

QATAR'S MAGICAL LAND: AN ECOCRITICISM STUDY ON THE REPRESENTATION OF NATURE IN *DREAMERS* MUSIC VIDEO BY FIFA WORLD CUP

Tanah Ajaib Qatar: Kajian Ekokritik Representasi Alam dalam Video Musik Piala Dunia FIFA
Dreamers

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Abstract: *Qatar, as the host of the World Cup 2022, has released a music video to enliven the euphoria. The music video is believed to present several issues, including environmental issues indirectly. This research aims to examine the depiction of nature in the Dreamers music video by Jungkook and Fahad Al Kubaisi for the official soundtrack of FIFA World Cup 2022. This paper uses ecocriticism interest, which takes an earth-centred approach to a literary study by looking at the role nature plays in a given work proposed by Cheryll Glotfelty. The result of the study shows that the music video contains some nature representations, which are the existence of pearls as Qatar's main income source before oil discovery, the whale shark as the country's representation to signify its new image, and the white snowy tree emphasising a climate change that has been a serious concern in the Arab world.*

Keywords: *Ecocriticism, Music Video, Qatar, Representation, World Cup 2022*

Abstrak: *Sebagai tuan rumah Piala Dunia FIFA 2022, Qatar telah merilis sebuah video musik untuk memeriahkan ajang tersebut. Video musik tersebut diyakini secara tidak langsung menghadirkan beberapa isu, salah satunya isu lingkungan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji penggambaran alam dalam video musik Dreamers oleh Jungkook dan Fahad Al Kubaisi untuk lagu tema resmi Piala Dunia FIFA 2022. Penelitian ini menggunakan pandangan ekokritik melalui pendekatan alam sebagai pusat dalam kajian sastra dengan melihat peran yang dimainkan alam dalam karya tertentu yang diusulkan oleh Cheryll Glotfelty. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa video musik tersebut mengandung beberapa representasi alam, yakni penggunaan mutiara sebagai representasi sumber pendapatan utama Qatar sebelum penemuan minyak, hiu paus sebagai representasi negara untuk menunjukkan sebuah citra baru, dan eksistensi sebuah pohon bersalju sebagai penekanan perubahan iklim yang telah menjadi perhatian serius di Arab.*

Kata Kunci: *Ekokritik, Video Musik, Qatar, Representasi, Piala Dunia 2022*

INTRODUCTION

Nature has had a huge role in providing human and animal needs for so long. It is believed that nature can survive without humans and animals, while these two entities cannot. Humans and animals have depended on nature for years and will continue to do so even though advanced technologies have been invented. Humans have only been able to modify what nature has provided rather than make a pure brand-new material to accomplish their needs. Humans still do not and probably will never be able to replicate how nature works. This indicates that nature cannot be replaced or duplicated even if humans had the most advanced technology that ever existed.

Compared to the other living things on Earth, humans have the most significant power to take as much advantage of nature as they want. However, this opportunity is used to unthinkingly utilise nature without taking sustainability actions. Humans often see nature through an anthropocentric perspective. Anthropocentrism is the belief that value is human-centred and that all other beings are means to human ends (Kopnina et al., 2018). This makes humans feel that they have the broadest possible right to utilise nature. As a result, nature suffers irreparable damage in some cases.

The impact of nature exploitation can be seen in climate change that has occurred for years. Global warming and extreme climate change in several regions of the world are clear examples of natural destruction results. The human population continues to grow while nature is constantly being damaged. Gaub (2021) stated that demographics and climate change are two developments that negatively reinforce each other. If humans do not stop exploiting nature without any awareness to preserve it, then nature will be highly depressed and damaged. As a reaction, some people start to realise that humans cannot forever take advantage of nature without taking sustainable action. It is important to maintain the balance of nature for the sake of the sustainability of human life in the future. In accordance with that, literature is one field that raises this environmental issue. As the product of human culture, literature also plays a role in helping to raise these issues to the surface through writing, music, and language.

