

Forms of the Relationship Between Nature and Humans in the Short Story 'Delivering the Last Rice Seed to the Field' by Silvester Petara Hurit: An Ecocritical Study

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe the form of human relationship with nature and the form of environmental damage contained in the short story "Taking the Last Rice Seed to the Field" by Silvester Petara Hurit. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method using Greg Garrard's ecocritical approach. The data source in the research is the short story "Taking the Last Rice Seed to the Field" by Silvester Petara Hurit. The data collection technique uses reading and note-taking techniques. The results of this study are first, the relationship between nature and humans in the short story Taking the Last Rice Seed to the Field shows a reciprocal relationship between nature and humans. The relationship is shown by Ama Nara and Nara's parents through the tradition of farming, how to resolve a conflict without division, and expressions that show their love and closeness to nature.

INTRODUCTION

In literary works, it is not far from the interpretation of reality. This includes literary works that tell stories about the natural environment. Literary works are created because of an event behind the creation of a literary work itself. This is in line with Sawijiningrum's (2018) opinion, she states that literary works written by authors display an event or events. The events that occur in a literary work are of course brought to life by the presence of characters who have conversations or other interactions. Be it with humans or with the natural environment.

The emergence of a relationship between literary works and the natural environment can lead to ecological criticism in literary works. An author is present to provide subtle suggestions and criticisms through the creation of literary works so that readers of these works can realize that our earth is increasingly damaged (Paembonan, 2020).

One of the literary works that discusses the relationship between nature and humans in Silvester Petara Hurit's short story "Delivering the Last Rice Seed to the Field", the events raised in this short story illustrate human behavior towards nature, where humans destroy forests and cut down trees that have been guarded for years by the local community. Therefore, researchers found several reasons why this short story needs to be studied using Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory.

The reason why the researcher conducted this research is about the ecological problems contained in the short story "Taking the Last Rice Seed to the Field" which shows the problems of the characters contained in this short story have a close relationship with nature. The setting in this short story is the forest in East Flores. The next reason is that the ecological problems contained in this short story are not only problems regarding forest destruction, there are also problems of human ecology with the environment and the customs of one of the regions in East Flores. the next reason is that ecological problems in literary works are a form of social criticism of the world today.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between humans and non-humans, throughout human cultural history and entails a critical analysis of 'humans' themselves in relation to the environment (Garrard, 2004). According to Garrard (2004), the focus of literary ecocriticism is to explore ways of imagining and depicting the relationship between humans and the environment in every field as a cultural product.

The researcher used the short story as the object of study because the short story focuses on human dependence on nature, where this dependence forms a relationship or bond between nature and humans. So this research focuses on the relationship between nature and humans. In addition, this short story has not been studied by anyone. Therefore, this research will reveal the forms of human relationships and the natural environment in the short story.

According to KBBI, short story comes from two words namely story which means a speech about how things happen and relatively short means the story

that is told short or no more than 10,000 words that gives a dominant impression and focuses on only one character in the short story.

The term ecocriticism (in Sihotang, 2021) itself comes from a combination of two words, namely ecology and criticism. Ecology is defined as a science that studies the mutual relationship between living things and the natural conditions around them. Criticism is defined as criticism, response, assessment, good and bad of a literary work. In simple terms, the focus of literary ecocriticism can be understood as environmental literary criticism.

Glorfelty (in Niam, 2016) explains that ecocriticism is a study of the relationship between literary works and the physical environment. The two branches of science are put together to become a new discipline used to study literary works. The hope of Glorfelty's ecocriticism theory is to criticize human nature to be more concerned about the natural environment through literary works.

The goal of literary ecological criticism is to synthesize literary criticism of the environment that focuses on literary analysis. The analysis focuses on the role of the environment in literature or vice versa. This kind of criticism is classified as a transformative interpretation, because it utilizes a lot of postmodern theory, but also looks at modern literary theory.

The theory of ecological criticism presented by Greg Garrard examines the relationship between humans and the natural environment and the forms of damage to the natural environment.

