



# CIREBON INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS (CICEE)

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## POTRAIT OF ENVIRINMENTAL DAMAGE IN THE NOVEL *ISINGA ROMAN PAPUA* BY DOROTHEA ROSA HERLIANY: AN ECORITICAL STUDY

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### Abstract

This article discusses the portrait of environmental damage that occurred in the interior forest areas of Papua in the Novel *Isinga Roman Papua* by Dorothea Rosa Herliany. This research uses a descriptive analysis method using literary ecocriticism theory and a discourse approach. To be able to understand the portrait of environmental damage that occurred in *Isinga*, this research uses the ecocritical theory put forward by Greg Garrard. The research results indicate that the novel can describe environmental damage in the form of pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals and earth. Based on the six indicators of environmental damage contained in the novel, it can be concluded that *Isinga* tries to show the environmental damage that occurs in the novel in the form of its causes and impacts through events involving the characters.

**Keywords:** Isinga, ecocriticism, environmental damage

### INTRODUCTION

Literary works are the result of a combination of social realities that occur in society and the author's creativity. Wellek and Warren (1994) argue that literature is often associated with certain situations, or with political, economic and social systems. Literary works are a form of author's expression in responding to situations that are considered important to be turned into a story. Issues related to the environment are one of the sources of inspiration for their expression. Several Indonesian writers have raised environmental issues in their works as a form of their concern for the environment. This indicates that the environment has a great influence on the literary works they produce.

The rise of literary works that raise environmental issues has attracted the interest of several researchers to study them using literary ecocritical studies. Pamungkas, et al. (2022) conducted a literature review in research entitled Environmental Representation in Indonesian Literature: A Literature Review. Bibliometric analysis using the Vosviewer and Publish or Perish applications sourced from the Google Scholar database, shows that literary ecocritical research in Indonesia has only developed in at least the last five years. In terms

of quantity, the amount of research is increasing and shows better development by involving other science from various fields for analytical purposes. The results of this research are certainly important information to see the extent of the efforts of authors and researchers of literary texts in their participation in addressing current environmental problems.

Sastrapratedja (1982) stated that ecological problems cannot be separated from the problem of humans acting or acting, because this involves choosing values or ethical issues. Environmental problems cannot be limited to the area of science alone, because this involves a larger moral, ethical and humanitarian responsibility. Moral choices and character formation are an inseparable part of the phenomenon of language and literature. Therefore, research on the extent to which environmental problems are addressed by literary studies, namely ecocriticism, is very important.

One novel that discusses environmental damage is *Isinga Roman Papua* by Dorothea Rosa Herliany, published in 2015 by Gramedia Pustaka Utama. Through this novel, the author won the 2015 Kusala Sastra Khatulistiwa award in the prose category. The contents of the novel talk about the life of inland tribes in Papua. At the beginning of the novel, it is told that the nature of Papua and all its inhabitants are in a state of harmony. The way humans interact with the environment and other living creatures such as animals and plants in living their daily lives is an interesting part of this novel. The environmental damage faced by the Papuan people is the result of excessive exploitation of natural resources. Many immigrants from outside Papua come to settle with the aim of cutting down agarwood trees because they have high economic value. Seeing the increasingly deteriorating condition of their forests, the Papuan people are taking various steps to ensure their environment remains sustainable.

Literary works are a vehicle that can be used as a medium for moral learning. This is related to the moral function of literary works, namely providing knowledge to readers about good or bad things in a unique and entertaining way so that it does not seem patronizing. Environmental damage in the novel *Isinga Roman Papua* is described as a serious problem and requires handling involving various parties. Therefore, this article discusses a portrait of environmental damage that occurs and is experienced by people in the interior of Papua in the form of its causes and consequences.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method. As stated by Ratna (2007: 46-53), qualitative methods place more emphasis on the aspect of understanding in depth the problem in order to get a more detailed picture of the object being studied. Apart from that, the author uses a descriptive analytical method by describing the facts then followed by analysis (Ratna, 2007: 53). The data source in the research is discourse in the form of a novel. The discourse approach in research is focused on narratives in the form of quotations in the novel *Isinga Roman Papua* by Dorothea Rosa Herliany in the form of a series of sentences related to environmental damage. The study used to analyze the novel is the theory of literary ecocriticism proposed by Greg Garrard (2004).

