

Chapter I

Introduction

A. Background of the Study

Women's and environmental issues have remained subjects of conversation for researchers for a long time. When talking about this issue, there will be two words highlighted, women and environmental. Environmental issues have been a crucial topic until now. Various environmental conflicts are consistently felt by people in different countries. One example of an environmental issue is territorial disputes and environmental destruction. The environment becomes a place on which all living creatures depend. The environment plays a role as a support for the sustainability of ecosystems that serve as a supplier of water, provide medicinal plants, regulate the climate, and maintain the balance of ecosystems (Bernadus Wibowo Suliantoro, 2019).

The environment is often interpreted as a source of livelihood that is needed by humans for their survival, starting with clothing, food, and shelter. The life of nature and all its elements is an inseparable whole, everything is interconnected and complements each other. The survival of one element in nature depends on the sustainability of other elements. However, if the environment is damaged, it will have the impacts that not only harm the ecosystem but also threaten the welfare of living creatures,

especially humans (Reflita, 2015). It is important to raise these issues because they are closely related to human life, especially for women.

Likewise with women's issues, women are always an interesting topic of conversation because they often face oppression and injustice on a public and domestic scale (Fahimah, 2017). Women often get unfair treatment in their environment, such as not being allowed to voice opinions, being used as objects of sexuality, and carrying out activities as housewives. Women are considered as the guardians of life who have the ability to produce whatever is in their environment. They not only collect and consume what grows in nature, but they make everything grow so that there is a reciprocal process between the two. That way, a close relationship arises between women and nature. If their nature is damaged, it will be a threat to the safety of the ecosystem, which will impact human life as well. Therefore, women will come forward to protect their environment (Rinoza, 2016).

This issue is very important for all of us because the exploitation that occurs becomes an injustice for women and nature. Damaging the environment has an impact on humans and environmental sustainability. Vandana Shiva stated that in situations of environmental destruction, women are severely affected because their dependence and empathy for the environment are profound (Bernadus Wibowo Suliantoro, 2019). Therefore, need action to maintain and protect nature in order to achieve better sustainability. Furthermore, several previous studies have shown that

women have a sense of empathy for nature and fight to protect it. This indicates that researchers care about issues related to women and nature.

Women's issues, which are often a concern, are related to the oppression of the environment. The combination of both creates a concept of ecofeminism that emphasizes attention to women's and environmental issues. Ecofeminism is a feminist movement that expresses the connection between all types of oppression against humans, especially women, and the natural environment (Dr. Wiyatmi, 2017). As a social movement, ecofeminism emphasizes the need for human attitudes and actions that reflect attention to both aspects: nature and women. In the ecofeminist view, nature and women have something in common. They are not inanimate entities or objects to be mastered and exploited (Monalisa Agnes Pamela Simanjuntak, 2022).

Based on the explanation above, the researchers are interested in analyzing this issue through a film entitled "*Dances With Wolves*". This film is a documentary film released in 1990. At the 63rd Academy Awards, this film was nominated for 12 Academy awards and won seven, there are Best Picture, Best Director for Costner, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Film Editing, Best Cinematography, Best Original Score, and Best Sound Mixing. The film also won the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture Drama.

Dance with Wolves is a film that talks about the journey of a white man during the Civil War in America. He was assigned to the western frontier,

where he had to live and build relationships with the Native American tribe, Sioux. Native American tribes are indigenous people of America who are thought to have come from Asia around 15,000 years ago. They are thought to be of Asian descent who entered America via the Bering Strait to Alaska, which at that time still had a land route. At that time, they still lived nomadic lives. When the ice age melted and the land of Siberia-Alaska was covered with ice, the Indians had no choice but to settle in America (Hoffecker et al., 2016; Moreno-Mayar et al., 2018; Raghavan et al., 2015).

This film shows how Sioux women carry out their daily activities. Women always carry out their roles as housewives, cooking, mixing medicines, making blankets, etc. Even so, the Sioux women always get unfair treatment from their environment. they are not allowed to give their opinions when a tribal meeting is being held, women are seen as objects of sexuality by men, and even when their territory is taken over and destroyed by the Pawne tribe, they can only be silent and are prohibited from fighting back. But because women have a strong connection to nature, they finally dare to make their own decisions. The role of women in preserving and protecting their environment is the reason for researchers to analyze the film *Dances with Wolves*.

