

Ecological Crisis as a Catalyst for Moral Transformation in The Lion King and WALL-E: An Ecocritical Comparative Study

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Abstract: This study examines the representation of ecological crises and the moral transformation of leader characters in *The Lion King* (1994) and *WALL-E* (2008). It aims to identify forms of ecological crises depicted in both films, analyze their role in shaping leaders' moral development, and compare their similarities and differences. Using a qualitative descriptive method with an ecocritical approach, the study analyzes dialogues, scenes, and visual elements based on Greg Garrard's ecocritical concepts, including animals, wilderness, pollution, apocalypse, and dwelling. The findings show that *The Lion King* represents ecological crises through habitat destruction, ecosystem imbalance, and environmental degradation, reflecting animals and wilderness. In contrast, *WALL-E* portrays ecological crises through excessive waste, pollution, and an uninhabitable Earth, reflecting pollution and apocalypse. In both films, ecological crises act as catalysts for leaders' moral transformation. Simba becomes a responsible leader restoring ecological balance, while Captain develops environmental awareness and responsibility for Earth's recovery. Although both films highlight environmental threats, they differ in problem focus and recovery strategies. The study concludes that both films emphasize leadership, responsibility, and ecological balance in sustaining life.

Keywords : Ecological Crisis, Ecocriticism, Moral Transformation, *The Lion King*, *WALL-E*.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji representasi krisis ekologis dan transformasi moral tokoh pemimpin dalam film *The Lion King* (1994) dan *WALL-E* (2008). Tujuannya adalah mengidentifikasi bentuk krisis ekologis, menganalisis perannya dalam pembentukan moral tokoh pemimpin, serta membandingkan persamaan dan perbedaannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan ekokritik. Data dianalisis melalui dialog, adegan, dan unsur visual berdasarkan konsep ekokritik Greg Garrard yang mencakup animals, wilderness, pollution, apocalypse, dan dwelling. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *The Lion King* menggambarkan krisis ekologis melalui kerusakan habitat, ketidakseimbangan ekosistem, dan degradasi lingkungan yang merepresentasikan konsep animals dan wilderness. Sementara itu, *WALL-E* menggambarkan krisis ekologis melalui penumpukan sampah, polusi, dan bumi yang tidak layak huni yang merepresentasikan konsep pollution dan apocalypse. Dalam kedua film, krisis ekologis menjadi pemicu transformasi moral tokoh pemimpin. Simba berkembang menjadi pemimpin yang

bertanggung jawab memulihkan keseimbangan ekologi, sedangkan Captain memiliki kesadaran lingkungan dan tanggung jawab terhadap pemulihan bumi. Kedua film menekankan pentingnya kepemimpinan, tanggung jawab, dan keseimbangan ekologis untuk keberlanjutan kehidupan.

Kata kunci: Krisis Ekologis, Ekokritik, Transformasi Moral, The Lion King, WALL-E

INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues are currently a major global issue, attracting increasing attention from many groups. Rapid industrial development, excessive consumption patterns, and uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources have triggered various ecological problems, such as environmental degradation, climate change, and reduced biodiversity (Hussain & Baig, 2022). The impact of these conditions is not only felt by natural ecosystems but also influences how humans view the environment. In recent years, human awareness of the impact of the environmental crisis has continued to grow, spurring various cultural works to address this issue, including films depicting the relationship between living things and nature. As attention to this issue grows, various cultural works not only represent the environmental crisis but also serve as a means of criticizing human behavior that contributes to ecological damage.

In literary and cultural studies, one approach frequently used to discuss environmental issues is ecocriticism (Wajid, 2025). This approach focuses on how the relationship between humans and nature is depicted in various cultural texts, including literature and film. Ecocriticism aims to analyze cultural practices that contribute to environmental exploitation and encourage a more critical understanding of the relationship between humans and nature. Through analyzing representations of nature in literary works, ecocriticism also raises awareness of the ecological crisis and the importance of sustainability, and encourages society to rethink the relationship between humans and nature more responsibly. Through an ecocritical perspective, the environment is seen not only as a setting for a story but also as a crucial element that can influence the actions, values, and moral awareness of its characters. Thus, film functions not only as a medium for entertainment but also as a means to convey ideas and reflections on the relationship between humans and the environment more responsibly.

