

Reflections Of Environmental Concern And Sustainability Gleaned From Al Gore's "Earth In The Balance"

Thị Thu Ha Phung, Maria Luisa A. Valdez

Thai Nguyen University of Technology
Socialist Republic of Vietnam
thuha@tmut.edu.vn

Batangas State University ARASOF Nasugbu
Republic of the Philippines
maluhvaldez888@gmail.com

Abstract: Nowadays, an enormous number of environmental problems that threaten the continued ability of both natural and human systems to flourish is generated by human action. Solving the critical environmental problems of biodiversity loss, global warming, pollution and water scarcity are perhaps the greatest challenges of the 21st century. The challenges posed by these four environmental problems and the forces that drive them seem insurmountable. Thus, this qualitative study was conducted to analyze the reflections on environmental concern and sustainability gleaned from Al Gore's literary work pointing out the implications of the findings of the study in teaching environmental stewardship. Findings of the analysis revealed that global warming is the greatest environmental threat of this time. Gore's literary work portrays vivid reflections and deep concerns on environmental issues and continues to confront men with reflective challenges. To give deeper meaning on the concept of environmental stewardship and logical framework to his work through language as well as to motivate the readers' imagination to visualize the characters, scenes and situations more clearly, Gore employed literary devices such as foreshadowing and flashback in the selected literary pieces. Through Al Gore's writings, this environmental steward could inspire educators specifically the Filipino and Vietnamese academicians to do their share to support this advocacy by adhering to the concepts that promote environmental education and by utilizing the appropriate pedagogical strategies associated with them.

Keywords: Al Gore, Environmental Concern, Environmental Stewardship, Flashback, Foreshadowing, Filipino and Vietnamese Educators, Sustainability

1. Introduction

Nowadays, an enormous number of environmental problems that threaten the continued ability of both natural and human systems to flourish and to sustain is generated by human action. These problems include biodiversity conservation, clean and renewable energy, electronic and nuclear waste, habitat loss, increased human population, global warming, land rush, new technologies, ocean system collapse, and water degradation. Solving the critical environmental problems of biodiversity loss, global warming, pollution and water scarcity are perhaps the greatest challenges of the 21st century. The challenges posed by these four environmental problems and the forces that drive them seem insurmountable. The impacts of these problems have shown up at regional and global scales, and the prospect of overcoming the differences between countries, between factions within countries, and even between individuals seems impossible at times [1]. Asia, not being spared from these, faces six of these major environmental problems which include urban excess, deforestation, overfishing, climate change, air pollution, and limited safe water supplies. Among these, four worst problems are being faced by these people -- deforestation, overfishing, climate change, and air pollution [2]. The natural ecosystem, on the other hand, is being severely ruined and as a result, the ability of planet Earth to sustain life is reduced. Sharing the same situations is the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. As part of a peninsula located in the tropical monsoon belt of Southeast Asia, it is one of the nations with a high potential of being most adversely affected by climate change. The country is already experiencing extreme weather phenomena such as storms,

heavy rains, and droughts as well as changes in fundamental climatic elements [3]. Likewise, it also faces many environmental problems related to air pollution, forest degradation, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, solid waste management and water pollution [4]. Similarly, the Republic of the Philippines is beset with the aforementioned problem. As one of the fastest growing countries in Asia, the Philippines faces environmental challenges. Ineffective management seriously degrades the country's significant biodiversity resources; water and air pollution levels exceed generally accepted healthy standards; greenhouse gas emissions are increasing from the transport and power sectors; and the country is ranked as one of the world's most vulnerable to the impacts of environmental disasters [5]. The Global Climate Risk Index 2015 listed the Philippines as the number one most affected country by climate change. This could be attributed to its geography since the Philippines is located in the western Pacific Ocean, surrounded by naturally warm waters that will likely get even warmer as average sea-surface temperatures continue to rise [6]. With reference to this, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [7] discussed the negative impact of climate change. The Convention's stated objective is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentration at a level that allows ecosystems to adapt naturally to the climate change so that food production is not threatened, while enabling the economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. To attain this end, the parties to the Convention were guided by the principles that reflect the awareness of global environmental responsibility, which were discussed in detail in the Rio Declaration on

