

THE ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE PORTRAYED THROUGH AL GORE'S CHARACTER IN AN *INCONVENIENT SEQUEL: TRUTH TO POWER* FILM (AN ECOCRITICISM STUDY)

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ABSTRACT

In the industrialization era, human activities have a global impact on the environment. Natural phenomena begin to occur, one of which is climate change. Rising sea-levels, warming earth temperatures, and air pollution are the actual impacts of climate change. The study aimed to explain how climate change is portrayed in *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* Film. In addition, this study also tried to investigate the adaptations carried out by Al Gore as the main character in responding to climate change. This study is descriptive qualitative research. The study used ecocriticism theory (By Garrard, 2004) to explain the representation of climate change and the adaptation of the main character to climate change. Data obtained from *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* Film by Bonni Cohen and Jon Shenk was released in 2017. The results of the data analysis showed the representation of climate change in the film through issues covering three aspects, apocalypse, pollution, and earth. These three aspects significantly impact human life, particularly health, economy, and environment. In addition, adaptations made by the main character in responding to climate change can be analyzed through environmentalism and deep ecology. The main character responded to environmentalism by building self-awareness of environmental concerns, and he created a training program to build awareness of human beings. Meanwhile, in deep ecology, he suggested switching to renewable energy to meet human energy needs to be more environmentally friendly and reduce the effects of greenhouse gases and pollution.

Keywords: *Ecocriticism, Climate change, Adaptation, Environment*

ABSTRAK

Pada era industrialisasi ini, aktivitas manusia sangat mempengaruhi lingkungan. Fenomena alam mulai terjadi, salah satunya adalah climate change. Kenaikan air laut, memanasnya suhu bumi, dan polusi udara merupakan dampak nyata dari climate change. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan bagaimana climate change digambarkan di dalam "An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power" Film. Selain itu penelitian ini juga mencoba menelisik adaptasi yang dilakukan tokoh utama Al Gore dalam merespon perubahan iklim tersebut. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskripsi kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan ekokritik (Garrard, 2004) untuk menjelaskan penggambaran perubahan iklim dan adaptasi dari tokoh utama terhadap perubahan iklim tersebut. Data diperoleh dari An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power Film karya Bonni Cohen dan Jon Shenk yang dirilis pada tahun 2017. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa penggambaran perubahan iklim dalam film tersebut melalui isu-isu yang mencakup

tiga aspek, yaitu bencana, polusi dan bumi. Ketiga aspek tersebut memiliki dampak besar pada kehidupan manusia, khususnya kesehatan, ekonomi dan tempat tinggal. Selain itu, adaptasi yang dilakukan tokoh utama dalam merespon perubahan iklim dapat dianalisis melalui konsep environmentalism dan deep ecology. Tokoh utama merespon environmentalism dengan membangun kesadaran diri akan kekhawatiran terhadap lingkungan dan dia membuat sebuah program training untuk membangun kesadaran masyarakat luas. Sementara itu dalam deep ecology, dia menyarankan untuk beralih ke energi terbarukan untuk memenuhi kebutuhan energy manusia agar lebih ramah lingkungan dan mengurangi efek gas rumah kaca juga polusi.

Kata Kunci: Ekokritisisme, Perubahan Iklim, Adaptasi, Lingkungan

A. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, concern about the environment has come to the public consciousness along with the era of industrialization. Human activities, which are almost all related to the surrounding environment, have a significant impact on the planet resulting in global warming and climate change. Even though in this industrialization era, all things became easy because of technology, this harmed the environment. It can be said that the same industrialization that had made the country wealthy was having an impact on the environment and their own health.

The impacts caused by climate change, especially the bad effects on the environment, can threaten human lives and encourage us to adapt wisely to climate change. Adaptation to climate change is needed to respond to or anticipate the adverse effects of climate change. So human beings can take appropriate action to prevent or minimize the damage that climate change can cause. Understanding climate change as ecological problems can be studied through ecocriticism. Ecocriticism is the study of humans and their environment.

The object of ecocriticism study can be applied to one of the literary genres, namely film. Film is one of the genres in literature and exciting media for campaigning environmental awareness. One of the most popular environmental films, at least in terms of viewer reach, is *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*. This research is analysis using ecocriticism theory to explore more about the conflict between humans and the environment and how Al Gore's efforts as a major character in adapt to climate change.

