

The Quality of Human and Non-Human Relation in Indonesia and England Portrayed in the Selected Picture Books

Syahruni Junaid¹, Ahmad¹, Nurhidayah¹, Aan Mujizat¹, Citra Andini²

¹English and Literature Department, Adab and Humanities Faculty, Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar, Indonesia

² English Language Studies Departement, Kultural Sciences Faculty, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia

*Correspondence: syahruni.junaid@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

*This study aims 1) to reveal the similarity of *The Tooth Fairies and Cleaning Factory* and *Kemana Tomat Pergi* literary works in ecocritical theory and 2) to reveal how useful the selected picture book in building children's awareness of the natural environment. This study was talking about the identification of human or non human-nature relationship and awareness building as reflected in the picture books from Indonesia *Kemana Tomat Pergi* and from England *The Tooth Fairies and Cleaning Factory*. This study used a descriptive qualitative method with ecocritical theory, particularly Cheryll Glotfelty's theory and Keraf's supporting theory, to examine how humans and nature relationship are depicted in the two picture books, moreover, the awareness building. The findings of this research indicate that there were two types of relationships between human and nature, consist of good and bad relations. The Indonesian picture book focused on the relationship between Kirin and her tomatoes, while the England picture book focused on the relationship between the little tooth fairy (non-human) and Junior (human) and how humans itself treat nature. Researcher also found from Indonesian picture books that human began to have the awareness after facing struggle in maintaining the balance of nature. meanwhile, the England picture book showed the causes of enormous damage happened in nature. In conclusion, the researcher found that picture books from Indonesia and from England are picture books that are useful in building children's awareness of the natural environment which is important for life today.*

ARTICLE HISTORY

Published June 1st 2023



KEYWORDS

Children's literature; ecocriticism; human-nature relationship.

ARTICLE LICENCE

© 2023 Universitas Hasanuddin
Under the license CC BY-SA
4.0



1. Introduction

There are many human activities that in its practice cannot be separated from nature. From these activities, there is always a reciprocal relationship between human and nature, or vice versa. However, in reality, the reciprocity exists not always in a good impact (Takuechi, 2010; Rahman, 2018). Many cases prove that there were also reciprocity produce a bad impact. Therefore, human as creatures equipped with reason must have appreciation and respect toward nature (Rahman & Amir, 2019). Such as attitude is based on human awareness being part of nature, and that human awareness is a component of nature (Keraf, 2010, p. 167).

Discussing the relationship between humans and nature is part of the discussion of ecological theory which, when associated with literary criticism, is called ecocriticism (Nahdhiyah et al., 2023). Ecocriticism is mostly defined as the study of the interaction or relationship between literature and the environment (Barry, 2020). Usually, it could be seen from the perspective of the involvement and it is the commitment and principle to prevent the destruction of nature by a human (Glotfelty & Froom, 1996).

In the literary works, the relationship between both human and nature can be found in the picture book of children. Has a function to increase the power of imagination and sense ability as well as teach children the importance of people-oriented and environment (Huck, 1993), picture book is a suitable tool for children to build awareness since the very young age.

From the explanation above, this research was discussing the relationship between human-nature, likewise, the building awareness in both Indonesia and English picture book. The picture book from Indonesia entitled *Kemana Tomat Pergi* by Naidi Atika Zundoro which was talking about a young girl, Kirin, who procrastinated in watering the tomatoes.

Consequently, the tomatoes have poor nutrition and leave Kirin's garden. Meanwhile, the England picture book *Tooth Fairies and Cleaning Factory* by Zani Mathoo was illustrating the life of a little forest fairy who lives in the deep forest called Ordon garden that worked as a tooth fairy and has interaction to the people who lives in the city.

A picture book is a result of work from the partnership between an author and the illustrator (Lukens, 2003, p. 40). The author and illustrator work together to create a great story. Illustrator adds text information about the characters, plot, or setting in the illustration which are very important in building the story as well as to provides understanding. The illustration presents the meaning of verbal and textual and shapes integration to generate balance in producing a good story (Junaid, 2014, p. 25). From the information convey through verbal and textual, it encourages the pleasure of the children when reading the picture book.