Animated films are often effective in conveying ecological messages because they are able to present symbolic stories that are easily understood by a wide range of audiences (Pan, 2020). Through strong narratives and compelling visuals, animated films can connect with audiences emotionally and convey environmental issues in subtle yet profound ways. Two animated films that stand out in depicting environmental issues are *The Lion King* and *WALL-E*. In *The Lion King*, environmental damage occurs when the natural balance of the Pride Lands is disrupted by the abuse of power. This situation not only causes ecological damage but also social chaos among the inhabitants of the region. Environmental recovery then occurs as Simba's attitude changes as he begins to realize his responsibility as a leader. On the other hand, *WALL-E* depicts a future Earth damaged by the accumulation of waste and excessive human consumption habits, forcing humans to abandon Earth and live dependent on technology.

Several previous studies have addressed environmental issues in film through an ecocritical approach. These studies generally highlight ecological messages or forms of environmental awareness displayed in animated films, including *The Lion King* and *WALL-E*. For example, research conducted by Tabdilah Marjan Wafda (2025) this study examines the use of symbols in the animated film *Wall-E* by director Andrew Stanton, which conveys environmental and social issues through a semiotic approach. This research focuses on the interpretation of the signs and meanings contained in the film's visual elements and narrative structure, as well as how these symbols contribute to a critique of human behavior and modern lifestyles towards the environment. In addition, (Lolang et al., 2023) analyzes the educational messages in *The Lion King* related to character building and environmental conservation, as well as the film's potential as an educational tool to promote positive values and environmental awareness. However, most of these studies still

discuss the two films separately, focusing more on general environmental representations. Therefore, there is a gap in research specifically comparing the two films to examine how ecological crises can drive changes in the attitudes and moral awareness of their characters.

Furthermore, research that comparatively examines how ecological crises in different narrative settings can serve as triggers for moral transformation is also limited. While both films depict environmental damage, they present different ecological contexts: a natural ecosystem damaged by irresponsible leadership in *The Lion King*, and a post-apocalyptic Earth driven by technological advancement in *WALL-E*. These different ecological contexts provide an opportunity to explore how environmental crises shape the main characters' differing processes of moral awareness and responsibility.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of understanding the relationship between the ecological crisis and the formation of moral consciousness in the context of popular culture. Amidst the escalating global environmental crisis, studies that focus not only on representations of environmental damage but also on how this crisis influences changes in attitudes and moral responsibility are highly relevant. Film, as a medium closely connected to society, has great potential in shaping ecological perspectives and awareness. Therefore, analyzing moral transformation in film is crucial to discern how ecological values can be conveyed and internalized through narrative.

Based on this, this study aims to analyze how the ecological crisis can act as a trigger for moral transformation in the films *The Lion King* and *WALL-E*. Using an ecocritical approach, this study focuses on the changes in attitudes and moral consciousness of the main characters, Simba and Captain B. McCrea, in response to the environmental conditions they face. To achieve an in-depth analysis, this study uses an ecocritical approach as the primary theoretical foundation to examine the relationship between humans and the environment and how the ecological crisis shapes the characters' moral consciousness and responsibility. Based on this background, this study focuses on three main questions. First, how is the ecological crisis represented in *The Lion King* and *WALL-E*? Second, how does the ecological crisis play a role in driving the moral transformation of the leader character in both films? Third, what are the similarities and differences in the ecocritical representations of the ecological crisis in the two films?

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze the representation of the ecological crisis, the moral transformation of the leading characters, and the similarities and differences in the representation of the ecological crisis in the films *The Lion King* and *WALL-E*. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on the interpretation of the meaning, representation, and narrative presented in the films as cultural texts (Creswell, 2009). In addition, this research uses an ecocritical approach, which focuses on the relationship between literary works or cultural products and the environment. According to William Rueckert (1978), ecocriticism is an approach that applies ecological principles to the study of literature and explores the relationship between literary works and the natural environment (Dudhatra, 2023). In this study, the analysis was conducted using ecocritical concepts put forward by Greg Garrard (2004). These themes include animals, wilderness, pollution, apocalypse, and dwelling, which serve as the basis for analyzing the research data. The data sources in this study include dialogue, scenes, and visual elements related to the representation of the ecological crisis and the moral transformation of the leading characters. The primary data sources come from the films *The Lion King* (1994) and *WALL-E* (2008), while secondary data were obtained from screenplays of *The Lion King* and *Wall-E*, as well as books, journals, scientific articles, and previous research relevant to the research topic.

