

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Environmental issues still become a big concern that affects people around the world. One of the biggest environmental issues that take the spotlight in early 2020 is the Australia bushfire. An international animal welfare and conservation charity IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) reported on January 2020 that Australia was burnt more than 24.7 million acres and the most devastating fire were in New South Wales and Victoria. The causes were said to be the catastrophic condition that affected Australia, which had been aggravated through months of extreme drought, very dry fuels, dry soils, and immoderate heat (“Australia Bushfire” 2020). Almost three billion animals were affected by that wildfire which had started since September 2019 and lasted until March 2020. This bushfire might be caused by some natural issues. Yet, there are many other disasters caused by humans ignorance and negligence. Indonesia’s forest for example, has been burnt down intentionally for business. Greenpeace Indonesia reported that in five years, from 2015-2019, 440 billion square feet, or equals to 8 times of Bali island, of Indonesia’s forest has been burnt down (“Karthula” 2020). Additionally, Fair Future Indonesia also reported that people in East Sumba,

Indonesia, usually have “planning season to the fields” every September. Thus, the community will burn land to clear up the land to be ready for planting season and fresh grass for animals feeding. Along with this land burning, they potentially damage the chain of ecosystems while the fire passes. Thus not only burn the grass, but also other plants, cricket, earthworms, insects, and other animals. On the other hand, the fire and smog spread is detrimental and dangerous to the surrounding area (“Effect of Rampant Burning” 2020). These land and forest burnings surely bring disaster to nature and human beings.

There is nothing that humans do unrelated to nature, as stated by William Ruecket (1978:108) about the law of ecology that “...everything is connected to everything else”. It means that human and nature itself is interconnected, it also means that everything is a component of nature, include humans. From the statement and the example of accident, try to imagine if we have to live without trees, or if we cannot breath fresh air anymore. Everything around us becomes miserable. That shows us that nature can turn into something that vulnerable. Those are only a few environmental issues that happen across the world. Nature provides everything for humans to survive and to live a comfortable life. However, some human activities cause harm and endanger environmental sustainability.

Aware with those relations and to prevent earth from the further destruction, some people begin an environmental campaign. Those campaigns

oppose further environmental damage and start to spread environmental awareness. They use all kinds of media, from mass media to social media. It also includes literary works. A lot of literary works present and contain environmental element.

In order to protect nature, the awareness must be spread to all generation, not only to elderly and adults as the responsible bearer of today's life, but more importantly to young generations as well. Therefore, literature takes part as one of the tools to spread awareness to children. Children are still learning, observing, and modeling the appropriate behavior and attitudes. Children's books keep alive a sense of nationality: but they as well keep alive a sense of humankind (Hazard 1944:146). Based on these, children's literature helps young reader understand their world and learn a lot of things. Thus, children's literature can be a medium to spread the environmental awareness to young generation.

Famous classic children's literature is still in printed today's. A lot of people still read it nowadays, even though it was firstly published long time ago. Thus, also supported by simple access, people can easily read classic children's literature through internet. As stated by Margaret R. Marshall, books are classic because they are still in print and today's readers still enjoy reading them more than a century after they first publication (1988:5). It means that people nowadays still enjoy reading classic children's literature. It makes classic children literature can simply teach and imprint an environmental awareness through young readers.

Theodore Seuss Geisel, Roald Dahl, and C. S. Lewis are best known as famous classic children's literature writers in their times. Several of their works also present human and nature relationship. *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss highlights the bad influence of humans toward nature. Environmental issues become the major theme in this book. This picture book portrays destructive relationship between human and nature, where it shows how nature can be vulnerable toward humans. Meanwhile, *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl shows the bad behavior of human toward nature. This book present how humans see nature as an object of exploration and satisfaction. *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle* describes how the inhabitants of Narnia activities slowly bring destruction toward nature. The relation of human and nature in this book portray the lack of affection of human that disturb environmental sustainability.

Considering that these three books are very famous and important in the history of world's children's literature I believe they are eligible representatives to see how relationship between human and nature is presented to young readers. By using those three classic books, the research will be an eco-analysis and the title of the research is "Human-Nature Relationship in Selected Classic Children's Literature".