Related to this study, there are some previous study discussed the same topic in different purposes. First, *Analysis of Ecocriticism Nature and Culture in the Novel the Trilogy Maze Runner* by James Dashner (2017) by Tahier. He found the lack of a human attitude towards nature seen from their exploration of nature and the interconnection between nature and culture based on the examination of a meeting that is not right between the desert and the city which leads to the absence of the boundary between the two concepts are interconnected, and how the totalitarian implement the attitude of does not appreciate the nature with the abuse of technological progress.

Another study is from Buanadewi (2013) *Sustainable Development in the "a Song of the Rolling Earth"* the work of Walt Whitman: a Study of Ecocriticism. She found that human race and technology will always evolve. People could not return to the era of hunter-gatherers. The society can do for a better environment to minimize the negative impact of industrialization and invigorate how to preserve the biotic community with more consideration and understanding of nature through sustainable development.

In discussing the relationship between human-nature, likewise, the building awareness in both Indonesia and English picture book, the indication of good and bad relationship would be determine by the theory from Keraf in the points bellow:

A. Good relationship

1) Respect for nature

Respecting nature views that humans have a moral obligation to respect nature. Such an attitude is base on the awareness that humans are part of nature and because nature has value in itself (Keraf, 2010, p. 167). If nature is damaged, humans will also find difficulty to survive. Then, it can be said that nature is a unity that must be discussed. Examples of respecting nature include how we relate well to nature and help plants to live, grow, and develop naturally, the awarness that nature has its own value and the awareness that nature has the right to.

2) Moral responsible for nature

The second aspect of Keraf (2010) is a moral responsibility for nature. It is about how humans and nature show a kind of responsibility to each other in the picture book *Kemana Tomat Pergi*. Kirin also contributes to the soil-spraying process through her moral obligation. Kirin is fully aware that maintaining the ecosystem's natural balance requires ongoing activity, and Kirin must keep up this commitment. This picture also category of moral responsible for nature because in whole of picture depicted Kirin's activity respect for nature and also responsible for nature.

3) Caring for nature

This aspect is the third point of Keraf (2010). It's about how humans and nature are shown by caring and affection for each other in the story. After reading the picture book, the researcher found two pictures that include this aspect. To keep a good relationship with the environment, it is essential to respect all types of life on earth. This attitude makes humans think that there are many more living beings on earth that deserve kindness. They will become known to others, and they will start to respect them as a part of life. This is proven when Kirin finally realizes that nature and humans need to be protected and take care of each other.

4) Solidarity with nature

This aspect is the fourth point of Keraf (2010). Solidarity toward nature builds a sense of togetherness, sympathy, a sense of unity, and a sense of equality between humans and nature. About how humans and nature show good solidarity with each other in the story. After reading the picture book, the researcher found one picture that belongs to this aspect. The attitude of solidarity towards nature is marked by the recognition of an equal position between nature

and other living creatures on earth, the attitude of sharing what nature feels, and efforts to maintain harmonious relations between nature and humans. This attitude will foster a sense of solidarity with nature who feels equal to nature and other living creatures, this will make humans try in every way possible to save nature and other living creatures.

5) The principle of simple living side with nature

This aspect is the fifth point of Keraf (2010). Can be seen in how humans live side with nature. In the picture book from Indonesia "Kemana Tomat Pergi". Because Kirin is environmentally conscious and makes good use of nature, the choice and selection of materials for its garden cottages are excellent.

B. Bad Relationship

1) Ignoring nature

The bad relationship between humans and nature is shown in their ignorance of a species' existence. Human assume that one species is not particularly significant to life. Because of this, they ignore existence. They are unaware that each species plays a specific role in maintaining the ecosystem's whole community.

2) Money oriented principles

Since the industry sector to develop around the world, many people who only view the nature as a resource to meet their financial started to take advantage in an execive amount. The industry exhibits the money centered principle. They look for new approaches to make the growth simpler for them which are commonly know as technology without considering the effect happen in the environment around. Moreover, money oriented principle encourages the deforestation for land expansion and urban industry, as well as the use of vehicles that are not environmentally friendly.

