

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The environment becomes the front-page news during the last decade and the public tend to believe that apocalypse will happen by unintended environmental disaster. The damage of the environment has become the talk of the universe. The deforestation and the forest degradation are not something uncommon in the world, yet the rapid loss of the tropical rain forests that has captured the world's attention since 1980s. Recently, there are many kinds of forest that also being deforested, such as temperate rain forests and tropical dry forests (Newton vii). It becomes the major factor of global warming and climate changing that increase rapidly this day on.

Human is not the only factor that causes environmental damage but the environment itself as well. There are two major factors that cause environmental damage; mankind and nature. By the 21<sup>st</sup> century, varies kinds of disasters have happened in the universe, such as earthquake, mountain eruption, hurricane, storm, tsunami, etc. It proofs that nature has its own power beyond human's capability.

There are many authors that show the environmental issues in their novels, for example *Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia* and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* one of the Harry Potter series. Those novels portray nature into the story as a main theme. They describe nature and how it gives impact to human in a certain time and place. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the readers can see the damaged

forest and *Hogwarts* School in a result of carelessness of the witch and wizards who fight and destroy the environment brutally in attacking each other. Whereas in *Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia*, the readers can see the contradiction between those who want to take care of the environment and those who want to exploit it for their own sake.

The other environmental novel is *The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge* by Michael Punke. *The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge* is a 2002 novel written, based on a series of events in the life of American frontiersman Hugh Glass. The novel was later adapted as a screenplay for a 2015 feature film directed by Alejandro G. Iñárritu. The novel was republished in January 2015 in anticipation of the upcoming film release.

The story takes place along the Missouri River. Hugh Glass is a master woodsman, a sharpshooter and game hunter, and, perhaps most importantly, a survivalist. The story gets going when he is attacked by a mother bear, and the damage he suffers is catastrophic. His colleagues leave him alone because they think that he will not survive and die. However, Glass is not dead. He slowly regains the strength to move and begins crawling toward Fort Brazeau, where he hopes to resupply before going after Fitzgerald and Bridger (his colleagues who are told to guard him). He survives by eating small animals and plants, but he hits the mother lode when he finds a pack of wolves eating a buffalo carcass. He scares them away using a torch made of sage branches and enjoys a few days of rest, relaxation, and lots of eating. After regaining his strength, he goes after Fitzgerald to take revenge.

From the novel, it can be seen the relationship between the main character—Hugh Glass—and the environment when he tries to survive after being attacked by the bear and also being abandoned when he is in the comatose state. The novel also shows the environment damage that happened after the hunting.

From the explanation above, the researcher is interested in analyzing the problem concerned on environmental issues and its relation with human in Michael Punke's novel *The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge*, using ecocriticism theory.

Ecocriticism, a relatively new form of criticism, finds its origins in the 1970s, and many critics are still struggling to determine the definition of ecocriticism. Cheryll Glotfelty, in her introduction to a collection of landmark essays in the field of ecocriticism, argues for the interconnectedness inherent in ecological literary criticism and embraces the standard definition of ecocriticism by the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE), that “ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (xviii). In America, environment was already being a development academic movement by the early 1990. They focused on the study of nature writing.

Ecocriticism is the criticism of the “house”, the environment as represented in literature. It has burgeoned since 1990. Peter Barry added a chapter titled “Ecocriticism” to the second edition of his *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (1995). Some ecocritics date the birth of the word “ecocriticism” to William Rueckert, who in a 1978 essay titled *Literature and*



1. Describing the relationship between the main character and the environment portrayed in the novel *The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge*.
2. Describing the effect of the relationship between the main character and the environment in the novel *The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge*.

#### **1.4 Scope and Limitation**

To keep the discussion proper to the objective of study, there is scope and limitation in this research. The scope in this research is the relationship between the main character and the environment or it is called ecocentrism. In this case, it means that the researcher only discusses about the relationship between the main character and the environment and the effect of the by the main character of relationship between the main character and the environment.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study of “*Ecocentrism in Michael Punke’s The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge*” is expected to contribute in the development of students of literary study and also the readers of literary works. The readers are expected to understand the relationship of human and the environment and use the understanding as the guide to treat the environment virtuously. The study is also expected to contribute in the analysis on study related to the study of ecocriticism in the novel *The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge* by Michael Punke.

## 1.6 Method of the Study

This study uses library research. Library research works through many books and other sources like articles, journals, e-books, and websites related to the topic in order to support the topic.

There are two sources of the data; the primary data and the secondary data. In this research, the source of primary data is the novel entitled "*The Revenant*" by Michael Punke. The secondary data is taken from some critical works and some books that concern with the novel and ecocriticism theory. The steps of data analysis that researcher takes are:

1. Reading and understanding the whole of the novel entitled *The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge*.
2. Collecting the data that relates to the relationship between the main character and the environment and the effect of the by the main character of relationship between the main character and the environment.
3. Analyzing the data related to the relationship between the main character and the environment and the effect of the by the main character of relationship between the main character and the environment.
4. Giving the conclusion from the analysis results.

### 1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

1. **Ecocriticism** : The study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Glotfelty xviii).
2. **Ecocentrism** : The relationship between human and the environment. Ecocentrism uses insights from the science of ecology to locate value within ecological entities, processes, and relationships. Ecocentrism represents an alternative to an anthropocentric or human-centered ethic of the environment (Woods 1).
3. **Nature**: the phenomena of the physical world collectively, including plants, animals, the landscape, and other features and products of the earth, as opposed to humans or human creations (qtd. in Magdoff and Williams 158).
4. **Physical environment** : the part of the human environment that includes purely physical factors (as soil, climate, water supply) (Green 1).