1.2 Identification of Problem.

Children's literature is one of media which record how human interacts with nature. *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl, and *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle* by C. S. Lewis, I believe, show different kind of relationship between human and nature: there is the influence of nature to human's life and there are impacts of human's activities to nature. At this point I want to emphasize on how each book, which are for different groups of age, deliver its message to the intended audience.

1.3 Review of Previous Studies.

Currently, a lot of environmental issues are coming out. Human's interference and bad behavior bring down environmental sustainability. However, environmental issues have becomes the top topics to discuss. Therefore, many discussions and researches have been conducted to reveal human and nature relationship. Due to the issues, I have found some articles and the thesis that have analyzed the literary works that discuss similar topic about the human-nature relationship.

One of the articles that discusses Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* is a thesis from Fanny Ariesta entitled "The Environmental Problems and Struggles of The Main Character as Reflected in Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* Directed by Chris Renaud (An Ecocritical Study)" (2015). She states that there are four indicators of

environmental issues that occur in Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*. First, there are no living trees and animals. Second, consuming the factory air made product. Third, enjoying living in the inorganic environment, the last is exploiting nature for business purposes. She also states that Dr. Seuss *The Lorax* offers environmental awareness and captured the struggle to save nature. However, this thesis analyzes the animation version of Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* that directed by Chris Renaud. Even though the thesis discusses the movie, but the main issues and main messages of *The Lorax* are similar. This article helps strengthen my hypothesis that there are several environmental issues in *The Lorax*, yet the researcher does not talk about human nature relationship because she focuses on the current impact as found in the movie.

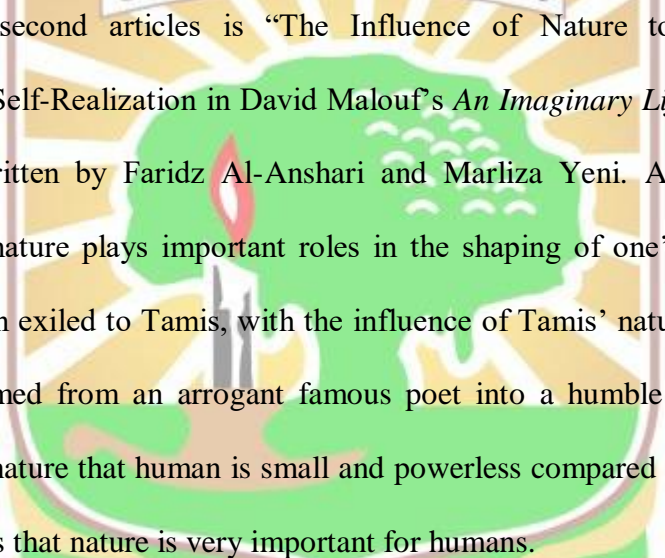
The next article is written by Sirirat Pholmoo entitled "Feathered-wings in A Cambodian Folktale and Roald Dahl's *The Magic Finger*: The Narratives of The Ecocentric Soul" (2018). She states that *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl enhances the ecocentric soul in the novel's narrative. This article also discusses the female characterization of the novel. According to Pholmoo, the female character in *The Magic Finger* is a representation of Mother Earth. The young girl character in *The Magic Finger* show how she protects wild ducks and punishes everyone who has mistreated the ducks. However, this article focuses on the meaning behind the transformation of the character and the correlation between

female character and nature. On the other hand, this helps me to enrich the knowledge of the female character in *The Magic Finger*.

The next thesis is an analysis of a novel by C.S Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle* written by Widodo Sungkono entitled "The Beginning of the End: An Ecocriticism Analysis on Clive Staples Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle*" (2015). This thesis focused on the environmental issues that occur in the novel, and what is the ideology of the author in this novel. According to Sungkono, several environmental issues occur in this novel, such as the destruction of nature, the exploitation of forests and animals. However this thesis only focuses on the environmental issues. Nonetheless, this thesis helps me with some supporting evidence that is related to the research.