Data collection was conducted by repeatedly watching both films and conducting close readings of the dialogue and scenes related to the research focus. The data obtained were then recorded, classified, and categorized based on themes relevant to the research problem formulation, such as the representation of the ecological crisis, the moral transformation of the leading characters, and the similarities and differences in the representation of the ecological crisis in the two films. The data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive method with Greg Garrard's ecocritical approach. The analysis was conducted by identifying and interpreting data related to

the representation of the ecological crisis and the moral transformation of the leading characters in each film. Next, the results of the analysis of the two films are compared to identify similarities and differences in the representation of the ecological crisis based on the ecocritical concepts used in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the representation of the ecological crisis in the films *The Lion King* and *WALL-E* based on the research problem formulation. The discussion focuses on how the ecological crisis is represented in both films and how the ecological crisis plays a role in driving the moral transformation of the lead characters in both films. Furthermore, the analysis is also conducted by comparing the similarities and differences in the ecological representation of the ecological crisis in both films.

Representation of Ecological Crisis in Both Films

The ecological crisis in *The Lion King* and *WALL-E* is depicted through environmental damage caused by irresponsible actions and behavior. Both films demonstrate how an imbalance in the relationship between living things and the environment can lead to various ecological problems. From an ecocritical perspective, these representations reflect a critique of behaviors that cause environmental damage and the importance of maintaining the balance of nature (Garrard, 2004). In *The Lion King*, the Pride Lands are depicted as a fertile and harmonious region through the concept of the "Circle of Life," a symbol of the balanced relationship between living things and nature. This concept is illustrated through the harmonious life of the animals in the Pride Lands and the interdependence between living things in maintaining a balanced ecosystem. Furthermore, the "Circle of Life" concept emphasizes that every living thing has a role in the sustainability of life.

However, this state of affairs did not last long. After Scar took power, the Pride Lands began to experience environmental damage, reflected in the changing setting, becoming darker, drier, barren, and gloomy. The green grass that once filled the area turned into barren, cracked soil, while the trees appeared dried up and there were almost no water sources. Furthermore, many animals appeared emaciated and struggled to find food, resulting in a gloomy and less harmonious atmosphere in the Pride Lands. The ecological crisis in the film is also evident when Scar allows the hyenas to live in the Pride Lands after he takes power. This is evident in Scar's dialogue, which states,

"We shall rise to greet the dawning of a new era... in which lions and hyenas come together, in a great and glorious future!"

The dialogue shows the changing order of life in the Pride Lands after Scar became leader. In the wild, hyenas and lions are rivals that often compete for territory and food. This competition is actually part of the natural balance in the ecosystem. However, since Scar's rise to power, the hyenas have lived alongside the lions in the Pride Lands and over-exploited natural resources. The presence of large numbers of predators in one area causes food sources to be depleted more quickly, thus disrupting the ecosystem's balance. This condition relates to the concept of animals in Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, which discusses the role of animals in maintaining the balance of nature. In this context, the lions and hyenas in the film are not only shown as ordinary animals, but also as representations of the ecosystem order and the relationships between living things in nature. Scar creates a new order that is contrary to the concept of the natural order of the ecosystem, namely by allowing the hyenas to live and over-exploit the resources of the Pride Lands. As a result, the balance of the food chain and life in the Pride Lands begins to be damaged because natural resources are exploited without limits. Furthermore, the impact of the disturbed ecosystem balance is further clarified through Scar's dialogue, which says,

"Where is your hunting party? They're not doing their job."

The dialogue is directed at the lionesses, who in their natural life play the role of hunters, finding food for their group. Under normal circumstances, this role is crucial for maintaining the sustainability of life and the balance of the food chain in the Pride Lands. However, environmental damage and the depletion of natural resources have made it difficult for the lionesses to obtain food, making their role as hunters no longer effective. This further reinforces the concept of animals in Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, which shows that every animal has a role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem. When the relationships and roles between animals are disrupted, the environmental balance is also disrupted. Through this situation, *The Lion King* demonstrates that disrupted relationships between living things in an ecosystem can trigger an ecological crisis and threaten the sustainability of life in nature.