This research aims to find out how is climate change represented in *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film. Also, finding what is Al Gore's action in terms of adapt to climate change. The researcher hopes that this research will give new information for the readers or the following researchers who are interested in learning this topic to understand about ecocriticism, and it can be helpful for people to use ecocriticism to raise their awareness to the environment.

B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Ecocriticism and Its Concepts

Ecocriticism, a term first coined by William Rueckert in 1978, addresses issues concerning the environment that the literary academy has previously overlooked. Rueckert's definition, explicitly concerned with the science of ecology, includes all possible relations between literature and the physical world. Eco-poetics, environmental

literary criticism, and green cultural studies are some of the other terms currently that are used (Glotfelty, xx). Through literary criticism, ecocritics here aims to contribute to humans environmental problems and preserve the environment. Environmental problems can be solved by ecological studies and with an ecocriticism approach.

The first environmental movement began in the 1960s due to concerns about population changes and scarcity of natural resources. From these movements, Greg Garrard traces the development of it and explores concepts related to ecocriticism.

a. Apocalypse

According to Garrard, the apocalypse is the realization that the world is not about to end. He discusses the apocalypse from various perspectives, including religion, prophecy, and other theorists. It appears to be an important part of the environmental discussion (Garrard, 86).

b. Pollution

Greg Garrard describes pollution as an environmental issue because it tells a moral assumption about something present in the wrong place. He goes on to say that pollution does not refer to a specific substance or class of substances (Garrard, 14).

c. The Earth

Garrard defines earth as the entire area of the Universe, as well as the problems that it faces, from various perspectives (170). He begins by defining globalization in terms of the impact of population growth. He suggests that human overpopulation could lead to the idea of capitalism destroying the entire planet.

d. Environmentalism

A large group of people concerned about environmental issues such as climate change yet wish to maintain or improve their existing way of living while opposing radical social change will be described as environmentalists. Many environmentalists enjoy rural lifestyles, such as hiking or camping, or participate in environmental organizations (Garrard, 18).

e. Deep Ecology

Deep ecology, requires an understanding of nature's moral value. Deep ecology requires a change in value system focus from human-centric view to nature-focused (Garrard, 21). Deep ecology sees nature as a victim of human population growth, so the destruction of nature is very widespread to support human life needs.

2. The Elements of Literature

This research will use literary elements as a supporting theory to analyze it concerning character and characterization. The following explanations of character and characterization are stated below:

a. Character

According to Gill (1995) characters are created and appear in literary works. Each of them has a certain personality that will show his/her role in the story. Furthermore, characters have a particular identity which can be distinguished from one to another (127).

b. Characterization

Characterization is the means by which writers present and reveal character. The method of characterization is narrative description with explicit judgment. It is given fact and interpretative comment. From both fact and comment the readers derive an impression of the character in the story (DiYani 55).

C. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

Vogt 1993 (in Purude) defines research design as the scientific theory of planning methods to obtain the most accurate results. A research design is an actual plan for connecting a conceptual research problem to relevant and practicable empirical research, as well as a framework for data collection and analysis (65).

Research design aims to organize research activities, including data collection, to achieve the research goal in the most efficient way possible. According to the research question, the researcher uses a descriptive qualitative design to analyze the *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film. This research is conducted to describe climate change issues and Al Gore's project in adapt to climate change.

2. Data and Data Source

Data is defined as a set of facts, figures, or other related material used to provide information for a common research and analysis (Purude,18). In this research, there are two kinds of data; primary data and secondary data. Primary data is the main source of the data. It is the film *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*.

3. Data Collection

The data collection method used in this research is observation as Purude (20) said observation is defined as gathering data through the use of either viewing or listening, or both. The method used in this category is to observe something directly and personally to obtain useful information. In this type of observation, the researcher observes the situation to collect data relevant to the research.

4. Method of Analyzing Data

The method of analyzing data used in this research is, according to (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 53) that divided into data reduction, data display, and conclusion.

D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. The Representation of Climate Change in *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*

a. Apocalypse

Apocalypse is about a condition where the environment has an issue that is harmful to humans. The film *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* portrays an apocalypse due to the effects of climate change.