The environmental damage contained in the short story "Taking the Last Rice Seed to the Field" shows that we must be more concerned and maintain the environmental conditions around us. Ecocriticism is a study that connects literary works with the environment, such as the loss of wilderness, the rapid extinction of animal and plant species, air, water and soil pollution. With ecocritical literary studies, the author hopes that readers will have an awareness to better protect the environment.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive method. According to Moleong (2013), qualitative research is research that has the intention of understanding a phenomenon about what has happened to the object of research by describing it in the form of words or sentences and language, in a special natural context and by utilizing various natural methods.

The data in this research is in the form of texts, quotations, writings that have the value of forms of human relations with the natural environment that are relevant in accordance with the research studied. The data source in this research is obtained from the entire content in the short story "Taking the Last Rice Seed to the Field" published by Kompas on April 19, 2020. Initially, the researcher reads repeatedly the short stories to be studied, then records data that reflects the relationship between nature and humans and sentences that show the destruction of nature. After that, the data that has been collected and analyzed based on their respective functions.

This research will focus on the problems that occur in the natural environment, as well as the relationship between humans and the natural environment itself using Greg Garrard's ecocritical approach. The data collection technique is done by using Library Technique, which is by reading and then recording it.

The selection of quotations in the short story is based on sentences or words that show the relationship between nature and humans and the damage done to nature by humans.

RESULTS DISCUSSION

The relationship between humans and nature is not just a one-sided interaction, but an interrelationship that shapes and determines each other. Since the beginning of their existence, humans have relied heavily on nature to fulfill basic needs such as food, shelter, water and air. However, as civilization develops, this relationship has undergone a significant shift: from harmonious dependence to exploitation that risks damaging the sustainability of the ecosystem. Nature provides all the resources that allow humans to build a life. However, when the utilization of these resources is done without limits and without regard to ecological balance, the impact is inevitable. Global warming, climate change, natural disasters and environmental crises are reflections of the unequal relationship between humans and nature.

This relationship also involves physical aspects (such as land, water and energy utilization), social aspects (environmental policy, ecological justice), to spiritual and cultural aspects (such as local beliefs in the sanctity of nature). In many traditional societies, the relationship between humans and nature is based on respect and a sense of deep connectedness. This view needs to be brought to the fore again in the modern era to create a sustainable lifestyle.

Thus, building a healthy relationship between humans and nature requires collective ecological awareness. Environmental protection is not only the duty of certain institutions, but the shared responsibility of all levels of society. Environmental education, wise resource management and community involvement in ecological policies are important steps to realize a mutually beneficial relationship between humans and nature.

Based on the results of the research conducted on the short story "Taking the Last Rice Seed to the Field" by Silvester Petara Hurit, researchers found a form of relationship between the characters in the short story and the natural and surrounding environment. In the short story, researchers also found environmental damage.

Human Relationship With Nature

The relationship between humans and nature is close and inseparable. Garrard (2004) states that ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between humans and the environment. There is a reciprocal relationship between humans and nature. Humans need nature, and nature also needs humans.

The relationship between nature and humans is one that has existed since the dawn of civilization. Humans are born, grow and develop in the embrace of

nature, making it a source of life and inspiration. Nature provides air to breathe, water to drink, land to plant, and various resources that sustain daily activities. Humans, on the other hand, have a role as custodians and maintainers of ecological balance, a responsibility that is increasingly important amidst the threat of climate change and overexploitation of nature.

The relationship between nature and humans is not a one-way relationship. Nature not only gives, but also responds to human treatment. When humans take care of nature, nature provides abundance. But when it is destroyed, natural disasters often signal that the balance has been disturbed. Therefore, building ecological awareness and environmental ethics is an important task for all levels of society.

The form of the relationship between humans and the environment is divided into two parts, namely the description of the setting and the thoughts of the characters.

a. Backdrop Painter

According to Nurgiyantoro (2002:227), the element of setting in fiction refers to the location where the events in the story take place. The place in question can be a location with a specific name, a certain abbreviation, or even an area that is not explicitly mentioned but has certain general characteristics. Places that are clearly mentioned can usually be found in the reality of life, while unnamed places tend to be presented through general descriptions such as "village", "road", "river", "city", and so on. The use of specific place names in the story should match or at least not contradict the actual geographical conditions. The effectiveness of the use of setting in fiction is greatly influenced by the clarity of the description, its function in the story, and its integration with other setting elements, resulting in a narrative harmony that supports each other.