3) Nature exploitation

When people rely on nature to meet all of their needs without practicing nature conversation, it is clear that such action is an act of nature exploitation. In modern life, humans tend to be consumptive and greedy. Some human overuse nature when they cannot recognize themselves as an essential component of it.

2. Methodology

The descriptive qualitative method was used in this research. A qualitative technique is descriptive, This research used a qualitative descriptive method. Aminudin (2006, p. 16) states that qualitative methods are always descriptive, meaning that the data analyzed is in the form of a description of the phenomenon, not in the form of numbers or coefficients about variables. The qualitative descriptive method serves to view and describe the data contained in the illustrated book that is analyzed. This method aims to describe everything related to ecocriticism in relation to the picture book chosen from Indonesia and England.

In this literary work, picture books show character interactions that represent a real-life social environment. Since picture books are the subject of the study, theories of narrative components both spoken and written texts are necessary to examine the theme of the narrative. The narrative is a plot or story that narrates the beginning, mid, and end of the story using chronological occurrences. 'Plot, characters, theme, and setting' are a story's four main components (Wellek & Warren, 1995).

3. Result and Discussion

After conducting the research, the researcher found data which can be examined from the two picture books regarding ecocriticism based on Glotfelty's theory. The two relationships between human and nature, the good and bad, in the story have fulfilled Keraf's theory. The good relations are respecting nature, solidarity with nature, existence of moral responsible to the nature, and the last one is the principle of simple living side with nature. Additionally, the indicators of bad relations between humans and nature are neglecting nature, Money-oriented principles, and exploiting nature without protection against it.

A. Indonesian Picture book Kemana Tomat Pergi

1) Good relationship

Good relationship

Data 1 (Page 16) la tak lagi suka menunda-nunda

She did not like to procrastinate anymore

From the data above, it was shown that Kirin, the girl as the main Character, has a bad habit by not watering her tomatos until the tomatos hide in the whole and some were getting sick. After realized it, Kirin began to show a change by diligently watering the tomatos as an act of respecting the life of the tomatos she had planted. It is important to respect all component of the earth in order to maintain a balance relationship with the environment. Human are lead to believe that other living things deserve kindness based on people attitude.

Moral responsible for nature

Data 2 (Page 16) Ia tak lagi suka menunda-nunda

She did not like to procrastinate anymore

Still in the same data, it was also implicitly showing the contribution of Kirin for the fertility of the soil by watering it as her moral obligation. Aware that maintaining the ecosystem's natural balance requires consistency, Kirin tried to be consistent watering the plant everyday.

Caring toward nature

Data 3 (Page 12) Kirin menanam biji-biji tomat dan merawat mereka

Kirin grows tomato seeds and takes care of them

One form of caring for nature is to utilize it. One form of utilization is by planting plants. that's what Kirin did. Utilizing land that previously only overgrown with grass to then planting tomatoes. not only benefiting nature, by planting vegetables and caring for them properly, humans will be given reciprocal benefits with fresh tomatoes.

Solidarity with nature

Data 4 (Page 9) "aku janji tak akan lagi menunda-nunda maaf, ya!" kata Kirin

"I promise i won't procrastinate anymore. Sorry!" Kirin said

The phrase of I won't procrastinate anymore in the data above lead to the habit of Kirin who were usually procrastinate watering her tomatos until it was getting sick. After she felt guilty, she decided not to procrastinate in watering the tomatos anymore. Kirin attitude shows that she also felt what the tomato felt. Sharing what plant or other living being feel is an attitude of solidarity to also let the plant keep alive. It is also encourage human to save other living being to far from extinction, moreover, to have courage in making decision against any action that can possibly damage the environment.

2) Bad Relationship

Ignoring nature

Data 5 (page 4) Kirin selalu menyiram sayur-sayurannya, kecuali tomat. Setiap kali akan menyirami tomat, ia selalu menundanya. 'besok saja ah', pikirnya selalu

Kirin always watering her vegetables, except for the tomatoes. Everytime she was going to watering the tomatoes, she always put it off. 'let me do it tomorrow' said Kirin always in her mind.