Ecocriticism comes from the English word ecocriticism which comes from the words ecology and criticism. Ecology can be defined as the scientific study of the relationship patterns of plants, animals and humans to each other and to their environments. Criticism can be interpreted as a form and expression of judgment about the good and bad qualities of something. In simple terms, literary ecocriticism can be understood as literary criticism with an environmental perspective.

Talking about literary ecocriticism, it cannot be separated from figures named Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm as its pioneers. Glotfelty (1996, xx) argues that ecocriticism must reveal all relationships that may arise between literary works and their physical environment. He also believes that the theory of literary ecocriticism is an approach whose focus is on the earth and the surrounding environment. The basic value of literary ecocritic theory is the fact that humans have a close bond with the environment around them. Both humans and nature both influence each other and are dependent on each other. Literary ecocritic theory also emphasizes the interconnectivity between nature and culture which also includes language and literature. (Glotfelty, 1996: xvii-xix)

Garrard (2004) states that literary works are essentially an author's response to situations in the society around him. The word "surroundings" refers to the environmental context. Literary works are a reflection of the environment of life in society which is observed by the author and adds the author's response and imagination to life. Portraits of environmental damage in literary works can be traced based on the principles of ecocriticism put forward by Garrard (2004). This ecocritical principle includes pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals and earth.

The aim of this research is to explain the portrait of environmental damage in the novel *Isinga Roman Papua* by Dorothea Rosa Herliany. The first thing the author did in this research was read the novel *Isinga* carefully to find out its structure so as to get a big picture of the contents of the novel. Next, the author collected the research data needed for analysis. Research data in the form of discourse related to environmental damage was studied based on the principles of literary ecocriticism put forward by Greg Garrard.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Environmental damage can generally be interpreted as a condition caused by actions that cause direct or indirect changes to physical properties that can cause the environment to no longer function (Soemarwoto, 2014: 4-6). One of the biggest causes of environmental damage is human activity. Humans view the environment as a natural resource that is worthy of being exploited as much as possible for its own interests. If this activity is carried out continuously it will cause environmental damage.

Pollution is a principle of ecocriticism which refers to the negative impacts resulting from human activities on the environment. This pollution can come from industrial waste, air and water pollution, and the use of dangerous chemicals. Environmental problems in the form of pollution can be found in *Isinga* when the arrival of agarwood seekers makes conditions in Hobone increasingly uncondusive for local residents.

Over time, more and more people are looking for gaharu. Then they built a rather strong house in the forest. There they stayed overnight and also used it as a place to collect their produce. (Herliany, 2015: 147)

The quote above provides an overview of the influence of human activities on the environment. Economic factors have become an attraction, especially for immigrants from outside Papua. The presence of agarwood seekers in Papua has led to efforts to exploit natural resources. They just built their house in the forest where there is still customary land rights that must be respected. Large-scale tree felling activities (illegal logging) and conversion of land into residential areas can cause pollution or contamination of the land

due to the increasing amount of organic and household waste due to the increasing human population. Overcoming the negative impacts of land pollution requires sustainable efforts. One of them, the government must be more active and care about environmental conditions by providing good education to the public regarding the importance of preserving the environment. Apart from that, the government must be more able to implement laws strictly so that no more individuals exploit the environment solely for personal or certain group interests.

Wilderness is an ecocritical principle that highlights the importance of wilderness as an integral part of the ecosystem. A discussion of this can include the importance of wilderness and show how the decline and destruction of forests can affect human life as a whole. As time goes by, the condition of forests in Papua is getting worse. The existence of abundant natural resources in Papua's forests means that more and more people from outside the island are coming. One of the items that is being sought after is the agarwood tree which has high selling value and has many properties for curing several diseases.

