

INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN TERE LIYE'S NOVEL *HUJAN*: A LITERARY ECOCRITICISM

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Abstract

This paper examines the interconnection between human and environmental degradation in Tere Liye's novel *Hujan* using the ecocritical approach proposed by Gerg Garrard. The focus of this study is how human actions affect the environment and how nature responds to these actions. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, where data is taken from novel texts and analyzed using ecocritical theory. The results of the analysis show that this novel describes various forms of pollution, habitat destruction, and the disastrous impacts caused by human exploitation. Pollution due to the use of environmentally unsustainable energy sources and policies that harm nature are the main themes. In addition, the image of wilderness as a source of balance for ecosystems and other living things is reduced because of the destruction. Ecological disasters that occur, whether natural or made by human, create conflicts between human needs and natural resource capacity. With an emphasis on the interrelationship between humans and the environment, this study aims to raise awareness about the importance of preserving the environment through a literary lens.

Keywords: *Ecocriticism, Gerg Garrad, Interconnection, Human and Environmental Degradation, Novel.*

Introduction

Ecocriticism is an English term that comes from the words of *ecology* and *criticism*. *Ecology* can be defined as the scientific study of the way plants, animals, and humans interact with each other and with their environment. While, *criticism* can be interpreted as a form and expression of understanding about the good or bad qualities of something. In simple way, *ecocriticism* is a consideration of the environment. Greg Garrard is an ecocritical figure who is well known for his work entitled *Ecocriticism*. One of Greg Garrard's concepts in ecocritical studies sees how the values expressed in literary works are in accordance with ecological wisdom, so that the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment is called *literary ecocriticism*.

Ecology is the study of how plants, animals, and humans interact with their surroundings. Criticism is how we judge something, whether positive or negative. So, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. According to (Arianto et al., 2021) literary ecocriticism aims to show how literary works show concern for the environment. Ecocriticism takes an earth-centered (environmental) approach to literary studies. More than that, ecocriticism explores ways of imagining and describing the relationship between humans and the environment in all areas of cultural stage. Ecocriticism was inspired by (also as a critical stance of) the modern environmental movement.

Literary ecocriticism is a critical theory in the current approach to literature. In the multidisciplinary ecocriticism of literature (ecology and literature), various relevant and interesting theories for literary and environmental studies must be exist, collaborate and unite. Some of these theories include critical theory, literary criticism, cultural theory, and environmental ethical theory (ecology). Literary ecocriticism is a term used to describe how literature interacts with the physical environment (Glottfelty, 1996). According to Garrard (2004), critical ecology has the ability to assist in the identification, investigation, and even resolution for broader ecological problems. Literature comes from the natural environment (ecological). Therefore, it is very reasonable that literature has the capacity to express an understanding of the environment, including the principles of environmental wisdom, because literature functions as a medium that represents people's perspectives, views and reactions to the surrounding environment. According to Kerridge (1998), ecologists want to follow ideas and environmental representations.

According to Greg Garrard (2004), ecocriticism includes the study of the ways in which we see and describe the relationship between humans and the environment in every aspect of cultural outcomes. Ecocriticism is inspired by contemporary environmental movements and also

as a critical attitude towards them. Greg Garrard traces the evolution of the movement and examines ecocritical concepts such as: 1.) pollution, 2.) wilderness, 3.) apocalypse, 4.) housing/dwelling, 5.) animals, and 6.) earth. However, research on the conflict between nature and humans using Gerg Gerrard's ecocritical theory is still limited.

Hujan, a novel by Tere Liye, combines stories of love, friendship and sacrifice in a challenging future world setting. This novel tells the story of *Lail*, a young woman, who faces trauma and loss due to a devastating natural disaster that hits the world. The story begins when the earth is shaken by a volcanic eruption that causes great destruction. *Lail*, who was still a teenager at the time, had lost his family in the tragedy. On his journey, he met *Esok*, a young man who becomes both a friend and an important figure in his life. Their relationship is close, but not free from dilemmas and sacrifices. *Lail* recalled various important moments in her life. The storyline alternates between memories of the past and present-day situations, where *Lail* must decide the big thing in her life. This novel also presents the philosophy of *hujan* (rain) as a symbol of life, purification, and hope. With Tere Liye's writing style, *Hujan* invites readers to reflect on the meaning of life, love, and happiness, as well as how humans survive the trials of life. Therefore, this research will reveal the conflict that occurs between nature and human in the novel *Hujan* by Tere Liye.

Method

This study included a descriptive qualitative study. In qualitative research, the interpreted problems cover things that are broad in nature or include perspectives on all aspects (Creswell, 2016). In this case, what will be interpreted is the novel *Hujan* by Tere Liye. According to Creswell (2016), one of the main characteristics in qualitative research is that the data is described by analyzing the text and interpreting it.