Overall, this film discusses the role of women in preserving and protecting their environment, which is coincidentally represented through several cultural symbols that represent women's close relationship with nature. The cultural diversity they have is the reason why researchers want

to analyze them through the symbols contained in this film and then look for their meanings and myths. Culture has become an interesting issue because as time goes by, many of the younger generations are less aware of the sacredness of culture. They should know the existing culture and preserve it. If they don't want to know a culture, then the culture will disappear slowly (Abdullah, 2023). To avoid this incident, the researcher aims to analyze the culture of native American tribes so that the readers can study their culture.

There are 2 reasons why this film is a suitable object for this research, firstly because this film can give insight regarding the lives of native american tribes. How they do their daily lives, what their physical shape looks like, and what their culture is like. Because the best film is a film that not only provides entertainment but provides useful knowledge for the audience (Lussyandari, 2020).

The second reason is that this film discusses the lives of Native American tribes, a subject that has rarely been studied by other researchers. Indeed, there have been several previous studies that discussed Native American tribes, but mostly from social, psychological, and Islamic perspectives. Meanwhile, issues about women and nature are rarely discussed. So the researcher decided to analyze this issue from this film. Even though the issue of women and nature has been discussed, this research will be different from the other research because this research will

be related to symbols and myths from Native American culture that reflect women's and environmental issues.

Culture often presents symbols based on the beliefs of a society (myths). In the film "*Dances with Wolves*," there are many symbols that depict the culture and beliefs of the Sioux community, reflecting the concept of ecofeminism. This film is based on a true story that occurred in the Sioux community, so the highlighted culture automatically contains the symbols originating from the environment of that community. These symbols exist as supporters of the culture in this film, so that the audience can easily receive the message. Usually, these symbols are not explicit but implicit. So, it requires a second interpretation of the message that is shown in the film which will lead to a myth later (Maulana, 2013). Myths guide what is real and significant for the life of a community (Angeline, 2015). Symbols and myths in a culture become an interesting topic to analyze because they show history and heritage, which can help preserve and understand the history and identity of a culture.

Based on the explanation above, a suitable theory used to solve the issues of women and nature is the theory of ecofeminism by Francoise D'eaubonne. Ecofeminism is a theory that discusses about the attachment between women and nature. Nature, which is a life-supporting vessel for humans, as well as women who are believed to be its custodians, are often exploited. The role of women in caring for nature is often not considered. Therefore, ecofeminist theory is needed to understand the role of women in

preserving nature and protecting nature. Ecofeminist theory is used to find how the women's role in preserving and protecting the natural environment. Françoise D'Eaubonne first coined this theory through his book entitled "le féminisme ou la mort" which was published in 1974. In his book, he stated that there is oppression against women and nature (Dr. Wiyatmi, 2017).

Meanwhile, to analyze the symbols and myths that exist in their culture, Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is used. Roland Barthes's semiotic theory discusses the symbols, meanings, and myths that are needed to solve this issue. By using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, we come to know how a symbol has a deep meaning and message which leads us to know that there is a myth contained in the message. Therefore, Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is needed to resolve how the symbols, meanings, and myths of culture in the film represent the issues of women and nature. In Roland Barthes's semiotics, there are the terms signifier and signified which were later developed into metalanguage theory by focusing the analysis into 2 levels, denotation and connotation. Denotation is the objective definition of a sign. The denotation, in this case, is a definition of what appears. While connotation is the meaning of the sign. There is another meaning at a deeper level, which is related to a myth (Dr. Hj. Fatimah, 2020). This semiotic theory is used to find symbols, meanings, and myths from native American tribal culture that reflect the ecofeminism that is found in the film "*Dances with Wolves*".

B. Problem Formulation

Based on the explanation above, the problem formulation of this research is to analyze:

1. What is the role of women in preserving and protecting their nature?
2. What are some cultural symbols and myths that reflect the preservation of nature embodied by women in the movie "*Dances With Wolves*"

C. Objective of the Study

Based on the problem formulation above, the objectives of the study are, as follows:

1. To analyze the role of women in preserving and protecting their nature.
2. To analyze cultural symbols and myths that reflect the preservation of nature which were embodied by women in the movie "*Dances With Wolves*."