Agarwood. Many people from outside the island come to Papua looking for gaharu. Among other things, they also came to the "city" of Yar District. People around the Hobone area don't know that in their area there are trees that are expensive. Agarwood trees are generally tall and straight. All parts of the tree can be used. Agarwood resin, agarwood sapwood, agarwood kemedangan, and agarwood ash or powder. (Herliany, 2015: 145)

The quote above describes the Hobone area which is increasingly busy due to the arrival of people looking for gaharu, a tree that is very expensive and has many benefits. The practice of excessive exploitation of gaharu can result in a decline in the gaharu tree population in the area. Apart from that, searching for gaharu can also damage local forests and ecosystems. In utilizing natural resources, it is very important to consider aspects such as ecosystem sustainability, conservation, and local community participation in environmental management and maintenance. This is where the need for government policies to protect natural resources in Papua without ignoring the cultural rights of Papuans which must be respected.

Disaster (apocalypse) is an ecocritical principle that describes the threat of destruction of ecosystems and human life as a result of environmental damage. In Isinga, famine can occur at any time due to seasonal factors. Famines usually occur in the dry season. This resulted in food supplies running low and even running out so that many people from the Aitubu and Hobone tribes died of starvation.

At that time, there was a famine. Many people died. The arrival of a doctor really helped the residents. Mr. Meage was the first person to immediately help build a simple house for them when they just arrived. Then several other men in the village helped. (Herliany, 2015: 12)

The quote above shows that abundant natural resource wealth is not a guarantee for Papuans to be able to meet their basic daily needs, including food. There are factors beyond human control that cannot be controlled, such as changing seasons which are increasingly difficult to predict as a result of increasing earth temperature or global warming. Therefore, Papuan people need skills in managing forests, gardening and also raising livestock so that food reserves are always available.

Dwelling is an ecocritical principle that demands recognition of residence as a space inhabited by humans and other organisms. This section explores how place is linked to individual and community identity and the impacts that alteration or destruction of residences have. Rapoport (1990) stated that residence is closely related to the setting or pattern of human behavior and the prevailing social environment. There are six factors that influence the form or model of settlement, namely material factors, construction methods, technological factors, climate factors, land selection, and socio-cultural factors.

Yowi's house is the core, that is the center of Aitubu community activities. The worlds of men and women are clearly separated. Men play an important and determining role in society. Together they do several things, such as planning the construction of a new house, clearing fields or gardens, holding traditional parties or ceremonies, developing strategies against enemies, and organizing peace. (Herliany, 2015: 29).

This quote explains about the yowi house which is specifically intended for men. The house in the quote above is not just a place to take shelter. Socio-cultural factors are one of the considerations in making it. For the Papuan people, the house can function as a differentiator of status and roles between men and women in environmental management and other important matters. The separation of roles between men and women in society shows a stereotypical division of tasks and responsibilities based on gender. Apart from that, the text quote represents the patriarchal society in Papua, where men have an important and dominant role in society. Important activities such as development, agriculture, and war strategy are determined by men. By placing men at the center of activities and decision makers, this shows the dominance of masculinity and minimizes the role and interests of women in Papuan society.

Apart from socio-cultural factors, building a Yowi house also takes into account material factors, construction methods, technological factors, climate factors and land selection. Yowi houses are built in mutual cooperation using simple technology passed down from generation to generation which is taught to boys. The plan of Yowi's house is circular with a diameter of around 4-6 meters. The roof construction of the house is cone-shaped, there is no ventilation, and there is only one door with a size relatively lower than the height of the occupants. Papuan traditional houses are generally very environmentally friendly. The materials used are taken directly from nature and processed using simple technology, giving a calming traditional impression.

Living conditions in Papua are changing due to the unstoppable flow of globalization. This of course cannot be separated from the influence of immigrants from other islands. The following quote in the novel shows this.

Full moon after full moon has appeared hundreds of times. The signs of time keep changing. Hobone is often visited by people from outside. There have been several changes in the village. They were dressed. No longer wearing traditional clothes. But other conditions remain unchanged. More people are able to speak Indonesian. Some houses remain simple, made of wood. However, the shape is no longer round and narrow. Now bigger and roomier. But inside it remains ordinary. There was nothing except a stove for cooking and a mat for sleeping. There are also houses that are more modern. Inside there are simple chairs and tables. Families have also become one. There is no separation of residence between men and women. (Herliany, 2015: 130)

The quote above explains the flow of globalization that is starting to enter the interior of Papua. Globalization is a socio-cultural phenomenon that sooner or later can change people's lifestyles in various aspects of life. Based on the quote above, Hobone village experienced changes in several aspects of life such as the way they dress and the houses where they live. Changes in the way they dress and where they live have of course shifted their original cultural values which will have an impact on their way of life. Local culture that has been maintained for hundreds of years is under threat. The influx of migrants will change the face of Papua's forests because there will be a lot of land needed for settlement. This means that many trees will be cut down, which has the potential to cause natural disasters.