In addition to affecting the relationships and roles of living things in the ecosystem, the ecological crisis in the Pride Lands also causes habitat destruction, threatening the survival of the animals. This condition is evident in Nala's dialogue, which says,

"It's over. There is nothing left. We have only one choice. We must leave Pride Rock."

The dialogue shows that the Pride Lands have suffered such severe damage that they can no longer support the animals that live there. Reduced food sources, drought, and environmental damage have caused the animals to lose their habitat and be forced to leave the area to survive. This situation relates to the concept of wilderness in Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, which discusses the wild as a natural habitat for living things. In *The Lion King*, the Pride Lands are depicted as a natural habitat that previously maintained a balance of life. However, the resulting environmental damage has caused the habitat to lose its ecological function, making it unable to support the continuation of life. Through this situation, the film demonstrates that environmental damage can threaten the existence of habitats and force living things to leave their natural environment.

Through various dialogues, visual changes, and environmental conditions, *The Lion King* depicts an ecological crisis resulting from the disruption of the balance between living things and nature. The film also demonstrates that environmental damage not only impacts the physical condition of nature but also influences the behavior, life patterns, and survival of species that depend on the ecosystem. If *The Lion King* represents an ecological crisis through the destruction of the natural ecosystem in the Pride Lands, then the film *WALL-E* depicts an ecological crisis in the form of damage to the Earth due to the accumulation of waste and environmental exploitation carried out by humans. In the film *WALL-E*, Earth is depicted as an area that is no longer habitable. This condition is evident from the beginning of the film, when Earth is shown as an empty area littered with abandoned buildings and polluted surroundings. In addition, only one garbage cleaning robot remains on Earth, namely *WALL-E*, who still survives and is active amidst piles of waste that tower like skyscrapers.

In the film, *WALL-E* is depicted continuously collecting, compacting, and arranging waste into a large pile in the middle of a destroyed city. This visual depiction represents the amount of waste that is no longer controlled due to human consumer behavior and human failure to manage waste and protect the environment. In addition, the pile of waste resembling a large building shows that waste has come to dominate human living space on Earth. The condition of environmental damage is also further clarified by the advertising slogan *Buy n Large*, which says,

"Too much garbage in your face? There's plenty of space out in space!"

The phrase "too much garbage in your face" indicates that the accumulation of waste on Earth has reached such a severe level that it has become part of everyday life. Waste is no longer seen as a controllable problem, but has dominated the living space and environment in which humans live. Meanwhile, the call "there's plenty of space out in space" suggests that the solution offered is not an attempt to repair environmental damage, but rather to leave Earth and find a new home in outer space. This situation represents humanity's failure to manage waste and a tendency to ignore responsibility for the damaged environment. Through this dialogue, the film *WALL-E* critiques

human consumer behavior that produces large amounts of waste and a reliance on practical solutions without addressing the root of environmental problems. This condition relates to the concept of pollution in Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, which discusses pollution as a result of human activities that damage the environment. In WALL-E, pollution is represented through the accumulation of waste that dominates human living space and humanity's failure to manage the impact of their consumer behavior. Through this situation, the film demonstrates that continuous pollution can cause large-scale environmental damage and threaten the sustainability of life on Earth. Besides being depicted through pollution and waste accumulation, the ecological crisis in WALL-E is also depicted through the Earth's uninhabitable condition due to ongoing environmental damage. This condition is evident in Buy n Large's announcement, which states,

“Operation cleanup has, uh, well...failed! Wouldn't you know, rising toxicity levels have made life unsustainable on Earth.”

The statement "rising toxicity levels have made life unsustainable on Earth" indicates that environmental damage has reached such a severe level that Earth can no longer support human life. This situation illustrates the long-term impact of continuous environmental pollution and exploitation without regard for the sustainability of nature. Furthermore, the failure of "Operation Cleanup" demonstrates that various efforts to address environmental damage have failed to restore Earth's condition. As a result, humans are no longer able to sustain life on the planet and are forced to leave Earth to survive. Through this dialogue, the film WALL-E depicts environmental destruction that has reached such an extreme stage that it threatens the survival of humankind. This condition relates to the concept of apocalypse in Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, which depicts environmental destruction as a result of human actions against nature. In WALL-E, the apocalyptic condition is represented by humanity's failure to address the environmental crisis, leading to Earth no longer being able to support life. Through this condition, the film provides a warning of the potential impacts if environmental exploitation and damage continue without adequate conservation efforts.