Environment and Development and Agenda 21. These principles include the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, inter-generational equity, the precautionary approach, and the right to sustainable development [8]. The major environmental problems that face the planet Earth did not surface overnight. They are the result of several forces working together such as humankind's pursuit of wealth, their consumptive habits, and their technological innovation, along with the exponential rise in the human population over the last 200 years. These forces have worked together to transform the planet to create economic opportunities and increase the standard of living for many people throughout the world. As time has passed, however, scientists have discovered that if population growth and the insatiable consumption of the planet's natural resources continue unabated, they would pose serious threats to the survival of the human species, as well as to the survival of millions of other living species. Humankind should look deeper into the underlying causes of planet Earth's environmental problems. They should consider how each one contributed to create the challenges and should also consider the tools they can leverage to bring about a sustainable world [1]. On this note, things detrimental as these must be disseminated to everyone through literature. Literature, as a reflection of truth about man's life, his being and his surroundings, could be the writer's channel in the dissemination of environmental information and in forming the positive attitudes of the public towards the environment. Readers can view literature as a social reality, which portrays the state of things as they are, rather than as they are imagined to be. Hinged on the premise that if literature will be viewed from a sociological perspective, it can then serve as a motivational tool for people to cooperate in the dissemination of information that is necessary to fulfill the collective goal of environmental stewardship. In a nutshell, it is a panacea for humankind's peaceful co-existence and sustainable development. As reflected in this paper, Albert Arnold Al Gore or Al Gore, the 45th Vice President of the United States of America, has used literature as his channel for conveying his thoughts relative to inter-generational equity, people's differentiated responsibilities, precautionary approach, and sustainable development. Aside from being a renowned politician, he is also an identified advocate of environmental awareness and protection and a passionate defender of planet Earth. A lot of attention to the issue of global warming - within the political arena and within local layman communities was brought about by his anti-global warming efforts. As chairman of the Climate Reality Project, he spent most of his time trying to address the problem on climate change. Relative to this, Al Gore has described in his bestselling book *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* how human decisions and actions are considered factors that can endanger or safeguard the vulnerable ecosystem of the planet that sustains every life possible. In 1992, the *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* [9], Gore's first book was published. This became the first book written by a Senator to make it to The New York Times bestseller list since John F. Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage*. The said book was written during a turning point in his life when he decided not to push through running into the White House and spend time for his son who was then recovering from a near-fatal car accident and sharing

his profound thoughts and concerns about environmental issues with his readers in this book reflecting the shocking and unimaginable truths about the ecological degradation on the Earth. By providing readers with precise data illustrated by vivid images, the works by Al Gore are highly informative and persuasive. The documentaries are presented in a combination of narrative and descriptive styles. This combination is clear and natural enough for the readers to acquire the content and the objectives at which the author aims. This study is anchored on Ehrlich's and Raven's Society-Nature Coevolution Theory [10]. This theory focuses on the dynamic mutual interactions between human societies and their natural environment. In Al Gore's work, he highlighted the interrelationship or interdependence between the natural environment and the sentient beings living within it. The aptness of a literary analysis as a research study is emphasized by its noteworthiness to a number of persons. Therefore, it is vital to explicate how this study is beneficial to academic managers, working professionals, college instructors of literature, students of literature, members of the community, and other researchers. This study may help the academic managers to ensure that environmental concern and sustainability initiatives are integrated in the academe by inspiring them to spawn pro-environment-related activities in the curricula and to help formulate and enforce environmental policies, standards and guidelines. This paper may be valuable for the working professionals on the account that the study may inspire them to embrace and support the advocacy of environmental stewardship within their workplaces. This study may be helpful in the literature instructor's methodology in teaching literature as a discourse specifically when dealing with the appropriate literary theories and the examination of the approaches to reveal meaningful themes. This study may provide the literature students a profound and extensive perspective about life through the life of the writer, the characters and the situations in the selection and may motivate them to intensify their appreciation of literary analysis as a scholarly undertaking. Researchers may be benefitted by this study by enlightening them on the process of drawing out literary theories and utilizing critical approaches in literary analysis. Finally, this paper may inspire future researchers to conduct more studies on ways that are most effectual in integrating the theme into the people's psyche to substantiate the present investigation.

2. Objectives of the Study

This study is an analysis of the environmental concerns and sustainability reflected in Al Gore's *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* pointing out the implications of the findings of the study in teaching environmental stewardship. Specifically, it aimed to show how the reflections of the author on environment may be gleaned from the selection, and the literary devices used in unveiling Al Gore's theme of environmental concerns and sustainability.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Design

This qualitative method of research was employed in the study. Qualitative research is restricted by the philosophical assertion that one must consider the multiple

