature that has been damaged. Because by repairing the damaged nature, students will understand what is caused if we do not care about the environment.

The third is Gustin Listiyanti Putri Emas's thesis entitled *Ecosystem Stability Described in The Man Who Planted Trees: An Ecocentric Concept* (2017). She analyzes environmental issues depicted in the story and uses an ecocentric perspective as a centre to study how humans relate to nature to maintain ecosystem

stability in the region. I agree with Gustin's perspective, which states that humans and nature's relationship is not well-connected. The novel depicts the author's ideology, which tries to maintain balance in nature, which is the primary goal. However, on the one hand, I cannot entirely agree with Gustin Listiyani's research because it only focuses on how the efforts made by humans to restore the damage of nature, and she does not explain the leading cause of the destruction of nature depicted in Jean Giono's novel.

The fourth is Alfarizi Akbar's thesis entitled *A Portrait of Environmentalist in Jostein Gaarder's The World According to Anna* (2016). He analyzes Anna as the main character and describes her behaviour and ideas to save the environment from excessive exploitation. In her thesis, she concluded that Anna is an environmentalist who has a special character: she is smart, diligent, and wise in saving the environment by using his ideas. So that Ideas have an effect and everyone is starting to respect the environment using *Green Machines* to save the environment. On the other hand, I think Alfarizi Akbar should give enough explanation about Anna's character in repairing environmental damage, not just give a glimpse.

Next is an essay written by Eva Najma entitled "Ideologi Edward Abbey Dalam Novel Fire On The Mountain: Suatu Studi Awal Ekologi Sastra" (*Suluh*: Vol. 15, No.19, 2014). She uses ecological issue in which Edward Abbey described John Vogelin as the main character in New Mexico. In her article, she proof that Abbey has four points about ecocritics: *Wilderness in Human Spirit*, *Wilderness Needs*

*Advocates, Wilderness Is Not Business, and Strength is Dangerous.* In her analysis *Wilderness in Human Spirit*, Wilderness was a human spirit itself, so humans had to guard the wilderness. *Wilderness Needs Advocates*, humans should not be damaged because it has natural beauty and is a livelihood source for all living things. In *Wilderness Needs Defenders*, humans must contribute to protecting and defending nature because even the tiny living things on earth have an essential role in maintaining the balance of nature. *Wilderness Is Not Business*, as environmentalist Edward Abbey continues to stand against deforestation, environmental destruction, and natural exploitation in New Mexico. I am certain that Edward Abbey has ideas for governments to use their authority to save nature. Besides that, I think Eva Najma's should add to the actions taken by Edward Abbey in protecting the environment in New Mexico and not just explaining Abbey's reflection through John Vogelin's character.

The last related study is an article by Michael Bonnet entitled "Environmental care, moral education, and our place in nature" (*Journal of Moral Education* 41.3 (2012): 285-300, 2012). In his article, he concluded that human consciousness is inevitable from the environment and humans must maintain environmental balance. Furthermore, humans also understand that nature is a place that must be guarded because it provides all the needs of living things. I understand that environmental care can save nature from destruction. I also disagree with Michael Bonnet, who stated that moral education could foster a sense of caring for the environment. If we want to

grow environmental awareness, everyone should be introduced to nature and directly involved with activities that protect nature

Based on the previous studies, I concluded that I have set out different studies from previous studies. I emphasize research on Edward Abbey Environmental Consciousness Depicted in His *Fire on the Mountain*: An Ecocritical Reading.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

The main focus of this research is the environmental consciousness described in the novel *Fire on the Mountain*. The questions I investigate are:

1. How is nature represented in *Fire on the Mountain* written by Edward Abbey?
2. How is Edward Abbey's endeavor in saving nature?
3. What are Edward Abbey's environmental ideology?

#### 1.5 Scope of the Research

This study focuses on analyzing environmental consciousness in the *Fire on the Mountain*. I investigate the causes of environmental awareness carried out by the characters in the novel using an ecocriticism perspective. To limit this research, I will find out what the benefits of environmental consciousness that shown in novel *Fire on the Mountain*.

## 1.6 Objective of the Study

This study aims to analyze nature represented in *Fire on the Mountain*. The writer also reveals Edward Abbey's endeavor in saving nature and what Edward Abbey doing to his land in New Mexico.