Sport is also one of the products of human culture. Through sports, humans can express themselves as they please. Sports become a significant product of human culture, and it can be seen from the existence of sports events at the world level, such as the World Cup. The World Cup is not a mere competition between countries to prove their strengths in sports, but it is also a medium to promote recent phenomena that need to be overlooked. In 2023, World Cup chose to raise awareness of nature which can be seen through the music video of their theme song. Nature itself has an intense relationship with the sport. Many sports worldwide are outdoors; whether acknowledged or not, they cannot be separated from nature. Hence, because many sports involve nature as their primary support, it is important to perceive and realise how much nature means to the world.

For the past few years, the World Cup has been actively promoting its event with a theme song to enliven the euphoria of the biggest sport's championship. Throughout the years, the typical song for the world will be an upbeat song that is guaranteed to lift the spirit of the players and the masses. A music video will always be provided with different themes and messages to deliver, such as the World Cup 2014 that took place in Brazil with their song entitled *Ole Ole Ola (We Are One)*. The music video tries to highlight the diversity and the uniqueness of Brazil through dances. Meanwhile, World Cup 2018 took place in Russia with their theme song, *Live It Up*, was more like a fashion show. Lastly, the banger of all time, *Waka Waka (This Time For Africa)* from World Cup 2010, accentuated another euphoria of the World Cup by showing clips of the tournament and traditional dance from Africa.

By analysing some of the music videos for the World Cup in 2022, the team is trying to add more meaning and value to promote their country and issues of the world's current situation. The latest theme song for the World Cup offers the condition of Qatar, where it is trying to showcase the beauty and diversity of Qatar through nature representation. Many nature elements are included in the music video to raise awareness of the current situation of nature. The song impacted people worldwide, as the World Cup is held once every four years. Many people were anticipating the coming of the song. One of the main factors was the singers for the theme song that brought sports fans and

everyone seated to listen to the song. Hence, the natural element that the music video is trying to showcase does not get so much spotlight as it was mainly underlying indirect meaning throughout the music video.

Dreamers music video was released on FIFA's official YouTube account in November 2022. FIFA chose Jungkook from BTS to sing its soundtrack since he is one of the most well-known singers in the music industry. Featuring Fahad Al Kubaisi, a Qatari singer, the music video reached over 147 million viewers on YouTube. The music video was shot in Qatar and depicts a variety of local characteristics, including skyscrapers, buildings, beaches, and oceans. In contrast to how Arab countries are typically portrayed—as deserts, arid, and hot—the music video includes numerous images of the sea and beaches. Additionally, the portrayal of whales throughout the video begs the question of what this video means and what FIFA wanted to show to the audience. People are intrigued by this uniqueness and want to learn more about the connection between this depiction of nature in the music video and Qatar.

Based on the backgrounds above, the researchers try to do more in-depth research into the depiction of the sea, beach, whales, and more in this music video. The study uses ecocriticism interest, which takes an earth-centered approach proposed by Cheryll Glotfelty. In order to raise readers' awareness of the natural world and their responsibility to preserve it, the ecocriticism study examines how literature and the natural world interact (Dobie, 2015). According to Glotfelty, ecocriticism is observing an analogous pattern, starting with an interest in “representations”, examining how nature is represented in literature, thereby raising awareness of perspectives towards the natural world, taking an earth-centred approach to a literary study by looking at the role nature plays in a given work (Dobie, 2015).

The same approach was once used by Nur Alfiah et al. (2020) from Universitas Halu Oleo to analyse Greg Garrard's *Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*. The research aims to describe its ecological issue. They examine ecological problems that emerge due to human actions in the movie; the relationship between humans and wildlife, the animals becoming wild and extinct, and the collapse of nature. Another writing using ecocriticism as a framework is a study of nature exploitation in the *Moana* movie, done by Eka Syamratul Fikriyah Agusta Akhiyat (2021) from Universitas Negeri Surabaya. The study looks at the problem of nature exploitation brought by human avarice and the resolution of the natural order in *Moana*. Although this research and the previous studies have a similarity, which is highlighting ecocriticism in literature, this research brings up its significance in raising awareness of the current situation of nature, which needs to be perceived and taken care of before any further damage to nature affects the long-lived humanity. This study is significant for students and researchers interested in ecocriticism study and those who want to gain a broader and fresh perspective of nature included in this article.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative method which was achieved through several steps. First, the materials from the primary data were collected. The primary data of this research was an official music video for FIFA World Cup 2022 entitled *Dreamers*, sung by Jungkook and Fahad Al Kubaisi. This research was also supported by secondary data that come from literature reviews of previous research. Second, the collected data were then divided into two big categories, which were: the raw data that had certain representation and the raw data that had symbolisation. Third, the data that had been categorised were analysed using an ecocriticism approach which took an earth-centered perspective to