realities experienced by the participants themselves to understand a complex reality [11]. These multiple realities experienced by the participants can be revealed in countless ways, including the literary genre referred to as documentaries. These documentaries, as used within the context of this analysis, refer to a genre that aspires to tell a true story. Human experiences take their meaning from cultural, social and political impacts, and are therefore incapable of being disconnected from the said influences [12]. Hence, in analyzing the identified literary work, the context of being an environmental advocate was considered. These provided substantial and significant interpretations of the author's motivations as regards Al Gore's concepts of environmental concern and sustainability. Moreover, this analysis employed the sociological, philosophical and formalistic approaches as basis for analysis. This study was anchored on Ehrlich's and Raven's Society-Nature Coevolution Theory. Likewise, this study used the sociological, philosophical and formalistic approaches as the bases for analysis. Moreover, other approaches in literary criticism that may be employed in the analysis like the Biographical Criticism, Cultural Criticism, Historical Criticism, and Psychological Criticism are not part of this analysis. Likewise, other literary devices that were found in the study were not included. Patton (2002) [13] noted that the purpose of qualitative data analysis is to expose emerging concepts, insights, patterns, themes, and understanding. Thus, this study also involved content analysis, which is a systematic method of analyzing meanings of content within texts. The text analysis in this research centered on pattern seeking and the extraction of meaning from Al Gore's selected literary narrative or image data. Substantial effort was concentrated on the task of making notes through concepts and categories; connecting and merging abstract concepts; extracting the essence; establishing meaning; analyzing and interpreting the quoted lines; and drawing conclusions.

3.2 Materials for Criticism

The representative literary work of Al Gore titled *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*, which is known by the short title *Earth in the Balance* was analyzed. The said book describes the world's environmental quandary and expounds a range of policies to deal with the most critical challenges. The book was chosen because of its correlation to the aforementioned themes specifically the reflections of Gore on the environment, literary devices he used in unveiling the theme of environmental concern and sustainability; and its implications in teaching environmental stewardship that may be drawn from the analysis. This book constituted the primary source of the study. Furthermore, this work has been taken up in critical analysis far less frequently than Gore's most popular books titled *The Future: Six Drivers of Global Change*, *Earth in the Balance: Forging a New Common Purpose*, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Crisis of Global Warming*, *Our Choice: A Plan to Solve the Climate Crisis*, and *Our Choice: How We Can Solve the Climate Crisis*. Other literary pieces of Al Gore which have undertones of environmental concern and sustainability were not included in the study.

3.3 Treatment of Materials

The relevant requirements in the treatment of materials were taken into consideration in the conduct of the research. Like all the other arts, literature has certain merits by which all selections can be measured for evaluation and analysis. According to Garcia, et al. (2000) [14], there are seven standards by which literary works can be measured for evaluation and analysis that would serve as guide in the selection of works that were included in the paper. Great literature, according to them, is distinguished by the following standards: intellectual value, suggestiveness, spiritual value, permanence, universal appeal, artistic value and style. The intellectual value attribute projected in the literary work was deliberately thought-out owing to its ability to stimulate and enrich the readers' thoughts specifically on ecological stewardship through the use of thought-provoking lines. The attribute of suggestiveness manifested in the literary text was thoroughly considered on the account of its emotional power as shown in several connotations associated with it that go beyond the work's surface meaning. The spiritual attribute reflected in the selected work was also carefully thought-out due to the underlying moral messages revealed that may change the readers' psyche into a purpose-driven one. Likewise, the attribute of permanence readily perceived from the selection was considered owing to its value of timelessness and timeliness as it rekindles the past and enlivens the present experiences of the readers. Moreover, the attribute of universality evident in the literary text was thoroughly evaluated as it brings about its appeal to diverse group of people representing various age groups, gender, culture and nationalities. Furthermore, the artistic attribute distinctly shown in the literary piece was weighed in the sense that it attracts the readers' aesthetic sense through its remarkably crafted phrases and sentences as well as its well-written lines. Finally, the attribute of style apparent in the selection merits consideration because of its peculiar way of projecting the writer's view about ecological concern and sustainability. In subjecting the materials to internal and external criticism and analysis, the meaning and trustworthiness of the narratives in the primary source were conscientiously analyzed. In relation to this, the researchers were free in their own views to defend their understanding and judgment of the literary piece according to the desired sensibilities with reference to the concept of environmental concern and sustainability evoked in them, by defining the suitability of the language to the theme, the relevance of the language to the situation, and the aptness of the language to the literary pieces under study. To attain congruency between the theories used in explaining the concepts of environmental concern and sustainability, coding and categorization were conducted. In this study, the categories which served as coding units include the following: the reflections of the author on the environment that may be gleaned from the selections; the literary devices used by Gore in unveiling the theme of environmental concern and sustainability; and the implications of the findings of the study in teaching environmental stewardship. Quoted lines were lifted from the literary pieces to serve as the primary texts and juxtaposed with the statements discussed. These passages from the book substantiated the theoretical basis of the study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Reflections of Al Gore on the Environment in his Selected Works

In this book titled *Earth in the Balance*, Al Gore, the former Vice President of the United States of America, discussed and presented exhaustive understanding of the facts and issues concerning environmental disasters and devastations. Each chapter of this book presents additional material on the extent of the ecological crisis the world is facing: species loss, global warming or climate change, loss of genetic plant diversity and the harmful effect of chlorofluorocarbon to humans. These are some of the issues covered in detail. Moreover, *Earth in the Balance* provides historic analysis on how human civilization has evolved. It likewise shows Al Gore's point that people may have lost respect for nature and its provisions and may also have lost sight of the environmental impacts of their actions [15]. He cited,

"Our beaches mirror the degradation of the environment. America is not responding to environmental danger signals. Half of all-American waters are polluted. If we do nothing else, save the rain forest."