(1) Climate Change represents the apocalypse that happened in Pakistan. In Pakistan, over 1.200 people died in the heat wave there. This year, they have dug anticipatory mass graves for the people they fear will die in this year's heat waves. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film 00:42:24)

Climate change causes rising sea levels and causes heat waves by releasing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, raising the Earth's average surface temperature. Through the plot of the film the viewer can see the record of a severe heat wave with temperatures reaching 49 degrees Celsius hit Karachi, Pakistan. It resulted in the deaths of about 1.200 people due to dehydration and heatstroke. the heat wave also caused zoo animals and agricultural livestock deaths in the country.

- (2) The second data shows the effect of climate change that left people in frustration. It is frustrating that for many years. I've tried to communicate that we've got to act on the climate crisis. But it's not happening fast enough. If I said there weren't times when I felt this was a personal failure on my part, I'd be lying. So, where is all that water going? I'll tell you where some of it's going. It's going into the streets of Miami Beach, Florida. High tides continue to bring a flood of frustration. Fort Lauderdale gets the award for 'the something you don't see everyday video. Fish swimming on Cordova Road. Experts say in 30 years or so, a drive along Ocean Drive could be drive in the ocean. Downtown Miami could be awash. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film, 00:14:38) .

The quotation above presents one of the effects of climate change in Miami, Florida. An overflow of seawater caused flooding along Cordova Street. This disaster brought seawater to the streets and sea fish, creating a unique sight for homeowners living along Cordova streets, who now see fish swimming in front of their homes rather than in the sea. The disaster causes environmental destruction that exceeds what humans have heard and imagined.

- (3) The other example of apocalypse represented in the film is the increase in sea-level. Sea-level rise refers to the rise in the level of the world's oceans as the effects of climate change. Miami, in terms of assets at risk, is the number one city at risk in the entire world for sea-level rise. This is a major crisis. Projected sea-level rise in South Florida, possibly seven feet or more in this century. In West Africa, many people are at risk there. And of course, the lowland islands, of Maldives have an enormous amount of risk. Kiribati has already purchased land to move its entire population. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film, 00:21:46).

South Florida and the Maldives are two countries with coastal areas. Most citizens live in lowland areas, putting them at risk of drowning, while sea-level rise in West Africa causes flooding and coastal erosion. As depicted in the film, erosion has contaminated farmlands and freshwater reserves, endangering the livelihoods of millions of fishers and farmers, costing the region a billion dollars, and resulting in a thousand deaths.

b. Pollution

Pollution or contamination has been around for a long time, but it only became noticeable after the mechanical development in the nineteenth century. Many types of pollution, such as air and water pollution, are contributed to in this modern era. The film depicts pollution while addressing the issue of coal burning.

- (4) So naturally, there still are some people that say, well we just have to keep relying on oil and gas and even coal. But it is worth pointing out that in northern China, life expectancy has gone down five and a half years because of air pollution. And in Beijing, the mayor said my city is not livable. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film 00:35:55).

The negative impact of oil, gas, and coal-burning has occurred around the world, as seen in Beijing. The main sources of air pollution in Beijing are vehicle emissions and the

use of coal to generate electricity. The film depicts the rate of air quality in Beijing, which has been ranked as the dirtiest country in the world.

- (5) When is the sun coming up today? I don't see it anywhere. I don't see the blue sky. When any of us walk outside and look up at the sky, our natural impression is that the sky looks like a vast and limitless expanse. Goes on forever. Actually, the atmosphere of the Earth is a very thin shell surrounding the planet. And of course, right now we are putting one hundred and ten million tons of heat-trapping global warming pollution into that space every single day. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film 00:40:30)

An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power film shows that many industrial activities have been the primary causes of air pollution. Because the burning of fossil fuels emits carbon dioxide gas into the atmosphere, many gases heat trapping in the atmosphere resulting in smoke covering the sky.

c. The Earth

In the context of ecocriticism, the Earth refers to any problems in the universe from any perspective that are not covered by pollution and apocalypse. In the age of industrialization, the Earth was an unsafe place to live as a home for human life. The Earth's condition has changed as a result of climate change. The film also depicted political points of view that also contribute to climate change

- (6) I want to add the latest images of the flooding going on right now in Louisiana. Okay. I mean, every week now this stuff just keeps getting worse and more of it. But actually, there were times when it really looked bleak and dark because the forces trying to stop the change regrouped and poured tons of money in trying to paralyze the political system in the U.S and in other countries. I got really discouraged. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film 00:04:47)

The field of politics demonstrates the interconnection of humans and nature. Every country in the world must be ruled by a strong authority based on governmental institutions, giving members of the authority power over the population. Many people try to manipulate this institution to strengthen their business.