D. Review of Related Studies

In the preparation of this thesis, the writer refers to the previous research that has a topic, theory, and significant object that are relevant to this thesis.

Some of the identified previous research are, as follows:

The first previous study is a journal conducted by Arief T. Setiawan, Andi F. Bakti, Muhtadi, Tantan Hermansah, and Kiky Rizky (2021) from Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. This journal used the

qualitative method through narrative analysis and the theory of Genre from an Islamic perspective. This journal discusses about the depiction of Islamic principles shown in the film. Therefore, this journal was held to know the existence of Islamic da'wah in the narrative of the film *Dances with Wolves*. The analysis shows that there are Islamic values, whether we realize it or not. It depicts a struggle (jihad) in the elements of the story that unite and stir feelings. Also, in the theory of the verisimilitude genre, there is a statement of belief (ilmul yaqin) in a truth about God's creation. Furthermore, through the theory of cultural context, it can be seen that there is at-tamaddun. The similarities to this research are found in the object of the research which analyze the movie "*Dances with Wolves*." Meanwhile, the difference between this journal and this research is in the topic of the research. This journal adopts an Islamic perspective, while this research takes into account ecofeminism and the symbols and myths of the culture (Setiawan et al., 2021).

The second previous study is a journal entitled "Alienasi terhadap alam: kritik ekofeminis terhadap karya barbara kingsolver, homeland" conducted by Rini Susanti Wulandari (2021) from Universitas Negri Semarang. This journal used the qualitative method and using the theory of ecofeminism. This journal discusses the book which tells about the environmental conditions of the Cherokee tribe which was originally a village for Indian tribes and then was built into a tourist destination. With this construction, the residents especially the main character of "Green Leaf" become

uncomfortable because it destroys the authenticity of the place where they live. Therefore, this study was held to elaborate on the alienation against nature depicted in Kingsolver's short story *Homeland*. The analysis shows that even the woman did not take action such as protesting against the construction, but they used other ways including holding the Indian tribal values which reflected ways to face the challenges of life. The similarities from this research are found in the subject, theory, and the topic of the problem. The subjects and theory chosen were Native American tribes using ecofeminism theory. The topics discussed were women's and environmental issues. Meanwhile the difference between Rini's research and this research, the first is that Rini's research chose the research object to use a book, while this research object used a film. Second, Rini's research focuses on examining how alienation from nature is represented, using an ecofeminist approach to critique the novel. While this research focuses on how women are represented and their role and struggle in protecting nature. In addition, this research also discusses about cultural symbols that reflect ecofeminism whereas Rini's research is not discussed (Rini & Wulandari, 2021).

The third previous study is a journal entitled “Analisis isi novel laut bercerita dalam bingkai ekofeminisme” conducted by Alifia Nur Fitri and Mafriha Azida (2021) from Universitas Islam Negri Walisongo Semarang. This journal used the qualitative method and using the theory of ecofeminism. This journal discusses the story of a woman named Kinan who often fights to demand the community's rights because their land was taken

over by the government. The aim of this research was to enhance our understanding of how the novel "Laut Bercerita" relates to the ideology of the ecofeminism movement. This analysis shows that there is a relationship between women and nature, which is shown by the struggle of Kinan and their friends. Also the importance of preserving nature and risking property, souls, and families to achieve the welfare and justice of society. The similarities from this research are found in the theory and the topic of the problem, women's and environmental issues using ecofeminism theory. Meanwhile the difference between Rini's research and this research, the first is Rini's research analyzed a novel that focuses on a female character named Kinan, while this film focuses on all women who fight to protect their nature (Mafriha Azida, 2021).