Al Gore reflected in the literary work his observations on the blatant disregard of people towards the environment. Humankind's activities, one or the other, have adverse effects which led to the disruption in the balance of one ecosystem to another. Planet Earth is now on its highest degree of critical balance. Al Gore began to describe this by citing:

"Internal combustion engines interfere with earth's cleansing. Civilization and the earth are increasingly in conflict..."

The hard truth is that the current economic system is partially blind. It "sees" some things and not others. It carefully measures and keeps track of the value of those things most important to buyers and sellers, such as food, clothing manufactured goods, work, and indeed money itself. But its intricate calculations often completely ignore the value of other things that are harder to buy and sell: fresh water, clean air, the beauty of the mountains, and the rich diversity of life in the forest, just to name a few. In fact, the partial blindness of the current economic system is the single most powerful force behind what seem to be irrational decisions about the global environment [9]. From these lines, it can be gleaned how Al Gore has reflected on how unresponsive people have become regarding the call to take more aggressive roles in taking care of the environment. People think only of themselves without regard to the probable consequences of their actions towards the environment and what the future holds. Due to the continuous development in the economic system, other important matters have taken a back seat. With industrialization and urbanization, consumption of resources has incredibly been on the rise. Humankind's great demand for the natural resources and their consumption as well as their large-scale exploitation has resulted to the weakening, exhaustion and deterioration of the natural resources. They somehow have this belief that

these resources will always be available, without regard to the depletion or disruption of the ecosystem. Excessive use of these resources has slowly made a dent to planet Earth's state of equilibrium. As globalization continues to seep through the consciousness of humankind, planet Earth's natural processes transform local problems into international issues that resulted to the reshaping of some parts of the world and hence, changing the environment. Al Gore strongly believes that global warming or climate change is the single biggest environmental and humanitarian crisis of the time. His work reflects how the planet Earth's atmosphere is overloaded with heat-trapping carbon dioxide, which threatens large-scale disruptions in climate with disastrous consequences [16]. He underscored that,

"Global warming is a strategic threat. The concentration of carbon dioxide and other heat-absorbing molecules has increased by almost 25 percent since World War II, posing a worldwide threat to the earth's ability to regulate the amount of heat from the sun retained in the atmosphere. This increase in heat seriously threatens the global climate equilibrium that determines the patterns of winds, rainfall, surface temperatures, ocean currents, and sea level."

On this note, Al Gore believes that by this strategic threat that endangers the global climate equilibrium, the global food supply may also be damaged. The dramatic increase in ultraviolet radiation due to the destruction of the ozone layer presents a serious, if not fully understood, threat to all crops as well as to critical links in the food chain, particularly in the oceans. Moreover, the changing climate patterns as a result of global warming, specifically the unstable distribution of rainfall, likewise poses problems to food production, as well as the rise in the sea level and northward migration of blight and pests. Al Gore then highlighted the effects of global warming by citing the current scenario in the Polar Regions. He stated,

"Indeed, global warming is expected to push temperatures up much more rapidly in the polar regions than in the rest of the world. As the polar air warms, the ice here will thin; and since the polar cap plays such a crucial role in the world's weather system, the consequences of a thinning cap would be disastrous."

From the aforementioned lines, Al Gore showed that it is expected that global warming has long-lasting, far-reaching and devastating consequences for planet Earth. The gradual heating of earth's surface, oceans, and atmosphere is caused by human activity, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gases that pump carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Climate scientists averred that they are at least 95 percent certain that humans are to blame for the warming at oceans, rapidly melting ice, and rising sea levels. Within a matter of years, the Arctic Sea will be completely ice-free during the summer months [18]. With regard to this, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report (2013) [19] cited that climate change was human-induced, and that humanity is

responsible over it. Moreover, the effects of global warming on planet Earth's ecosystems are expected to be profound and widespread. Many species of plants and animals are already moving their range northward or to higher altitudes as a result of the warming temperatures [20]. This movement may result to having these animals to go extinct. In addition to this, warmer temperatures will expand the range of many disease-causing pathogens that is brought by the migratory birds and insects which arrive in their summer feeding and nesting grounds several days or weeks earlier than they did in the 20th century. These pathogens will kill off plant and animal species that formerly were protected from disease [18]. As feared by Al Gore, these and the other effects of global warming, if not unchecked, will likely contribute to the disappearance of up to one-half of Earth's plants and one-third of animals from their current range by 2080 [18]. However, he stressed that the effect of global warming is an extensive yet preventable threat. He cited,

"The flaw in the argument this time is that if the skeptics are as wrong as it appears, and if we do not act now, the crisis of global warming will inflict enormous, even irreversible damage. And it is preventable if we act now, wisely and boldly. It is worth remembering that big changes can occur quickly. There will probably be some climate surprises. Melting of the arctic tundra could release huge quantities of methane, an extremely potent greenhouse gas, which would greatly amplify climate change. Who can afford to wait?"