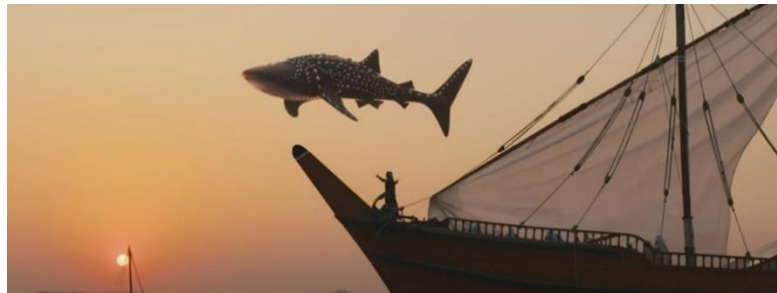
reveal the deeper meaning of the primary data collected. The data were examined and discussed further to find out the other meanings of particular representations and symbolisation in the music video.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Whale Shark as Qatar's Representation

It seems impossible if one's country does not have the representation of its natural resources. It applies to Qatar as well. As part of the Middle Eastern country, Qatar shows the richness of nature through whale sharks as their main representation. Qatar is the home of the largest whale sharks in the world. As the World Cup 2022 was held in Qatar, whale sharks became one of the main faces in the 2022 music video theme song.

Figure 1. Flying Whale Shark



A figure of the whale shark is crystal clear in the music video of *Dreamers*. The whale shark was flying around in the Gulf state. It came out from the water and moved toward the skyscrapers. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), whale sharks have been noted on their red list since 2016. It indicates how whale shark all over the world has been decreasing by 50% over the past 75 years—whale shark has been listed as the endangered animal. However, in the *Dreamers* music video, Qatar wants to showcase its safe water environment for sea animals, such as whale shark which still holds its throne for being the largest animal commodity of Qatar.

Ahmed al-Baker, the CEO of Katara Studios who produced and directed *Dreamer's* music video, said in his interview with Aljazeera that whale shark represents the stigma of how people tend to be scared of large sea creatures because of their massive size. Some people are even uncomfortable seeing some of the big creatures because of how they perceive them to be a bad and 'monster' of the sea. However, in reality, the whale shark is a gentle animal that does not kill other sea creatures. Instead, they eat small shrimp and fish, plankton, and algae.

Qatar's unique ecosystem supports the appearance of whale sharks in Qatar. The average sea temperature in the Gulf, where whale shark is typically found in Qatar, is 27 degrees, which is much cooler and the ideal temperature for fish to spawn. The plentiful fish eggs attract whale sharks because it is one of their main food sources.

Reliving the Heyday of Arab before Oil Discovery

The music video features images of the sea, boats, and whales throughout Fahad Al-Kubaisi's part, rather than in Jung Kook's as if to represent the "Arab" side. However, why is the sea mainly shown as Arab imagery instead of oil and gas, which are the primary sources of wealth in the Arabian Peninsula? This is so because the Arabian Peninsula has a proud history of its sea before the major oil and gas discoveries.

Figure 2. A kid picked up a pearl from the sand



As in the video, in minute 0:34, two boys are playing on the coastline when they find a small white stone in the sand which turns out to be a pearl. A pearl here symbolises Qatar's background history in pearl diving. Before the great discovery of oil and gas back in the 1940s, the Gulf region was one of the poorest areas in the world, with its economy primarily based on pearl diving (Yeomans, 2016). In the 19th century, pearl diving was the driving force behind the region's wealth, which amounted to 75% of the Gulf's total exports with a large number of jewellery being sold to Europeans and royal families worldwide. Thus, Dreamer's music video tries to include a 'pearl' as a symbol of one of the country's oldest professions and a fundamental foundation of its wealth before oil discovery.

