

# I

## Introduction

This chapter covers the introduction of the present study. It consists of eight sections: background of the study, reasons for choosing the topic, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, research method, which is divided into data collection and research procedure, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

### 1.1 Background

The consequences of human actions that directly damage the environment also often damage the human themselves. Cutting down trees and burning tropical rainforests, for instance, can directly damage the natural ecosystem and also indirectly damage human welfare. These human actions that damage the environment show that humans feel like they own the nature. This is contradictory to Katz's (1993, cited in Tucker & Grim, 2003) explanation that humans were supposed to guard the nature. He also states that "in Jewish tradition, man is the guardian of the natural world, not the owner" (Katz, 1993, cited in Tucker & Grim, 2003, p.66).

According to Timm (1993, cited in Tucker & Grim, 2003), the relation between human and nature can also be seen in Quran. He states that every creation

has to be respected by man. In the first period of Moslem tradition, they have to respect all aspects in life, not just human's life. Animals should be treated with care and feeling, partly because they are creations of God, and some other reasons because they have a role to play in the devotional act of all creation (Timm, 1993, cited in Tucker & Grim, 2003). From the explanation above, it can be concluded that humans have an important role in maintaining the relationship with nature and have an obligation to keep all of His creation, not to destroy and exploit nature irresponsibly.

The vast numbers of environments which are damaged by human activities, eventually lead to environmental movements in various parts of the world. Greenpeace, for example, is an international environmental movement that was first founded in Vancouver. Another example, World Wildlife Fund or now is known as World Wide Fund for Nature is also the biggest international environmental movement. In Indonesia, there is WALHI (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia) as the national largest environment movement, and then in India, there is an environmental protective movement, called Chipko that takes direct actions in an effort to draw attention to environmental concern.

An interesting story came from the Chipko movement in Uttar Pradesh, which involves the women who would like to save the trees. They embrace the tree in order to protect them from the lumberjack of a small cooperative of artisans in the Chamoli district. According to Mawdsley (1998, p.39), although the word "chipko" in Chipko movement was from Hindi's word which means

‘adhere’ or ‘stick to’, it is usually translated as ‘hug’. In the traditional culture in India, the tree is something holy and sacred and closely related to the survival of land and its people. The movement above shows that women have a big influence towards nature.

As the result of those movements, there has speculation from Shiva and Mies (1993) that development does not only affect the environment, but also has a big influence toward women. They further explained in their book and said that:

The development has spawned a myth that increasingly place women at an unfair condition, especially portraits of development as practiced by the countries north and has also led to women are in poor condition, the more impoverished by a system that creates economic and political policies developed countries to colonize poor and developing countries (pp. 2-3).

In agreement with Shiva and Mies (1993), Philipose (1989, cited in Eaton and Lorentzen, 2003) also suggests that women are the worst victim of environmental destruction. In other words, women seem to be the most constant symbol of marginality. On the other hand, Verhagen (2008) states that nature is identical to women. According to him, Mother Earth is a metaphor that has been used throughout the ages to characterize the human-Nature relationship.

Women are often symbolized by nature, for example, roses. Brown (2003, p.352) states in his novel, that “roses always become the first symbol of female sexuality”. He also symbolizes five rose petals in primitive goddess as the five phases in women's lives, which are; birth, menstruation, motherhood, menopause, and death. Similar with roses, in Buddhism, lotus is believed as a “symbol of rebirth or reincarnation” (Ridyasmara, 2009, p.123). This is a belief that every

human is born from women. The concept of connecting women with nature dates back to the times of ancient classical mythology, as Verhagen (2008) mentions that since the prehistoric times, humans have made creation stories, in which these stories the Earth as Goddess figured prominently, with several goddesses being strongly connected to the earth, for example; Persephone, as the goddess of vegetation, and her mother, Demeter, as the harvest goddess. It was believed that the same source from which human life springs is also the source of all vegetable and animal life.

In Hindu culture, some trees are also symbolized as "mother". Mother Tree or sacred tree could become the symbol of women and women are also represented as nature. This is in line with Shiva (1997, p.71) which is believes that as something sacred, and respected, forest is also denoted as "*Vana Durga* or the Goddess of the tree" and became standard measure to see human ability to unite with nature "intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually."

This relationship between women and nature refers to a theory called Ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is a very interesting topic to discuss, especially in terms of human and nature relation, including the connection between women and nature. The terms ecofeminism, as proposed by Eaton and Lorentzen (2003), became a useful tool to assess interconnections between women oppression and ecological crisis. Tong (2009) claims that there is a direct link that exists between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature in ecofeminism. Tong (2009) suggests that there is an intense relationship between human being and

nonhuman beings such as animal, plant, and inert. Tong (2009) concludes that not only women that have relation with nature but all of human beings including men. Even though all human beings including men have relation with nature, there is some evidence which says that women have a big influence to nature.