It can be gleaned from the aforementioned lines how Gore underscored is unwavering on his call for people to come to their senses and to bring back the balance of nature that is slowly leaning down on one side. These lines only get to show what humans can do to contribute to the lessening of the effect of global warming throughout the world. It can be inferred then that Al Gore is silently imploring humanity to do their share regarding the problem, which may eventually inflict enormous, even irreversible damage. As clearly expressed in the lines, if humans will not act at once and as one, there might be greater damage that may befall planet Earth and its entire populace. In brave and unforgettable terms, Al Gore strongly averred that human civilization must change its course of action if people are to heal the ailing environment and preserve Earth's ecology for the future generations. He further mentioned,

"The world must unite to save the environment. Every individual should take responsibility for the earth. A balance between civilization and the earth is needed. Welcomes criticism as "too environmental" Ozone protection is working; keep up diligence. Strengthen CAA; polluters pay for air cleanup. Replacing internal combustion is possible & will create jobs."

It can be gleaned from this line that Al Gore is calling to all people to make up from their gross disregard of the environment and respect planet Earth and life in all its diversity. He believes that people must learn to accept and to live by the principle that living sustainably depends on accepting a moral and legal obligation to seek harmony

with other people and with nature. This analysis conforms to Shah, et al.'s (2004) [21], pronouncement that something must be done about global warming and climate change. Unless this will be addressed, and as the global warming is on the increase, species and their habitats are on the decrease. From this, it can be taken that chances for the ecosystems to adapt naturally are diminishing. It is then taken from this context that many are in agreement that global warming and climate change are one of the greatest threats that humankind and the world is facing.

4.2 Literary Devices Used in Unveiling Al Gore's Theme of Environmental Concern and Sustainability

In sending his message to the world, Al Gore used literary devices to explicitly convey to his readers what he wanted them to understand about global warming. Generally, literary devices are a collection of universal artistic structures that are so typical of all works of literature frequently employed by the writers to give meanings and a logical framework to their works through language as well as to motivate the reader's imagination to visualize the characters, scenes, and situations more clearly. They not only transform artistically the piece of literature but also give deeper meanings to it, testing the very understanding of the readers along with providing them enjoyment of reading [22]. It can be gleaned from the selection that ecological concern refers to humankind's awareness on environmental conservations and methods on alternative and sustainable development. Sustainability, on the other hand, refers to the process of meeting the needs of the future depending on how well humankind balance the social, economic, and environmental objectives or needs when making current decisions [23]. With this, Al Gore used literary devices to give the readers a documentary of the past and an advance hint of what is to come in terms of environmental concerns and sustainability.

4.2.1 Foreshadowing

In his literary text, Al Gore used the literary device called foreshadowing to associate with the terms environmental concern and sustainability. Foreshadowing is a literary device which means suggesting, hinting, indicating, or showing what will occur later in a narrative. It often provides hints about what will happen next. Often, this foreshadowing takes the form of a noteworthy coincidence or appears in a verbal echo of dialogue [24]. Based on Al Gore's viewpoint, people are often too unwilling to look beyond themselves to see the consequences of their current actions. They just want to satisfy their present needs without considering the effect of their actions which can do harm to planet Earth. For him, humankind should think beyond themselves and about the legacy they are going to leave for the future generations. These are hinted by the author in his literary text. He averred,

"This near invisible, poison which has been first welcomed as a blessing, became for me a symbol of how carelessly our civilization could do harm to the world almost without realizing its own power."

From these lines, Al Gore had clearly foreshadowed how people nowadays have continually acted without regard to what the future holds. He clearly presented his main point on the context of how people look at their economic

development as a boon, not realizing that it can be a bane. Sadly, these lines highlighted his belief that though planet Earth provides humankind with all that they need, still they have created a consumption-driven economy that demands more resources that they can take from planet Earth. Because of his deep concern on the environment, Gore shared his sentiments on how these destructive acts may be staved off and how to help people realize that time will come that what they do unto nature, the latter will also do unto them. The concern for global freshwater sustainability was also considered in the selection. Due to world's poor condition, the distribution of water around the world was affected. Humankind, nowadays, may not be that mindful of the next generation's problems regarding freshwater resources because they are still preoccupied with their current state. The indication of humankind's possible problem relative to freshwater resources was presented in the following lines:

"This still leaves more than enough water to meet all our needs, both now and in the foreseeable future, but it is distributed unevenly throughout the world. The dramatic change in our relationship to the earth, since the industrial revolution especially in this century is now causing profound damage to the global water."