The other four articles are quite important to support this research. The four articles help to widen knowledge of application the ecocriticism with the similar topic, even though using different literary work. The first Writer is Syakinah from the English Department of Andalas University. The thesis entitled "The Impacts of Humans' Behavior on Nature as Reflected in *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Magician's Nephew* By C.S. Lewis: An Ecocritical Reading" (2017). This thesis analyzes and discusses the impact of human activity on nature. She classifies human's behavior into two, biophilic and ecophobic, and applies this critic to C.S Lewis's work. She claims that C.S Lewis's work implies a message of the importance of the human act to keep the sustainability of nature. The work

also has shown the action against the exploitation of nature. As she mentions in the thesis that the novel describes nature as an important reason for the main characters to start their journeys. She also states that children can learn how to protect nature and treat it wisely, even though the one who destroys nature is the adults (7). This thesis widens my perspective in analyzing the behavior of characters in literary works.



The second article is “The Influence of Nature toward the Main Character’s Self-Realization in David Malouf’s *An Imaginary Life*: an Ecocritical Reading” written by Faridz Al-Anshari and Marliza Yeni. Anshari dan Yeni argues that nature plays important roles in the shaping of one’s identity. Ovid, who has been exiled to Tamis, with the influence of Tamis’ natural environment, has transformed from an arrogant famous poet into a humble young man. He learns from nature that human is small and powerless compared with nature. This article proves that nature is very important for humans.

The third writer is Agung Nalendra Janiswara Christinawati. The article entitled “The Relation between Human and Nature In John Keats’ *Odes*: An Expressive Study” (2012). Christinawati mentions that the innate awareness inspires him to depict and characterize nature as a source of life and the center of universe. To survive in this world, people must protect and interact with nature (12). He defines that John Keats’s awareness towards nature influences the author’s work and it is portrayed in John Keats’s *Odes*. The relation of human and

nature exists in many ways, not only to support human physically and material but also psychologically. This article gives more insights to my knowledge about how an author conveys a message in literary works

The fourth writer is Ignaditya Herdiana and Eva Najma from English Department of Andalas University. The article entitled “Mutual Relationship Between Human and Nature on *The Secret Garden* and *Sarongge*: an Ecocritical Reading” (2019). The article focused on the mutual relationship between human and nature, especially in heal mental and physical of humans. She states that the problems that are experience by the characters because of the bad influences of nature, but when the human and nature interacts more close and care with each other, the change happens indirectly. “Nature is the only closest media that can cure all diseased. All depends on how natural conditions are: if natural or environmental conditions are not healthy, human health can be also affected” (31). This means that the mutual relationship between humans and nature cannot be ignored. Furthermore, this research helps me increases the knowledge about relationship between human and nature.

Based on those previous studies, I conclude that my research is about the different kind of human and nature relation focusing on selected western classic children’s literature. The research focuses on the representation of the relationship between nature and human in *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl, and *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle* by C. S. Lewis by

applying ecocriticism. I also investigate whether the lesson delivered in the books still are relevant nowadays.

1.4 Research Question

The main focus of this research is to discover different kind of relationship between human and nature that is implied in *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl, and *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle* by C. S. Lewis. The research will be conducted by focusing on answering these two questions:

1. How are human and nature relations represented in *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl, and *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle* by C. S. Lewis?
2. What are the messages delivered by those three books to young readers related with environmental awareness?

1.5 Scope of the Research.

This research focuses on analyzing different kinds of relationship between humans and nature whether positively or negatively, as presented by the three books: *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl, and *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle* by C. S. Lewis. By analyzing and investigating how humans characters interact with each other and with nature in those books, I obtain result that there are several kind of relationship between human and nature which is based on ecocriticism perspective. This research will

also try to find out whether the messages that are delivered in those books related with environmental issues today.

1.6 Objective of the Research.

This research aims to analyze and discover how classic children's literature presents different kind of relationship between human and nature, especially in *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl, and *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle* by C. S. Lewis. In addition, the writer will reveal whether the message delivered by those three authors in their book still relevant today.

Furthermore, the writer hopes that this study's result will be a helpful tool to rising awareness toward nature in children. Because children will be the next generation to inherit all culture and values, and we cannot let the young generation live in damaged environment. Hopefully, this study will also be a useful tool to further study or other related study. Last not least, this research will contribute to enrich the road map of research on children's literature in English Department, Andalas University.