The depiction of the setting in the short story "Taking the Last Rice Seed to the Field" is characterized by the characters' understanding of their surroundings. The beginning of the story describes how Ama Nara returns to her hometown and sees that the location that was once a forest and overgrown with banyan trees has now been cut down by the wealthy. people with money. Seen in the following quote:

"Where are the big trees?"

"They've been cut down with chainsaws, tractors, poisoned, and burned...The big trees are considered the lairs of kuntilanak dwarfs, evil spirits. A place where people worship idols and ascend to witchcraft, witchcraft and the like."

"Traditional elders?"

"They were sentenced to two months on charges of establishing a new religion."

"Farming traditions?"

"It's dead."

(Hurint 2020)

This horrific event happened when Nara was traveling. When Nara returned to her hometown, she was shocked to see the drastic changes in her

hometown. Culture and customs are fading away because of capitalism and the times. As a result of this, the relationship between nature and culture has faded. Nature no longer gets special attention because its cultural traditions are prohibited by the government. The relationship between nature and humans is gradually fading due to the entry of increasingly modern technology.

In addition to understanding the environment in the short story "Taking the Last Rice Seed to the Field", there is also the use of the environment that occurs in Nara's father's field. This is evident in the following quote.

"You must stop and not continue this activity! This land is ready to be executed to build a star hotel," said one of them in a slightly threatening tone.

"This land belongs to us. How can you tell us to stop?" my father challenged. Someone took out a piece of paper from his bag. "This land has been bought by Mr. James. This is the certificate."

"Who sold it?! Can a piece of paper transfer what has belonged to us since our ancestors from centuries ago?!"

The quote above shows that there is land utilization by the wealthy rulers. The fields used to grow crops were sold without Ama Nara's father knowing. The land is used to build a star hotel, with the construction of which many farmers will lose their jobs.

b. Character's Thoughts

Of course, in interacting with nature, characters must have thoughts about the natural environment. In this case, the main character gets knowledge about nature from his own mother. This is because in their family they really respect and protect nature like the most valuable treasure. The following quotation is found in the short story:

"When Wuno appears in the sky and Pari sinks in the middle of the sea, it is time to plant. Immediately his mother takes rice, betel nut and tobacco to the grave to ask for the ancestor's blessing."

"Prayers are recited, a few eggs are passed around, then broken. A chicken, a piglet and a goat are also sacrificed. Some must die in order for life to continue."

"A few young coconuts are shelled to cool the soil. So that the rice can grow healthy, mature, and give birth to delicious grains, it must be guarded with love and respect." (Hurint 2020)

The sacrificed animals and plants represent nature in the ritual before planting. The presence of nature in this ritual shows that nature has a very important role in every local culture. The culture and customs that are always held firmly, always teach that nature is always involved in all affairs and in traditional ceremonies. The community always believes that if anyone violates the customs, it will bring disaster in their lives. With the beliefs that have been instilled since long ago, the community always tries to pass on the traditions of their ancestors.

Based on the expressions or words spoken by the characters, the researcher tries to explain how the description of human life and the environment in the short story "Taking the Last Rice Seed to the Field". The words or expressions found in the short story are more dominant and describe Nara's life. In the short story,

Nara's family is described as a family that highly values nature. Nara's parents always teach Nara to get closer to nature and always instill traditional values.

"Rice is alive. If you are serious about it, even when it is infested with pests, it will not leave us who sweat, who sweat, who are willing to get wet in the rain to take care of it".

"Remember the land. Remember the ancestors. Also the food, the drink and everything that makes you alive," her mother advised.

(Hurint 2020)

Nara's parents' expression above shows her family's closeness to nature. Nature, symbolized by rice, is said to have life. Rice is not just an object or plant, but the Nara family views rice as something that gives life, and something special. Rice is treated like a human being. Rice is described as having feelings. Not only rice, but all plants and animals are treated equally well by Nara's parents.