The data above shows how kirin ignoring the specific plant, in this case is tomato. She has various vegetables but he has treated tomatoes differently by delaying watering them. This bad relationship generally based on an assumption that one species is not particularly significant. People unaware that each species plays a aspecific role in maintaing the ecosystems of the whole community.

B. England Picture Book The Tooth Fairies and Cleaning Factory

1) Good relationship

Respecting nature

Data 1 (Page 4) Deep in a new forest where no big people ever went there was

a tiny little magical village called the Ordon Gardens. Here, three little tooth fairies named Incisor, Canine, and Molar were busy at work in their factory. The three tooth fairies were all named after types of teeth.

In the data above, implicitly can be understood how the non human, the tooth fairies, respecting nature by maintaining all the colorful flowers and plants to keep growing fertile around their house. It is proven that they can coexist with nature without causing any damage.

Caring toward nature

Data 2 (Page 17-18)

In the morning, as soon as Junior woke up, he rummaged under the pillow to see if the tooth fairy had left any money for him. He was thrilled to find the coins but looked blankly at the card he found in his hand. Mummy didn't mention anything about a card... he wondered.

He read the card out aloud... the tooth fairy's guide to healthy teeth...

Based on the data, the attitude of the tooth fairy (non human) to Junior (human) showed the manifestation of a caring attitude toward all types of creatures on earth. A good relationship with nature depend on having sympathy for all living species. People are led to believe that there are several other living things on the planet that need to be treated kindly by this attitude. Not only care to the fellow creatures, even non-human how to treat other creatures nicely.

2) Bad relationship

Nature exploitation

Data 3 (Page 11)

It was such a treat to leave the forest and see the city skyline but it was dangerous place for fairies. Canine had to make sure that the big people never saw her.

Even though the forest where the fairies live was in a good condition, but far from it, in the city, there was a condition that has possibility to cause big damage on earth. People in the city based on the picture book was describe as people who adopt modern life. People begun to use nature excessively such as cutting down the trees to open new land for housing, factories, roads and other facilities. Without good consideration, this can be categorized in a bad relationship. Nature exploitation especially to land exploitation is possibly resulting in flood, landslide, animal or plant extension.

Human relationship with nature is described as a complex relationship which lead to an understanding that human always depends on nature. On the other hand, the fact that humans also destroy nature is an important thing to be realized. The Indonesian picture book *Kemana Tomat Pergi* and England Picture book *The Tooth Fairies and Cleaning Factory* are two suitable children's literature that provide a good understanding related to the role of human plays on nature.

The good relationship between humans and nature can be seen in *Kemana Tomat Pergi* Kirin's story. It illustrated the close relationship between Kirin as a diligent and hardworking child that has high concerned about the nature around her. The human relationship with nature was mostly described in good relationship. It can be gotten in how Kirin decided to make garden house and was dilligently watering her tomatoes which reflects her respect for nature, so that they can live and grow healthily. By watering the tomatoes, it also helps the soil fertility which also functions to maintain the balance of the ecosystem. Kirin also takes care of sick tomatoes to maintain the viability of the tomatoes until until the harvest time arrived. Nevertheless, before showing those good relationships, Kirin at the first time has a bad relationship. She ignores watering tomatoes. As the result, the tomatoes hide in holes due to the sick and malnutrition caused by Kirin's negligence in taking care of them.

Otherwhile, the good and bad relations between human with nature can also be seen in *The Tooth Fairies and Cleaning Factory*. The relationship is represented by the little tooth fairies who was described as a kind, hardworking and caring fairy who lives peacefully side by side with the other fairy in a forest called Ordon Garden. He shows the good relation by being very protective and not to destroy nature as the form of nature respect. He did not try to kill the flowers

to grow around his homes but allow it. apart from it, as a non human creature the attitude of the tooth fairy in treating nature is also by taking care of all living creatures on earth as well as the human. The fairy was taking care of the dental health of a children named Junior and other children. In this story, the bad relationship was firstly appeared after humans were starting to realize that nature has an economic value as a source to earn money. It motivated by the modern lifestyles. Humans started to exploit by clearing land for industry, and building high-rise luxurious buildings.