There have been studies about ecofeminism which raise the issue of women and nature connection. One example was Ragaišienė (2009) in “*I am not a Tree with my Root in the Soil’: Ecofeminist Revisions of the Tree/Root Dialectics in Sylvia Plath’s Poetry*” a Journal. In this research, she mentions that what emerges from Sylvia Plath’s poetic exploration of the gender meanings of the tree metaphor is the dialogue with Nature. This dialogue which occurs within the context of the male dominant literary tradition contains an implicit negotiation with dominant discourses, which unavoidably shape woman’s self-identification within the nature/culture dualism, and instigates an effort to re-imagine conventional significations.

Another research on ecofeminism was conducted by Fitzpatrick (n.d, cited in Campbell, 2008) in *My Body, My People, My Land: Healing The Bonds That Are Broken In Linda Hogan’s Solar Storms*. She studies about the bonds of women and nature in a novel by Linda Hogan. She argues that the women are empowered to struggle to protect the land, animals, plants and indigenous communities. They ultimately find strength and healing through a re-forging of the bonds between humanity and nature as well as a re-imagining of nature and of themselves and their roles as women.

In addition to those studies, the connection and symbolization of nature and women are often seen in paintings and other artwork such as poems, music, drama or even movie. Movies are a modern form of literary works. Movies are made to entertain and extend messages and information to audiences. This is in line with Monaco (1977) that there are some visual elements of the images in a movie that gives universal power of communication. In a movie, the moviemakers have some missions to insert some issues and moral values so the audiences can learn from it.

Regarding the issues about the connection between women and nature and the facts elaborated in the movie, the present study investigates the Avatar movie script by James Cameron. The present study uses ecofeminism theory in order to analyze the influence of nature that creates the connection between human especially women in the movie script and the impacts that are caused by the development of mining industry toward the continuity of the connection between the earth people, the *Na'vi* (people of Pandora, henceforth, the natives) and nature that occurs in the movie script.

*Avatar*, for example, is a movie by James Cameron that tells us about the people of Pandora called the *Na'vi* who try to save their planet in the arms of human technology to keep their “creator”, Mother Tree or *Eywa*, and the balance of life. The movie, as Cameron (2007, 2009) mentions in an interview with Telegraph and Time magazine, shows the connection between human and nature, for example the connection between *Eywa*, woodspirits, and the native in the way of their life. He tried to raise the environmental issue in this movie.

## 1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic

The topic of the research is chosen because it is interesting to know more about the relation between human and nature especially the connection between women and nature; and also to know about the impact of development such as mining industry which has a big influence to the connection between human especially women and nature. In a 2007 interview with *Time* magazine, Cameron was asked about the meaning of the term *Avatar*, to which he replies that *Avatar* is a movie about the incarnation of one of the Hindu gods that transform into human or animal form. Cameron (2007) also mentions that the movie showed about human technology in the future which is capable to inject human's intelligence into another remotely located biological body.

In another interview with *Telegraph*, Cameron (2009) states that the movie can make us think about the way we interact with nature. *Avatar* movie script mostly shows us about the relation between human and their habits, and the important roles of women against the development to save the nature.

## 1.3 Research Questions

In this study, the research questions are formulated as follows:

- 1) What are the connections between women and nature that establish in *Avatar* movie script?

- 2) What are the impacts of mining industry development in Avatar movie script toward the continuity of the connection between women and nature?

#### **1.4 Aims of the Study**

Given the above research questions, this research paper is aimed at the following:

- 1) Analyzing the connections between women and nature as described in Avatar movie script.
- 2) Analyzing the impacts that are caused by mining industry development toward the continuity of the connections between women and nature in Avatar movie script.

#### **1.5 Scope of the Research**

This research is trying to raise the environmental issues that are found in Avatar movie script by James Cameron in the perspective of ecofeminism. The research is limited to mainly investigate the connection between human especially women and nature; and also the impacts of mining industry development toward the continuity of the connections between women and nature.

#### **1.6 Research Method**

This research is mainly qualitative research which employs descriptive method. This research use qualitative research because the data used in this



research are sentences which analyze the movie script entitled *Avatar*, and it concerns on the analysis of the text. Stokes (2003) also suggests that qualitative research is primarily concerned with meaning, interpretation and the analysis of a text. As a textual analysis, this is a case study which looks intensely into the presentation of the connection between human especially women, nature and environment in the literary text. Escote (2008) argues that textual analysis and literary criticism consist of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of literary works. In this study, *Avatar* movie script is treated as a text and read within ecological framework especially in ecofeminism perspectives which is deliberately done to reveal the types of connection between human and nature and the impacts of mining industry development in the movie script.