Humankind is cognizant that water is a universal solvent and that they cannot live without it. However, their continued disregard to this natural resource has somehow created a strain in the distribution of freshwater reserves. He emphasized that the result of their decision as regards the management and utilization of the environmental resource has led to the present poor condition of nature and the abnormal weather condition that may affect the water resources in the future. Al Gore has presented his viewpoint about the future problems of the world. The next generation of world leaders may face not just political problems but also environmental challenges. In the literary text, it is evident that some people are beginning to look ahead. Humankind starts thinking about the urgent problems which require urgent decisions. As civilization evolves, there is a systematic change that transpires with it. He said,

"But it is altogether different when a civilization undergoes systematic change. It naturally seems easier to avoid even thinking about it, especially if we can argue that it still lives in the future. One reason many world leaders have difficulty responding to the environmental crisis is that worst of predicted effects seems decades away and they are so unprecedented that they seem to defy common sense."

As modernization paves the way for humankind's improved quality of life, harmful environmental implications also exist. The man-and-nature relationship seems to be more of a competition than a friendly relationship. It is not more of a give and take relationship. Al Gore believed that people satisfy their current needs without considering the negative environmental implications. As the population increases, nature may be unable to sustain humankind's future needs. He also believed that the future environmental crisis is predictable and may be considered as one of the biggest problems future leaders have to face. From the same lines, it can be construed

how Gore feels towards the reactions and decisions of those involved in various economic systems as well as the politicians and advertisers. They seem to perceive that the worst of predicted effects of the problem seems decades away and they are so unprecedented that they seem to defy common sense. They are somewhat reluctant to acknowledge the devastating effects that these developments can bring to the environment and the future generation instead of encouraging a more rational approach to environmental responsibility. And this saddens Al Gore.

4.2.2 Flashback

In his literary work, Al Gore also utilized the literary device called flashback to unveil the theme of ecological concern and sustainability. Flashback is a method of narration in which the present action is temporarily interrupted so that the readers can witness past events. These are usually in the form of a character's memories, dreams, narration, or even authorial commentary [24]. Al Gore used flashback in depicting the occurrence of specific events that had led to global warming and its effects to the environment and the planet Earth. In his work, he used past narratives by stating what had taken place in the past that have something to do with the present time. In presenting his point on the degradation of the environment brought about by men, Al Gore used flashback, and this is manifested in the following lines:

"Climate change on civilization has been massive migrations from one geographic area to another. In fact, one of the greatest migrations in the history - the one that introduced human beings into North America and then South America - came about as a direct result of climate change. During the last age, roughly 20,000 years ago, when vast amounts of seawater were frozen into ice, sea level was about three hundred feet lower than it is today."

As mentioned above, the climate change has become the reason for the migration of the masses in the past centuries. Through flashback, Al Gore showed that the global warming prompted people to migrate to other places. He recollected that in the past 20,000 years, there were already environmental problems existing and happening on planet Earth which had affected countries all over the globe. He used flashback to present to his readers the scenario on how earlier human acts has affected the present state of planet Earth and what could have been the reason of the rapid warming and migration that transpired. Moreover, Al Gore flashbaked the previous years when there was already an agriculture spoliation that has happened in different parts of the world. It is indeed disastrous to productive agriculture if the population will continue to outstrip the agricultural resources. And as the practice of selecting traits for breeding crops continues, other minor strains of crops disappeared completely. This resulted into the loss of several traits of local crops. As cited,

"The recent history abounds with situations that show how severe the strategic threat to our modern food supply has become. In 1970, the United States suddenly suffered devastating losses in the corn crop when the southern corn leaf bright took advantage of a trait that had been uniformly bred into virtually all of the corn crop in order to simplify the genetic

manipulation itself. In 1977, the scientist searching in Ecuador found a wild relative to avocado that was resistant to blight, a genetic trait of tremendous value to avocado growers in California. But the good news came with bad news: this strain of avocado was growing on only twelve trees in a tiny patch of forest, one of the last remnants of large lowland forest that had been cut down to accommodate the needs of growing Ecuadorian population."