The Role of the Ecological Crisis in Driving the Moral Transformation of Leader Characters in Both Films

The Lion King and WALL-E not only depict stories about ecological crises but also demonstrate the moral transformation experienced by their leaders in the face of them. In both films, environmental damage becomes an experience that forces the characters to reflect on their roles and responsibilities as leaders. This situation influences their perspectives on the environment, the communities they lead, and the decisions they must make to address the problems. Through this process, Simba and Captain experience a growing awareness that drives them to take action to improve the environment and the lives of the people affected by the ecological crisis.

In The Lion King, Simba's moral transformation is demonstrated through his changing attitude toward his responsibilities as leader of the Pride Lands. After Mufasa's death, Simba chooses to leave the Pride Lands due to guilt and the belief that he caused his father's death. These feelings drive Simba to move away from his homeland and avoid his responsibilities as heir to the throne. For years, he lives a new life with Timon and Pumbaa, far from the problems of the Pride Lands. In this life, Simba tries to forget his past and no longer be involved with the royal conditions that were once part of his life. However, things begin to change when Simba learns that the Pride Lands are experiencing environmental damage and a worsening crisis under Scar's leadership. This situation prompts Simba to reflect on his identity and responsibilities as the heir to the kingdom, which then becomes the beginning of his moral transformation.

This situation begins to change when Simba meets Rafiki, who encourages him to face his past and accept his identity as the heir to the throne. Simba's moral transformation culminates when he decides to return to the Pride Lands to confront Scar and reclaim power. This is evident in the scene where Simba returns to Pride Rock and bravely confronts Scar after previously running away from his past. In the scene, Simba says,

"I'm here to take my place as king."

The dialogue shows that Simba has accepted his identity and responsibility as the leader of the Pride Lands. Previously, Simba chose to leave his homeland and avoid the various problems that occurred after Mufasa's death. However, after learning that the Pride Lands were experiencing environmental damage and an imbalance in the ecosystem due to Scar's leadership, Simba realized that he had a responsibility to improve the situation. The statement "I'm here as king" not only shows Simba's return as heir to the throne, but also signifies a change in his perspective on his role and responsibilities as a leader. While previously he chose to avoid problems, at this stage Simba instead makes the decision to face the ongoing crisis and strive to restore life in the Pride Lands. Thus, the ecological crisis that occurred in the Pride Lands becomes one of the factors that drives Simba's moral transformation from a figure who avoids responsibility to a leader who is willing to take action to improve the condition of the environment and his community. This moral transformation is related to the concept of dwelling in Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, which emphasizes the importance of the relationship between living things and their homes. At the beginning of the story, Simba chooses to leave the Pride Lands and distance himself from the environment and community that are part of his life. However, after realizing the impact of the crisis, he decides to return and fulfill his responsibilities as a leader. The decision to return to the Pride Lands demonstrates Simba's efforts to rebuild his connection to his homeland, community, and the environment he had abandoned. Through this action, Simba not only reclaims his position as king but also strives to restore life and environmental balance in the Pride Lands, which have been experiencing an ecological crisis.

Similar to Simba in *The Lion King*, the leader in *WALL-E* also experiences a moral transformation due to the ecological crisis. While Simba experiences a change after witnessing the destruction of the Pride Lands, Captain experiences a shift in perspective after learning about the Earth's deterioration due to environmental pollution and overexploitation of resources. This realization leads Captain to reconsider his role as a leader and the future of humanity living on Axiom. In *WALL-E*, Captain's moral transformation is evident through his shift in attitude toward Earth's condition and human life on the Axiom. At the beginning of the film, Captain is portrayed as a passive leader, completely dependent on the automated systems that control life on the Axiom. He carries out his duties according to procedure without questioning the decisions made by Buy n Large or Auto. However, the discovery of a plant brought by WALL-E and EVE leads him to re-examine Earth's history and the reasons why humans abandoned the planet. Through this process, Captain begins to understand the impact of the ecological crisis on human life and realizes the importance of taking responsibility for determining their future. Captain's moral transformation begins when he realizes that human life on the Axiom no longer provides meaningful connections to the environment or to real life. This realization is evident when Captain states,

"I DON'T WANT TO SURVIVE!, I WANT TO LIVE!"