Figure 3. Men dancing on the boat



The pearl divers are also depicted in some parts of the video, where they are dressed in the *wzar* which is a cloth wrapped around the waist, whilst performing traditional dance on the dhow boats. For divers, boats were also the main transportation source long before the invention of lavish yachts and ships (Qarjouli, A. 2022). Thus, the depiction of the sea, boats, and pearls symbolises Qatar's pride in its background history of pearl diving before the discovery of oil and gas.

Raising Awareness of Climate Change

Climate change that has occurred is now becoming the world's concern, including in the countries on the Arabian Peninsula. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) stated the Arab States is the region most affected by climate change. In 2100, it is estimated that the temperature in the Arab States will reach an average increase of 5°C (Khoday, 2022). In response, Arab countries support the prevention of extreme climate change by signing the Paris Climate Agreement, which aims to prevent global temperatures from 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and plans to generate half the electricity used from renewable energy by 2030. Qatar, as the host of the World Cup 2022, also tried to contribute to raising awareness of this phenomenon by inserting this issue into the official music video of the FIFA World Cup 2022 soundtrack.

Figure 4. A man standing in front of a tree and white snow-like sprinkle



The first thing that needs to be perceived in *Dreamer's* music video is the view shot. In this scene, the view shot uses a bird's eye perspective. The bird's eye view is a way of taking pictures that are carried out overhead as if adjusting to the point of view of a bird in flight. The purpose of using this point of view is to show the helplessness of the highlighted character. In this case, a bird's eye view emphasises that the Arab people, represented by singer Fahad Al Kubaisi, cannot do anything to prevent the extreme climate change that has occurred.

This idea is supported by the existence of a tree behind the man and white splashes like snow all over the scene. A typical tree should be green, but in this part, the leaves were all white as if they were covered in snow. The white sprinkles that fall on this scene also symbolise snowfall, which means that there has been extreme climate change in Qatar. The Arabian Peninsula has been associated with arid land, a desert climate, and relatively low rainfall intensity for years. Thus, the recent snowfall in some Arab countries is possibly a sign of extreme climate change, and this occurrence is highlighted through the scene in this music video.

Figure 5. A man stands before a tree



The view shot in this scene has changed, from a bird's eye view to a medium shot. A medium shot is used to highlight the interaction between the character and the environment. This shot also allows a better view of the environment. In this scene, the tree and the man are placed in the middle of the building, but the man stands before the tree to emphasise that humans have the authority to manage the environment around them. Furthermore, this angle depicts the modern building surrounding the man and the tree as if they were trapped in it. The part indicates that the environment around has turned into buildings and more or less puts humans and nature at stake. This is because buildings and construction account for 39% of global carbon emissions (Preger, 2021). Humans keep on constructing buildings each time and it will affect nature sooner or later. Hence, this scene specifically captures the impact of mass building towards nature and humans in Arab and most likely countries all over the world if it is continued.

Figure 6. A man smiling while looking at the upper side



The scene is captured in a close-up shot, usually used to frame the character's particular emotion or symbol. In this sequence, the man is smiling while looking at the front upper side. The upper side is the place where the white snow-like flakes come from before falling to the ground. The man adores the phenomenon even though it is quite abnormal to view snowfall in Arab countries. The scene portrayed the beauty of natural phenomena though it is an unusual event. Nature can serve humans with its beauty if it is being taken care of. This scene is more likely an irony of the recent snowfall phenomenon in the Arab Peninsula. Some people might see it as something extraordinary because it is rare to see snowfall in Arab countries. However, in reality, that phenomenon is a clear sign of climate change and people should start to realise the change and take further action to prevent wider damage.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on *Dreamer's* music video by FIFA World Cup through an ecocritical approach by Cheryll Glotfelty, it can be concluded that this music video portrays the country – Qatar. The representation of whale sharks throughout the video as Qatar is home to one of the largest whale sharks' assemblages in the ocean, and has an implicit meaning in the portrayal of the country, that a large sea creature does not always scary and eat other sea creature, but rather a gentle animal that only eats small shrimp and fishes, plankton, and algae. The depiction of 'pearl' is the country's historical background on pearl diving as Qatar's main wealth before the discovery of oil and gas back in the 1940s. Meanwhile, the portrayal of a white-snow-like tree is a sign of extreme climate change in recent Arab countries.

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