Forms of Natural Damage

In general, environmental damage can be classified into two main causes, namely natural factors and human activities. However, if traced deeper, some natural disasters such as floods, coastal abrasion, forest fires, and landslides, are often triggered or exacerbated by human intervention. The second factor, human activity, contributes more significant damage than purely natural events. This is because human behavior that damages the environment tends to occur repeatedly and on an increasing scale.

Activities that harm the environment include forest destruction, land conversion, mining, and air, water and soil pollution. Among these, mining activities have complex and serious environmental impacts. Some of the impacts include decreased land fertility, increased soil density, erosion and sedimentation, the threat of landslides, disruption of flora and fauna ecosystems, and endangering the health of surrounding communities. Not only that, mining can also cause changes in the microclimate in the surrounding area.

According to Garrard (2004), humans live on this earth with all the sufficiency that nature has provided. However, humans often do things that can harm nature and humans themselves. All forms of damage to the natural environment in the short story "Taking the Last Rice Seeds to the Field" are clearly depicted. The characters' actions towards the natural environment in this short story are depicted by damaging the environment. Such as cutting down trees, hunting, and clearing land. This can be seen in the following quote.

"Where are the big trees?"

"They've been cut down with chainsaws, tractors, poisoned, and burned...The big trees are considered the lairs of kuntilanak dwarfs, evil spirits. A place where people worship idols and ascend to witchcraft, witchcraft and the like."

"Traditional elders?"

"They were sentenced to two months on charges of establishing a new religion."

"Farming traditions?"

"It's dead."

(Hurint 2020)

This horrific event happened when Nara was traveling. When Nara returned to her hometown, she was shocked to see the drastic changes that had occurred in her hometown. All the banyan trees that were used by the people for shelter during hot weather were cut down, because they were considered as idolatry and creating a new religion. In addition, culture and customs are fading due to capitalism and the times. As a result of this, the relationship between nature and culture is fading. Nature no longer gets special attention because its cultural traditions are prohibited by the government. The relationship between nature and humans is gradually fading due to the entry of increasingly modern technology. The description of the destruction of nature does not only stop at cutting down trees and destroying forests. However, the people in this short story are also prohibited from continuing the farming tradition that has become their livelihood.

The short story "Taking the Last Rice Seeds to the Field" is a form of the author's support for the preservation of nature. This partiality is evident in the author's treatment of nature. In this short story, the author conveys that nature has a loyalty that cannot be measured by anything. However, this loyalty will be lost if humans betray it. This human betrayal is clearly illustrated in the short story, where there are arrests of customary elders, felling of trees, and a ban on farming.

In addition to destroying the forest, cutting down trees, the people in this short story also received violence regarding the seizure of land that has been passed down by their ancestors for generations. Here is the excerpt.

"You must stop and not continue this activity! This land is ready to be executed to build a star hotel," said one of them in a slightly threatening tone."

(Silvester Petara Hurit, April 19, 2020)

In the quote above, it can be seen that local farmers are prohibited from continuing their activities as farmers because the land has been seized and belongs to investors without the knowledge of the local community.

Based on the excerpt that has been presented, we can find out how humans damage the environment. Therefore, we can help protect humans from greed and save the natural environment so that it remains sustainable. The quote is presented so that humans have the awareness to always maintain their relationship with nature. Based on the quote above, it proves the lack of positive relationships carried out by humans in the short story "Delivering the Last Rice Seeds to the Field" by Silvester Petara Hurit.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of research that has been conducted by researchers on the short story *Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang* by Silvester Petara Hurit, it can be concluded that the relationship between humans and the natural environment in the short story shows a close relationship between humans and the natural environment, especially forests in East Flores, NTT.

In addition to the relationship between nature and humans, there are also forms of environmental damage found in the short story *Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang* by Silvester Petara Hurit, such as the destruction of forests by cutting down trees for personal gain, the seizure of land belonging to local

communities to build multi-storey buildings, forest burning, and oppression of farmers.

FURTHER STUDY

Suggestions for further research to deepen the phenomenon of food crisis. Why Indonesia as a country rich in natural resources can actually lack food sources. Further research is expected to provide input for the government and society to better synergize in managing nature for all Indonesian people.

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