It can be gleaned from the aforementioned lines how Al Gore recalled the previous years when there was already a threat in food supply. He used flashback to show that the crops' devastation that happened at that time meant that there will be food shortage in the near future. Moreover, he used flashback to show that the reason why food supply had become scarce today is not only due to pests or natural phenomenon, but also because the land resources which were initially meant for planting crops had been converted to residential areas because of the growing population. Flashback has simply presented to the readers in a clearer manner how this shortage came about. The following lines also manifested Al Gore's use of flashback:

"I remember the day that citizens from the small Tennessee town of Mitchellville (pop.500) called me to complain about four smelly boxcars dripping with garbage from New York City that had been sitting in the hot sun for a week on the railroad siding in their town. "What worries me," said one resident to a reporter from the air, viruses and this type of thing. When that wind is blowing that stuff all over town, them little germs are not saying, 'Now, we can't leave this boxcar, you know we've got to stay here.'" Mitchellville's vice mayor, Bill Rogers, said, "A lot of the time you can see water, or some kind of liquid, dripping out the bottom of the cars, and some of them contain pure New York garbage." As it turned out, the mayor had agreed to let hauling company, Tuckasee Inc., bring trash to New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania to a landfill thirty-fives mile from the railroad siding for a fee of \$5 per boxcar, which looked like a good deal for a city whose annual budget is less than \$50,000."

From these lines, Al Gore was able to recall the long-standing polluting activities of men in Tennessee. Through flashback, he was able to disclose a mistake in the past which shows the improper garbage disposal system in the City of Tennessee. Moreover, he was able to unveil a violation committed in the said place and that there was no further action to solve and pursue the said matter. Relative to this, Al Gore used flashback to show the controversy as regards the locality's poor disposal facilities and meager budgetary allocation. The author's experiences and travels were likewise important in understanding the use of this literary device since these have created impacts to the readers that led to some realizations. To conclude, the use of foreshadowing and flashback has created some realizations among the readers on how to handle environmental concerns and promote sustainability. The author was able to stress onto the readers the circumstances to show that environmental problems are human-induced

and could only be given a respite if these will be understood and internalized by all.

4.3 The Implications of the Findings of the Study in Teaching Environmental Stewardship

The implications of the findings of the study in teaching environmental stewardship can be hauled out and discerned in the writings of Al Gore. An in-depth analysis of his reflections on the environment underscores the value of environmental stewardship. Environmental stewardship signifies taking responsibility and actions to manage environmental concerns and problems. As cited by in the 1980 World Conservation Strategy, education has a big role in bringing about such environmental transformation. With reference to this, educators have a vital role to play in helping to bring about the extensive social transformations needed for sustainable development. It is reasoned out that, eventually, the behaviour of the entire society towards the biosphere must be transformed if realization of the conservation objectives is to be guaranteed. Educators have the responsibility to help students develop a sound understanding of the natural resources, their characteristics, distribution, status, and present and potential uses, in order to make informed decisions on which resources to consume for which purpose. On this, it involves the learning on what the natural world is and its functions to the ecosystem [23]. Through Al Gore's writings, this environmental steward could inspire educators specifically the Filipino and Vietnamese academicians to do their share to support this advocacy by adhering to the following concepts that promote environmental education and by utilizing the appropriate pedagogical strategies associated with them. First, the educators may consider pointing out to their students the concept that the environment is an essential part of nature that needs to be appreciated, respected and preserved. They may also emphasize the notion that the environment is the sacred and pristine environment, from which humankind have dissociated themselves and to which they must learn to interact so that they can enrich their quality of life. Nature-immersion strategies may be adopted in relation to this concept since it is only an experiential approach of nature that will allow students to interact with it in a fitting manner. Second, the educators may also emphasize the concept that the environment is a resource to be managed. Cognizant of the fact that the environment sustains humankind's quality of life or that it serves as their collective biophysical heritage, they have to inculcate in the minds of their students that the environment is a limited and deteriorating resource. Thus, it should be managed in accordance with the principles of equitable sharing and sustainable development. As educators they may make the necessary decisions to ensure adequate resources for them and the future generations. Engaged experiences, resource or heritage interpretation in museums and parks as well as campaigns for the prudent use of resources such as conservation, recycling, regeneration, and restoration are among the teaching strategies that may be adopted relative to this notion. Another interesting pedagogical strategy relevant to this concept is an environmental audit through the application of energy consumption methods or waste management system. Third, the educators may highlight the concept that the environment is a problem that needs to be solved. They may consider the environment as