In this research, the novel *Hujan* by Tere Liye was used as the data source. The data taken for research material is in the form of text narrated in the data source. The data collection technique in this research uses literature studies, namely reading, marking and identifying data related to the problems raised. After the data is collected using markup techniques (markers), the data is then analyzed using text analysis based on Wendy B Faris' perspective (Gadamer, 2016) which are: 1.) describe the data in the novel *Hujan* by Tere liye, 2.) analyze data on six ecocritical characteristics found in the novel *Hujan*, 3.) analyze problems in the text by connecting the six previously discovered with ecocritical characteristics, and 4.) make conclusions based on the analysis results.

Results and Discussion

Gerg Garrard's ecocritical theory is an approach in literary studies that combines ecology and literature. This theory aims to understand how literary texts represent humans' relationship with nature, as well as how nature itself 'speaks' through literary texts. In other words, this theory invites us to 'read' nature through literary works and vice versa. In the novel *Hujan* by Tere Liye, the interconnection of human and environmental degradation will be analyzed through Gerg Gerrad's theory with several ecocritical concepts.

1. Interconnection between Human and Pollution in Tere Liye's Novel *Hujan*

Pollution is manifested from various activities carried out by humans which are directly in contact with nature. Pollution is created because of human greed and a sense of indifference to the nature. Even with their greed and dissatisfaction, humans make regulations that have a negative impact on nature and cause pollution. In Gerg's theory, Gerrad examines how literary texts describe environmental damage caused by human activities, such as air, water and land pollution as quoted in the text below,

Data: *Pada hari ke-60 pula, pembangkit listrik yang menggunakan sumber daya terbarukan seperti angin, air, dan cahaya matahari juga telah berpotensi penuh. Sebaliknya, kota-kota atau negara-negara yang mengandalkan tenaga nuklir, saat gempa bumi terjadi, pembangkit itu menjadi masalah mengerikan, melipatgandakan kerusakan. Reaktor nuklir meledak seperti bom atom, menyebarkan radioaktif ratusan kilometer, menciptakan zona radiasi nuklir.* (Liye, 2018: 69)

Translation: On the 60th day, power plants that use renewable resources such as wind, water and solar light also have full potential. In contrast, cities or countries that rely on nuclear power, when an earthquake occurs, the plant becomes a terrible problem, multiplying the damage. Nuclear reactors explode like atomic bombs, spreading radioactivity hundred kilometers, creating zones of nuclear radiation. (Liye, 2018: 69)

From the data above, it can be clearly seen that pollution due to nuclear power plants is a terrible problem, as in the sentence *nuclear explosions are like atomic bombs, spreading radioactivity hundred kilometers, creating zones of nuclear radiation*. Radiation pollution caused

by nuclear reactor explosions has long-term impacts and damages the environment so it can be categorized as a very dangerous form of pollution. Nuclear radiation can contaminate soil, water, and air, damaging the ecosystem as a whole.

2. Interconnection between Human and Wilderness in Tere Liye's Novel *Hujan*

The idea of a wilderness is about a landscape in a region or country that is not contaminated by any civilization. Wilderness is the most powerful natural construct available for the balance of the world's environment in the future. It also has sacred value in every inch of its territory as a mobilized construct to protect specific habitats and species.

Data: *Hutan-hutan terlihat kerontang, menyisakan pohonnya yang kelabu. Tanah persawahan retak-retak. Perkampungan yang kembali ditinggalkan, kota kota mati, terlihat di sepanjang jalur kerta.* (Liye, 2018: 294)

Translation: The forests look dry, leaving behind gray trees. Rice fields are cracked. The village is again abandoned, the city is dead, visible along the train line. (Liye, 2018: 294)

The data above reflects the consequences of human actions that damage the environment. Gerrad's theory of wilderness emphasizes that humans must learn to live in harmony with nature, not exploit it. In this novel, the damage experienced by the environment is a reflection of human indifference to the sustainability of forests and ecosystems.

3. Interconnection between Human and Apocalypse in Tere Liye's Novel *Hujan*

The disaster in this study is considered to be the end of the history of civilization. It is a picture of a damage that can no longer be stopped. Damaged nature, an unstable climate, and weather that changes frequently and cannot be predicted by human science calculations. In general, environmental crises can be divided into two: first, environmental disasters (environmental disasters), namely forms of disasters caused by human treatment that disrupt the balance of the ecosystem, and lead to long-term and global-scale damage. Included in this category are global warming problems, water and air pollution, nuclear radiation, and others. Second, natural disasters (natural disasters) are disasters caused by natural activities themselves such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis (Laily, 2017). In this theory, it examines how literary texts describe natural or man-made disasters that affect the environment and society.