"For the first time, we're going home."

These two dialogues demonstrate Captain's moral transformation after he learns about the impact of the ecological crisis that led to humanity's abandonment of Earth. These dialogues not only reflect his changing perspective on human life on the Axiom but also demonstrate his willingness to take on the responsibility of leadership in determining humanity's future. The dialogue, "I DON'T WANT TO SURVIVE! I WANT TO LIVE!", demonstrates Captain's changing perspective on human life on the Axiom. Previously, Captain accepted a life entirely dependent on technology and automated systems without question. However, after learning about Earth's history and the impact of the ecological crisis that led to humanity's abandonment, he begins to realize that life is not just about physical survival, but also about having a purpose, experiences, and a meaningful connection to the environment in which we live. This realization is further clarified through the dialogue, "For the first time, we're going home." This dialogue demonstrates the Captain's not only changing perspective but also taking concrete action as a leader. His decision to

return to Earth reflects his responsibility for humanity's future and his desire to restore humanity's relationship with the planet, long abandoned by the ecological crisis. Thus, the ecological crisis that caused humans to leave Earth became a factor that drove Captain's moral transformation from a passive leader to a leader who dared to make decisions for the sake of human survival.

Similarities and Differences in the Representation of Ecocriticism in the Two Films

Based on the analysis, there are several similarities and differences in the representation of the ecological crisis in *The Lion King* and *WALL-E*. These similarities and differences are analyzed using Greg Garrard's ecocritical concept, which was used in the previous discussion. Therefore, this section discusses these findings comparatively to see how the two films represent ecological issues through different contexts.

a. Similarities

1) The environment loses its ability to sustain life

The first similarity between *The Lion King* and *WALL-E* lies in the representation of the ecological crisis, which causes the environment to lose its ability to sustain life. In *The Lion King*, the damage to the Pride Lands leads to reduced food sources, drought, and the destruction of the natural ecosystem, forcing animals to abandon the area. Meanwhile, in *WALL-E*, the accumulation of waste and increasing levels of environmental toxicity render Earth uninhabitable, forcing humans to abandon the planet to maintain their survival. Although presented in different contexts, both films demonstrate that ecological crisis can cause the environment to lose its primary function as a living space for living things. These findings align with Garrard's ecocritical perspective on the concept of apocalypse, which views environmental damage as a threat to the survival of life. According to Garrard, apocalyptic narratives are used to describe conditions where environmental damage has reached a level that threatens the future of life and the survival of a community. In *The Lion King*, this condition is seen through the destruction of the Pride Lands ecosystem, which causes the animals to lose the resources they need to survive. Meanwhile, in *WALL-E*, apocalyptic conditions are depicted more extreme, with Earth becoming uninhabitable due to the accumulation of waste and increasing levels of environmental toxicity. Thus, both films demonstrate that continuous environmental damage can threaten the survival of life, forcing living things to leave their habitats to survive.

2) The disruption of the relationship between living things and the environment.

The second similarity between *The Lion King* and *WALL-E* lies in the representation of the ecological crisis that disrupts the relationship between living things and their environment. In *The Lion King*, environmental damage is shown not only through changes in natural conditions but also through the disruption of the relationships between living things within the ecosystem. The presence of large numbers of hyenas and the depletion of natural resources disrupt the balance of the food chain, thus disrupting the role of animals in maintaining the ecosystem's sustainability. Meanwhile, in *WALL-E*, environmental damage causes humans to leave Earth and live a life entirely dependent on technology on the Axiom. This situation further alienates humans from the environment that has been their source of life. Although presented in different contexts, both films demonstrate that the ecological crisis can disrupt the reciprocal relationship between living things and the environment that sustains them. This finding aligns with Garrard's ecocritical concept of dwelling, which emphasizes the importance of the relationship between living things and the environment in which they live. In this concept, the environment is viewed not only as a physical space but also as an inseparable part of living things' lives. Through both films, the ecological crisis is depicted as having disrupted this relationship so that living creatures can no longer live in harmony with their environment.