The primary data of the study is a movie script entitled *Avatar* written by James Cameron. The data were collected in the form of words, utterances, and dialogues that are purposively selected and directed to answer the research questions.

The data collection will be conducted through several stages. The first stage is watching the movie and finds the interesting phenomenon to discuss. The second stage is to find the movie script to review the movie based on it. The next stage is finding, collecting, and comprehending the references related to the research to form the theoretical framework. The fourth stage is formulated the research questions concerning to the connection between women and nature and the impact

of the development of mining industry. After that, doing the multiply reading (reading repeatedly) the *Avatar* movie script by James Cameron to gain complete view about the data. The sixth stage is categorizing the data by focusing on the connection between women and nature, and the impacts of mining industry development toward the continuity of the connection between women and nature, in the form of tables according to each point analysis. In terms of types of connection, this table consists of columns named types of connection, interpretation, and textual evidence. In terms of impacts of mining industry development, the table consists of columns named impacts of mining industry, interpretation, and textual evidence. The seventh stage is discussing and interpreting the analysis of the textual evidence mentioned in the previous stages and answering the research questions based on ecofeminism theory. Finally, the analysis ends by making conclusions and suggestions for further research.

## 1.7 Clarification of Terms

**Development** : from the word develop means a cause to grow larger, fuller or more mature, organized; or new stage which is the result of developing. (Oxford Advanced, 1987)

**Ecofeminism** : the term which acknowledges that there are important connections between how one treats women, people of color, and the underclass on one hand and how one treats the nonhuman natural environment on the other. (Warren, 1991)

**Globalization** : (1) An *economic agenda* that traverses the world, promoting market economies and enhancing trade in the service of capital growth; (2) An *ideology* representing values, cultural norms, and practices, seen by some as a superior worldview and by others as cultural hegemony; (3) A *corporate structure and mechanism* that may supersede the rule of nation-states and challenge or even threaten democracy; (4) A *global village*, the consequence of vast cultural exchanges, communication technologies, transportation, migrations, and a wide array of global interconnections, including the globalization of ideas such as eco-feminism; or (5) A *grassroots globalization* or

*globalization from below* as witnessed in anti-globalization or pro-democracy movements emerging in resistance to economic and cultural globalization (Eaton and Lorentzen, 2003)

**Natives** : a. person born in a place, country, etc and associated with it by birth (Oxford Advanced, 1987) b. Belonging by birth to a people regarded as indigenous to a certain place, especially a preliterate people. (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/native>, Retrieved on March 2012) Natives in this study is refers to the people of Pandora or the Na'vi.

**Nature** : the whole universe and every created thing (Oxford Advanced, 1987).

**Mining** : According to [media.wiley.com](http://media.wiley.com) the terms of mining is encompassing the extraction of any naturally occurring mineral substances—solid, liquid, and gas—from the earth or other heavenly bodies for utilitarian purposes. (<http://media.wiley.com>, Retrieved on January 2012)

**Mining Industry:** the complex of branches of production engaged in the exploration for deposits of minerals and in the extraction from the earth and primary processing (concentration) of

these minerals. The mining industry is divided into the following main groups: the fuel industry, the ore mining industry, the nonmetallic mineral and local building materials industry, the mining and chemical materials industry, the hydro mineral industry. (<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Mining+Industry>, Retrieved on June 2012)

**Movie script** : a written work that is made especially for a film or television program. Screenplays can be original works or adaptations from existing pieces of writing. (“The Definition of Screenplay”, n.d)

**Tree of life** : The Tree of Life is an important symbol in nearly every culture. With its branches reaching into the sky, and roots deep in the earth, it dwells in three worlds- a link between heaven, the earth, and the underworld, uniting above and below. It is a feminine symbol, bearing sustenance, and a masculine, visibly phallic symbol- another union. (“Tree of Life”, n.d)

## 1.8 Paper Organization

This paper will be presented into five chapters as the followings:

### Chapter I (Introduction)

This chapter is an introduction to the research which contains the background of the study, reason for choosing the topics, the scopes of the study, research questions and aims of the study, research method, data collection and data analysis, clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper.

### Chapter II (Literature Review)

This chapter provides the explanation about the theoretical foundation of this study. It consists of theories that are used to analyze this research. It also provides previous studies that are related to the present research.

### Chapter III (Research methodology)

This chapter is about the research methodology which contains the research method of the study, data collection and data analysis.

### Chapter IV (Finding and Discussion)

This chapter provides an analysis and the discussion of the data by using the theory, explanation and investigation of the research.

## Chapter V (Conclusion and Suggestion)

This chapter interprets the result of the study discussed in the findings and discussions that provides suggestions for further study.