Animals is an ecocritical principle that considers animals as creatures that have intrinsic value and values them as part of the ecological community. Papua Island is known as a storehouse of exotic animal wealth in Indonesia. In the novel *Isinga*, we can see this in the following quotes.

In Hobone there are tree kangaroos and ground kangaroos. The ground kangaroo is a type of small kangaroo in the world. They weigh between 3 and 6 kilograms. There are also 10 kilograms. The body length is about 90 centimeters with a width of about 50 centimeters. There are several types of tree kangaroos. The ornamental tree kangaroo is the most numerous type of tree kangaroo. The body's skin is brown and is found in many rainforests on the island of Papua. (Herliany, 2015: 58-59)

The bird of paradise is a beautiful bird that is considered legless. Because they will not go down to the ground. Just in the air because the feathers are beautiful. Because of this, this bird is known as the bird of heaven or the bird of heaven. The feathers are nice. (Herliany, 2015: 82)

The novel quote above describes the diversity of animals found in Papua, such as kangaroos and birds of paradise. Both animals are categorized as endemic animals, namely animals that only live in certain areas such as islands, countries or ecological zones. The Papuan people have a philosophical view that the kangaroo is a small and agile animal, so it symbolizes ingenuity and agility, while the bird of paradise is considered a bird of paradise or a bird of heaven because of the beauty of its feathers. Papuan people consider the bird of paradise as a symbol of beauty and beauty.

The diversity of rare animals in Papua is an environmental treasure that must be protected and preserved. This effort has been made by the government by issuing Law no. 5 of 1990 concerning the conservation of biological natural resources and their ecosystems. However, in reality, poaching of rare animals still often occurs. Apart from that, excessive logging of gaharu poses a threat to the number of bird populations which will continue to decline due to loss of their natural habitat. There needs to be more massive outreach from the government to the public regarding the regulations that have been made. Apart from that, it is hoped that the implementation of severe penalties for perpetrators will have a big impact on the preservation of animals in Indonesia.

Earth is an ecocritical principle that emphasizes the importance of being aware of and respecting our own planet. A form of respect for the earth can be realized by caring for and utilizing natural resources appropriately according to needs. Exploitation activities of natural resources carried out by migrants can damage Papua's natural environment. The practice of felling trees and large-scale land clearing can have a negative impact on ecosystem life and biodiversity in Papua. This actually shows humans' arrogance and disrespect for the earth.

Since there were people looking for gaharu, Yar District has become busy. Agarwood seekers usually look for gaharu in inland forests. At first only a few people entered the forest and only for a short time. Sometimes without success. Then they entered even further inland. Natural conditions that are difficult to reach make it impossible for them to return without success. A lot of energy and time has been wasted. (Herliany, 2015: 146)

The text excerpt shows the negative impact of the control of Papua's natural resources by immigrants. Local communities can lose access to natural resources that are traditionally used for daily life. Apart from that, the presence of immigrants can bring significant social and cultural changes to local communities. This can cause cultural conflicts, division of community groups, and neglect of traditional ways of life. Therefore, it is important for the government and large companies that control natural resources in Papua to ensure fair cooperation with local communities, protect their rights, and maintain environmental sustainability in Papua.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it can be seen that environmental damage in Papua in the novel *Isinga Roman Papua* is caused by human behavior or the characters in it. Environmental damage is described as the impact of exploitation by migrants of agarwood trees in Papua's forests. This causes various disasters such as famine, land pollution, declining populations of rare animals, and increasing earth temperatures (global warming). Apart from that, the impact of globalization and land control by immigrants has eroded the original cultural values of some residents in Papua, especially in terms of clothing and housing. Thus, environmental damage not only has an ecological impact, but also has an impact on shifting cultural values and the social life of the people in Papua.

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