b. Differences

1) Focus on the Representation of Living Creatures in the Ecological Crisis

The first difference between *The Lion King* and *WALL-E* lies in the focus of the representation of the ecological crisis. In *The Lion King*, the ecological crisis is represented through animal life and changes in the natural ecosystem in the Pride Lands. Environmental damage is shown through the disruption of the food chain balance, the depletion of natural resources, and the destruction of habitats that support various species. Conversely, in *WALL-E*, the ecological crisis is represented

through human life and the impact of human activities on the environment. The accumulation of waste, pollution, and increasing levels of environmental toxicity are the main factors causing the Earth to become uninhabitable. Thus, *The Lion King* emphasizes the representation of the ecological crisis through the animal kingdom and natural ecosystems, while *WALL-E* focuses on the relationship between humans and the environment and the consequences of human activities on nature. This difference aligns with Garrard's ecocritical perspective on animals and pollution. Through the concept of animals, Garrard highlights the relationship between animals and the environment and their role in maintaining ecosystem balance, which is prominent in *The Lion King*. Meanwhile, the concept of pollution emphasizes the impact of human activities on environmental damage, which is the main focus in *WALL-E*.

2) The Form of Ecological Crisis Recovery

The second difference between *The Lion King* and *WALL-E* lies in the form in which the ecological crisis recovery is depicted. In *The Lion King*, environmental recovery is represented through the restoration of ecosystem balance after Simba reclaims his position as leader of the Pride Lands. This change in leadership is followed by the restoration of previously damaged natural conditions, demonstrated by the return of rain, the growth of vegetation, and the improvement of animal habitats. Meanwhile, in *WALL-E*, environmental recovery is represented through human awareness to restore and rebuild life on Earth after realizing the impact of environmental damage that has occurred. Recovery is not only demonstrated through humans' return to Earth, but also through efforts to plant and manage the environment as a step towards restoring the planet's condition. Thus, *The Lion King* depicts ecological crisis recovery through the restoration of natural ecosystem balance, while *WALL-E* emphasizes the role of humans in repairing the damaged environment. This difference can be understood through the concepts of wilderness and dwelling from Garrard's ecocritical perspective. In *The Lion King*, environmental recovery focuses on the restoration of natural balance as a habitat for living things, which aligns with the concept of wilderness. Meanwhile, in *WALL-E*, environmental restoration is shown through human efforts to rebuild relationships with the environment in which they live, which is in line with the concept of dwelling.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the representation of ecological crises and the moral transformation of leaders in Disney's *The Lion King* (2019) and Pixar's *WALL-E* (2008) through Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective. Based on the analysis, ecological crises in both films are represented through different forms of environmental degradation. In *The Lion King*, ecological crises are depicted through the disruption of ecosystem balance, damaged habitats, and the deterioration of ecological harmony in the Pride Lands. These representations are associated with Garrard's concepts of animals and wilderness. In contrast, *WALL-E* portrays ecological crises through excessive waste accumulation, environmental pollution, rising toxicity levels, and the uninhabitable condition of Earth, which are reflected through the concepts of pollution and apocalypse. The findings also reveal that ecological crises function as a catalyst for the moral transformation of the leaders in both films. In *The Lion King*, Simba transforms from avoiding responsibility to embracing his role as a leader who restores ecological balance in the Pride Lands. Similarly, in *WALL-E*, the Captain develops environmental awareness and takes responsibility for restoring life on Earth after recognizing the consequences of environmental destruction. These transformations demonstrate that ecological crises not only affect environmental conditions but also encourage leaders to develop a stronger sense of responsibility toward their communities and the environment.

Furthermore, the comparison of the two films reveals both similarities and differences in their representation of ecological crises. Both films portray ecological crises as conditions that threaten the sustainability of life and disrupt the relationship between living beings and their environment. These representations are closely related to Garrard's concepts of apocalypse and dwelling. However, the films differ in their focus of representation and forms of environmental recovery. While *The Lion King* emphasizes ecological crises through the lives of animals and natural

ecosystems, WALL-E focuses on environmental destruction caused by human activities. Likewise, The Lion King portrays environmental recovery through the restoration of ecological balance, whereas WALL-E highlights the role of humans in rebuilding and caring for the environment. In conclusion, both The Lion King and WALL-E use ecological crises as a medium to criticize environmental destruction and emphasize the importance of maintaining a harmonious relationship between living beings and nature. Through different narrative contexts, the films convey environmental messages that encourage ecological awareness, responsibility, and sustainable interactions with the environment.

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