- (7) So, we're in relatively early stages of the investigation, but some of these companies and the denial organizations and groups like the American Petroleum Institute have been actively seeking to distort the market, to suppress investment in renewables through this relatively new line of propaganda. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film 00:31:41)

Al Gore mentioned companies that also contributed to causing climate change. The American Petroleum Institute is one company that contradicts renewable energy promotion because it may impact their business. The American Petroleum Institute (API) is the largest U.S. trade association for the oil and natural gas industry. The people in this company do not show respect for the environment by continuing to explore natural resources.

- (8) Burning of forests and burning of cropland. But still, the main part of the problem is the emission of carbon dioxide from the burning of coal, oil and gas. And that builds up heat energy and raises temperatures. India just set their all-time high

temperature record in May. 123.8 degrees Fahrenheit. The streets are melting. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film 00:41:39)

Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions are to blame for climate change. Human activity is responsible for the majority of the increase in greenhouse gases. The oil, gas and coal burning have already increased the temperatures in the few countries as fast as the global average, which can be seen through India which the film recorded the streets were melting.

2. **Al Gore's action or idea in adapting the climate change in *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film**

Based on ecocriticism theory by Greg Garrard, there are two categories of Al Gore action, environmentalism and deep ecology.

a. **Environmentalism .**

Environmentalism is an interest in or study of the environment to protect it from damage caused by human activities it is not only exposing conventional attitudes but also providing alternative models for conceptualizing nature and its relation to human society. Here are some characterization of Al Gore who support his to be environmentalist:

(9) The first characterization of Al Gore that supports his environmentalism is enthusiasm. Enthusiastic refers to intense and eager enjoyment or interest. When a reporter interviewed him about his decision to leave politics, his enthusiasm was noticeable. Al Gore felt a thirst for knowledge about the climate change issue. At that moment did you decide that you wanted to leave politics aside and actually move into this, uh, new career? Well, to be honest, I enjoyed politics, but this is a mission that I have dedicated myself to. And there's a hunger for information about what's happening, why it's happening, and how we can fix it. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film 00:21:46)

Al Gore acts as if being an environmentalist is a mission for him. Al Gore enthusiasm as an environmentalist can be seen through his strong desire to learn more about what is causing climate change, why it is occurring, and how to stop it, he collects all climate change information.

(10) A consciousness about the importance to adapt with climate change, makes Al Gore become proactive. The film shows Al Gore character as proactive when his psychological side recognizes the sense of loss from their environment. Ten years ago, I made the decision to launch a training program, so that anyone who wanted to learn the skills to communicate to thousands of others could come and get trained. There were only 50 of them in the beginning. But I look back on that first training it makes me smile, because they were real pioneers, in my way of thinking about it. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film 00:22:33)

In order to inspire others to do their best for the environment, Al Gore decided to launch The Climate Reality Project, a training program that trains volunteers worldwide.

(11) Other characterization of Al Gore that leads him to be an environmentalist is Optimistic. With all the chaos caused by climate change, he still believes that good things will happen. I had a detailed plan for my life. But it turned out that life had a

different plan for me. You know, anybody who decides to be a part of helping to solve the climate crisis has a constant struggle between hope and despair. Uh, and so when you see these slides about all the damage that's being done. Hang on, because hope is coming don't sink too low. Despair can be paralyzing. But we are building up speed and we are seeing a tremendous amount of positive change that gives me the optimism that I feel about this. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film 00:29:52)

Al Gore stated that being environmentalism was not something he planned to do in his life. Still, his concern for the environment in which he lived was so strong that he was willing to devote himself to being environmentalism.

b. Deep Ecology

Deep ecology believes that humans must change their relationship to nature from one that values humans to one that values nature for its inherent value.

(12) Do you believe that reducing fossil fuel-based energy usage will lead to lower greenhouse gas emissions? Basically yes, The National Academy of Sciences here in this country and in the 16 largest or most-developed countries in the world agrees with the consensus that I've stated. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film 00:02:10)

Human activities cause much pollution because of the use of fossil fuels in all human activities. The consequences of excessive use of fossil fuels have released gases in the atmosphere called greenhouse gases. Al Gore gave his opinion to discuss fossil-fuel-based energy to reduce greenhouse gases, which cause pollution and raise temperatures. Al Gore hopes that changing the fuel that humans use will reduce most of the causes of pollution. Then he promotes alternative solutions for replacing fossil fuels.