Data: *Gunung purba di belahan benua lain meletus. Suara letusannya terdengar hingga 10.000 kilometer saking kerasnya, praktis penduduk radius 200 kilometer dari*

gunung itu langsung tuli seketika sebelum tahu apa yang terjadi. (Liye, 2018: 21)

Translation: Ancient mountains on other continents erupted. The sound of the eruption was heard up to 10,000 kilometers so loud, practically the residents within a 200 kilometer radius of the mountain were, immediately deaf before they knew what was happening. (Liye, 2018: 21)

The data above can be considered an ecological disaster. Another example such as extreme drought, rising air temperatures, and the loss of the rain cycle are the impacts of human actions that cause disasters. This is a classic example of the conflict between humans and nature.

4. Interconnection between Human and Dwelling in Tere Liye's Novel *Hujan*

Dwelling or residence is not a temporary state, but implies a long-term human settling place in the images of memory, descent and death, ritual, life, and work. This study discusses models of human habitation. The residence in question is not just a residence but a place to live life. Gerg Gerrad's theory shows how literary texts describe human's relationship with the place of life, which can be home, city, or surrounding natural environment.

Data: *Kota indah mereka telah hancur oleh gempa bumi berkekuatan 10 skala Richter. Sedikit sekali dalam catatan sejarah, ada gempa sekuat itu, yang tenaganya mampu menghancurkan benua. Gedung-gedung bertumbangan, jalan layang rebah, penduduk kota berteriak-teriak, berlarian menyelamatkan diri. (Liye, 2018: 30)*

Translation: Their beautiful city has been devastated by a magnitude 10 earthquake. In very few historical records, there was an earthquake as strong as that, whose power was able to destroy the continent. Buildings fell, flyovers fell, city dwellers screamed, ran for their lives. (Liye, 2018: 30)

This quote highlights the inevitable conflict between humans and nature. Humans try to build civilization on earth, but nature always has the power to destroy everything humans have built. This shows how vulnerable humans are in the face of natural forces. Humans cannot stop natural disasters, and are often victims of powerful natural forces.

5. Interconnection between Human and Animal in Tere Liye's Novel *Hujan*

The idea of animals in ecocritical studies is the study of the relationship between animals

and humans. Animals and humans must be aligned in equal rights in a unit of life without having to differentiate between the two. In this way, bad and cruel treatment of animals can be avoided. In Gerg's theory Gerrad shows how literary texts represent animals and the relationship of humans to animals.

Data: *Menatap hamparan sawah, burung-burung terbang di atas padi menguning. Sekarang, semuanya berubah.* (Liye, 2018: 135)

Translation: Staring at the expanse of rice fields, the birds flew over the yellow rice. Now, everything changes. (Liye, 2018: 135)

This data illustrates significant changes in the natural environment. The phrase *staring at the expanse of rice fields* and *the birds flew over the yellow rice* depict a harmonious and productive ecosystem. However, the phrase *now everything changes* indicates disturbance or damage to the ecosystem. These changes occur as a result of human behavior which results in a conflict between human needs for space and resources and the needs of ecosystems and other living creatures.

6. Interconnection between Human and Earth in Tere Liye's Novel *Hujan*

The earth in this study is an embodiment of life in the future. The existing of earth is described as a very fragile, small and isolated place. In line with the previous explanations, ecocriticism can also help determining, exploring and even solving ecological problems in a broader sense. In its function as a medium for representing people's attitudes, views and responses to their surroundings, literature has the potential to express ideas about the environment, including the values of environmental wisdom. This is very reasonable considering that literature grows, develops and originates from society and the natural environment.

Data: *Emisi gas menetap di stratosfer hingga puluhan tahun, mengubah iklim dunia. Kota tempat mereka tinggal suhu rata-ratanya sekarang menjadi delapan sampai sepuluh derajat Celsius.* (Liye, 2018: 69)

Translation: Gas emissions remain in the stratosphere for decades, changing the world's climate. The city where they lived the average temperature was now eight to ten degrees Celsius. (Liye, 2018: 69)

Earth is described as the place of life in the future and as a place to live for all living creatures, experiencing drastic changes due to human activities. Increasing global temperatures threaten the survival of many species and change overall environmental conditions. This quote

describes the clear conflict between humans and nature. Human activities that produce gas emissions have damaged the balance of nature and threatened human survival itself.

Conclusion

Garrard emphasized the importance of seeing literature as part of nature and not as something separate from it. This view is in line with the message conveyed by Tere Liye in his novel that human and nature are one unit that influences each other. The novel *Hujan* by Tere Liye depicts the impact of excessive natural exploitation, climate change and ecological disasters that threaten human survival. This novel invites its readers to reflect on the relationship between humans and nature, as well as the consequences of our actions on the environment. Thus, *Hujan* is not just a literary work, but also a call to an action. The novel invites us to look back on our role as inhabitants of planet Earth and encourages us to seek solutions to increasingly complex environmental problems.

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