humankind's life support system or biophysical environment, which is threatened by degradation and pollution. They must instill in the minds of their students how to restore it and preserve its quality. Problem-solving skills are the often-favored educational strategies applicable to this concept. It focuses on essential learnings such as identifying, analyzing and diagnosing a problem; searching for and evaluating diverse solutions; conceptualizing and executing a plan of action; evaluating the process and ensuring a constant feedback, and many more. Fourth, the educators may emphasize the concept that the environment is a place to live, to learn about, to plan for, and to take care of. They may show the value of the environment specifically the human, historical, socio-cultural, and technological factors that characterize it. They may also impart among their students the notion that the environment is one towards which they must develop a sense of belonging and one that they should learn to appreciate and take care of. The pedagogical process associated with this intends to transform each of the students so that they may change their daily state of being. Each student must become a creator of, and an actor in, his or her own environment. These educators may propose an education for rehabilitation, which favors developing the art of living in harmony within their environment. Fifth, the educators may underscore the concept that the environment is the biosphere in which humankind live together towards sustainable future. They may consider the environment as a world of interdependence and harmony between human beings and other sentient beings. They may aim to develop an understanding of the multiple dimensions of the world and to stimulate effective participation in dealing with salient issues. Case studies which are put to practical use particularly to global issues or an audit of consumer goods produced in various parts of the world are among the suggested teaching/learning strategies suitable to this concept. Learning activities such as telling of tales and legends where different scientific studies of the origin, structure and space-time relationship of the universe reveal the close connection between the Earth and human beings. Finally, the educators may highlight the concept that the environment is a community project in which everyone must be involved. They consider it as the environment of human collectivity, a shared living place, a political concern, and the focus of critical analysis. They must motivate their students to heed the call for solidarity. Personal as well as collective involvement may be done in order to participate in the development of the society. The pedagogical model which proves to be relevant to this notion is an integral action research or participatory process aimed at transformation for community problem solving. Likewise, environmental issue forums may be proposed. These implications support and adhere to Sauve's (1996) [25] study of discourses and practices in environmental education which identified paradigmatic conceptions of the environment. The author underscored that the influence of diverse conceptions can be observed in the pedagogical approaches and strategies suggested by different authors or adopted by educators. These conceptions of the environment may be considered from a synchronous perspective: they actually co-exist and can be identified in different contemporary environmental education discourses and practices. Ideally, a comprehensive environmental education process should

consider each one of these complementary visions of the environment, either cumulatively, through carefully orchestrated interventions, or, preferably, in an integrated pedagogical approach.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Al Gore's book titled *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* portrays vivid reflections and deep concerns on environmental issues and continues to confront men with reflective challenges. To give deeper meaning to the concept of environmental stewardship and logical framework to his work through language as well as to motivate the readers' imagination to visualize the characters, scenes and situations more clearly, Gore employed literary devices such as foreshadowing and flashback. Through Al Gore's writings, this environmental steward could inspire educators specifically the Filipino and Vietnamese academicians to do their share to support this advocacy by adhering to the concepts that promote environmental education and by utilizing the appropriate pedagogical strategies associated with them. From the foregoing findings and conclusions, the researchers offer the following recommendations: That the results of the study be presented to key stakeholders involved in the implementations of environmental programs to serve as benchmark inputs on global warming in Vietnam and in the Philippines and to serve as bases for regulatory and policy approaches to better take the environment into account; That results in this study serve as inspiration to media practitioners to create intervention strategies that integrate educational messages on environmental concern and sustainability into their television programs to change cultural attitudes, norms and behaviors that would benefit audiences; That college literature instructors may incorporate in their teachings lessons on environmental concerns using appropriate instructional materials and media, literary theories and approaches to develop their students' appreciation and sense of value that underpins the environmental steps they need to take relevant to the preservation of global resources and conservation of the natural resources people all depend on; That results from this study serve as pertinent point of reference for students of literature in realizing the significance of environmental concern and sustainability and may serve as their inspiration in treating literature as a work of art distinguished from other texts through content and form, intensifying their appreciation for prose works as well as inspiring them to engage in literary analysis as scholarly endeavor; That the Filipino and Vietnamese communities instill in their consciousness that environmental stewardship is most effective when it highlights the positive interdependence existing among the nations, organizations, groups and people; and That future researchers conduct other literary analysis on the same topic for academic enhancement and to have a cross dissections of views about ecological concern and sustainability and to substantiate the present study.

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international refereed journals. Her papers won the Best Research Paper Awards in local and international research conferences. Her research interests include topics on education, humanities and social sciences specifically on contemporary social issues like peace education, gender equality, and environmental issues manifested in the selected contemporary literary works in English. She is a visiting professor and the dissertation adviser of the Doctor of Philosophy students of the Thai Nguyen University, International Training and Development Center, Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Authors' Profile



Dr. Thị Thu Ha Phùng is an English teacher at Thai Nguyen University of Technology, Socialist Republic of Vietnam. She has been in the teaching profession for 23 years. Her primary areas of teaching include English Teaching Methodology, Literature of the English-Speaking

Countries, General English and English for Specific Purposes. Apart from those, she designs syllabi, reference books and develops various programs. Her research interests include topics about literature and language.



Dr. Maria Luisa A. Valdez is a Professor and the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in the Batangas State University ARASOF-Nasugbu, Nasugbu, Batangas, Philippines. She has been in the teaching profession for more than 30 years. She is also a senior accreditor of the

Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines conducting program assessment among various state universities and colleges. She has published sixteen researches in reputable international and national refereed journals and presented papers on various local, national and international research fora. Likewise, she is an editorial board member and a peer reviewer of eleven