The fourth previous study is a thesis titled "eksploitasi alam oleh perempuan dalam novel aroma karsa karya dewi lestari dan annihilation karya jeff vandermeer: kajian sastra baindingan" conducted by Siti Lussiyandari (2020) from Universitas Airlangga Surabaya. This thesis used a comparative literary approach and using the theory of ecofeminism. This thesis compares 2 novels that have the same content where the novel tells the story of an exploited woman. There is a connection between women and nature. The aim of this research is to find out how the women are exploited in that novel. The result of this research shows that some of the actions taken by women to protect the natural environment include hiding information regarding rare plants, encouraging their offspring to find the source of their

original plants, participating in dangerous expeditions, and taking great risks to preserve nature. The similarities from this research are found in the theory and the topic of the problem, women's and environmental issues using ecofeminism theory. Meanwhile, the difference between Siti's research and this research is in the research approach. Siti's research uses a comparative literary study approach to a novel, while this research uses a qualitative descriptive approach to a movie (Lussiyandari, 2020).

The fifth previous study is a journal entitled "penindasan perempuan dan alam dalam perspektif ekofeminisme pada film "Maleficent" conducted by Illona Grace Undap Pondaag, Akhsaniyah, and Noveina Silviyani Dugis (2014) from Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya. This journal used the descriptive qualitative method and used the theory of semiotics by Rolland Barthes from an ecofeminism perspective. This journal discusses about a film entitled "Maleficent" which portrayed women as strong, independent, compassionate, and maternal. Even so, they still have weaknesses. Therefore, women are often dominated by men. In addition, exploitation of nature also occurred, marked by war between the kingdom and the Maleficent region called the Moors. The king was very ambitious to conquer this region because the Moors were a region rich in natural resources. Attracted by the wealth of the Moors, King Henry decided to seize this territory and make it part of his kingdom. The aim of this research is to show the relationship between women's oppression and nature. The result of this research shows that the film depicts the exploitation of nature

by humans, which occurs along with the oppression of women. Therefore, to liberate nature, it is necessary to reveal the relationship between men (rulers) and women, because in various traditions that exist in society, women have a stronger bond with nature. The similarities from this research are found in the object, theory, and topic of the problem. The object and theory chosen were a movie using ecofeminism theory. The topics discussed were women's and environmental issues. Meanwhile, the difference between this journal and this research is in the theory. This journal used semiotic theory while this research uses ecofeminism theory (Illona Grace Undap Pondaag, Akhsaniyah Akhsaniyah, 2017).

E. Research Methodology

Research method is used by a researcher in conducting this thesis, in this case of the movie. The writer uses the descriptive qualitative method to analyze this research. Qualitative research methods are particularly useful for gaining rich, in-depth information concerning an issue as well as generating solutions.

1. Data and Source of Data

In this research, the sources of data are categorized into two parts, main data and supporting data. The types of data will be explained individually, as follows:

a. Main Data

The main data of this research is a movie entitled *Dances with Wolves* (1990) produced by Kevin Costner. The writer's data consists of screenshots taken from the movie.

b. Supporting Data

The supporting data for this research was obtained from references that support the main data, such as the website, book, journal, and thesis that are relevant to this research.

2. Technique of Collecting Data

In conducting this research, the writer takes several steps to collect data. First, watch the film on the internet carefully with the aim of finding the points. Then the writer will collect the components in the form of image screenshots that correspond to the problem formulation. After collecting these elements, the author will organize them into several aspects based on the problem formulation that has been classified. Next, to find the supporting data, the writer collected data online about the issues of ecofeminism, and symbols and myths. In collecting online data, the researcher finds several materials that can support the main data by reading articles on the internet, journals, and theses to support the main data.

3. Technique of Analyzing Data

One of the important steps that must be taken next is a technique for analyzing data. To analyze the data, the author will employ qualitative methods, involving the analysis actions, along with comprehending the issue under analysis. After obtaining data and information, the first step to answering the first question is the data that has been arranged based on the problem formulation and then processed using ecofeminism theory to find out the role of women in preserving and protecting their nature.

Next, to answer the second question, the data that has been arranged then processed into 3 significations, namely denotation, connotation, and myth using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to find the symbols, meanings, and myths in Sioux culture that reflect the preservation of nature embossed by women.

F. Presentation

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction, including the background of the study, problem formulation, objective of the study, review of related studies, research methodology, and presentation. The second chapter is about the theoretical framework and approach. The third chapter is an analysis of the research. The fourth chapter is the conclusion of this thesis.