(13) Let me give you some exciting examples. Look at the wind. One day this month, Scotland got 100% of its electricity from wind. In Portugal, they had four days straight last May on renewable energy alone. And on a global basis, wind alone can supply 40 times the entire global demand for energy. But let's look at solar. This, to me, is the most exciting new development. (*An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film 00:30:36)

As an alternative solution to reduce greenhouse gas emission, Al Gore comes up with idea to change the energy from fossil fuel energy to renewable one. He gives an example the use of wind power. Al Gore mentions that wind power can support global energy 40 times, which means that wind power is more than enough to supply human energy needs and that there is still solar power and geothermal heat that can produce the same energies.

Based on data found on *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film. It shows understanding related to the importance of nature. The understanding can be seen in the causes and consequences of climate change in the human world. The existence of climate change in the environment triggers ecocriticism to exist as represented by literature as a tool to protest against nature. To understand more about the representation of climate change in the film, the researcher applied literary elements. Literary elements become the foundation to understanding the film. The plot is the first part, and it depicts the events that occur in the film that help the researcher to understand what really happened in the film.

The second aspect is the film's setting, which depicts several catastrophes that occurred as a result of climate change. Researchers can deduce where climate change events occur in the film by looking at the setting. The film's setting of place depicts how climate change has the greatest influence in western states, which therefore reflects climate change as pollution, especially air pollution that occurs in some areas, causing the air to be dirty and unfit for human consumption. Climate change is also described by some changes that occur on Earth due to climate change, as temperatures rise every year as humans continue to contribute carbon dioxide into the Earth's atmosphere. This condition is very dangerous for the sustainability of the Earth.

To understand the awareness and action of the film. A major character plays important points and values in the film. A character's action is play an important rules in telling the viewer beneficial information about how to adapt to climate change. Al Gore is a major character of the film that can tell more than what can be done by speech. His action has a strong power to provoke people to change their values to become earth-centered. The first action taken by Al Gore in response to climate change is attempt to be closer to nature as the response of the Al Gore character on the apocalypse. He is describing an environmental awareness underlying of climate change effect. He is overwhelmed to deal with the apocalypse because he is worried about nature's sustainability.

The first action taken by Al Gore in response to climate change is an attempted to be closer to nature as the response of the Al Gore character on the apocalypse. The other action taken by Al Gore is to present renewable energy to be adapted to deal with pollution and the Earth's rising temperature. This action is identified as deep ecology because the main point of deep ecology is based on a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving nature rather than just understanding nature as much as it can benefit humans. Al Gore's actions were also motivated by his experience as a politician who had previously served as Vice President. He promotes his actions to respect the environment more through partnerships and the media. Because he was once Vice President, Al Gore has the authority to force the government to explore renewable energy as a way to reduce pollution. Al Gore stressed the importance of governments in implementing environmental policy.

E. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

After analyzing the data, the researcher concludes that *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film portrays climate change issue using three concepts of ecocriticism by Greg Garrard: the apocalypse, pollution, and the Earth. Climate change has had an impact on practically every area on the planet. Climate change is primarily caused by carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The majority of the increase in greenhouse gases is due to human activity to support their lives. It is like a boomerang for humans because, in the end, climate change adversely affects humans, causing moral and material harm.

In adapting to climate change Al Gore's action is environmentalism and deep ecology. From the analysis result, it can be seen that Al Gore has a great character to support his environmentalism. That everything started from human's unawareness of their natural environment. First Al Gore is awakening others' awareness that nature has its value and that humans depend on nature. At least humans should decrease their unfriendly activities to reduce the effect. Second Al Gore tries to shift fossil fuel energy to renewable one that is more environmentally friendly to reduce pollution and greenhouse gases.

This research focuses on the representation of climate change and Al Gore character response to the issue using five concepts of ecocriticism. Different theories can be used to examine many other major topics in *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* film. Future researchers can conduct similar environmental studies focused on culture and social issues, along with relevant theories.

Another suggestion is for readers to watch the film *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*. Hopefully, people become more environmentally aware after watching the film and preserve nature for future generations.

Finally, policymakers or the government can more closely monitor industrial activity and punish businesses that violate environmental policies. As a result, in the industrialization era, a collaboration between industries, government, and society is critical to reducing the negative effects of climate change.

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