However, the picture books from Indonesia were more inclined to good relations between humans and nature than the bad relationships. This can be seen from the dominant good relationship rather than the bad as what has mentioned in the previous paragraph. It has been widely known that Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia. It consists of thousands islands and is also called as an archipelago because of its richness in natural resources. In addition, Indonesia is also known as an agrarian country, where most of the population lives as farmers supported by the fertile soil for planting various kinds of food crops and other plants that grow in certain climates. Subsequently, the closeness relation to nature makes Indonesian people try as much as possible to avoid serious risks to nature.

Basically, the picture books from England also more inclined towards good relations between tooth fairies (non-human) to Junior (human) and between the tooth fairies to the nature rather than bad relationships. On the other hand, for human toward the nature, it showed a major bad relationship. As a part of Europe, England is a country that has adopted modern lifestyle and rapid development of technology and industry. This leads the agrarian sector of its society has turned into an industrial society and various agricultural activities have greatly reduced the area of its natural forest. Therefore, the flora and fauna in England are greatly reduced in population and even some of them have become extinct. One that gets a bigger bad impact with the progress of modern industry here is nature. As a bad impact of industrialization, cities that used to be vast forest fields turned into glittering and majestic cities, animals and plants lost their natural habitat, namely forests, and environmental problems such as floods, landslides, water, air, and sound pollution. So do not be surprised if there are wild animals that enter residential areas because they have lost their homes.

Their awareness to conserve animals and their ecosystems are still lacking. The preservation of the earth is seriously endangered by this situation. Humans must therefore be conscious of the need to protect the environment in order to maintain life. Glotfelty & Froom, (1996, P. xxiv) believes that understanding the environment through increasing ecological awareness is essential for healing the damaged earth. This means that to build public awareness to preserve nature, there must be a medium. In this case, literature seems to voice and build awareness for the community. As Worster said (in Glotfelty 1996:xxi), literary scholars together with historians, philosophers, and anthropologists can help reform nature by providing an understanding of nature. Thus, literature appears to be a powerful means of building awareness through the pleasure and understanding it offers. What people can do for a better environment is to minimize the negative effects of industrialization and maximize ways to preserve biotic communities by paying more attention to and understanding nature.

Actually, the use of nature must also be wise, because nature is present to support human life. What Kirin and the little tooth fairy do is good because they continue to support the lives of other creatures by considering a balanced ecosystem, this attitude reflects that Kirin, a young girl, is the main character in the Indonesian picture book, *Dogs, Molars, and Incisors* as a tooth fairy characterizations are more described to show their role in picture books as a means to convey the meaning of the story. The behavior of the story characters shows how close the relationship between humans and nature is. For example, Kirin's actions to save and care for tomatoes and fairies who can coexist with nature and protect nature can help readers understand the struggle between humans and nature and encourage them to think about how important the survival of tomatoes is to maintain the balance of the ecosystem. Most significantly, the actions of Kirin and the tooth fairy in the end succeeded in saving sustainability and convincing the reader that children and fairies in the fantasy world, or even the author's imagination as long as they have the desire to protect the planet, can take action and save nature.

As in previous research, Thahier (2017) in his thesis *Ecocritical Analysis of Nature and Culture in James Dashner's novel Trilogy Maze Runner*. He found character shows a lack of a human attitude towards nature as seen from his exploration of nature, during Buanadewi's research (2013) in her thesis *Sustainable Development in Walt Whitman's "a Song of the Rolling Earth: An Ecocritic Study*. She discovered the human race and technology would always evolve. One cannot go back to the hunter-gatherer era. Meanwhile, Romadhon (2011) in his thesis *An Analysis of Environmental Issue using Ecocriticism in Avatar the Movie James Cameroon*. He found facts in the film about human relations with the environment, human assessment of nature, and usually the exploitation of nature, but in contrast to the relationship of non-humans who are alien to the environment, they respect nature and worship nature.

Different from the three previous research trees above, this study uses children's literature as the object of research in analyzing the good and bad relationship between humans and nature. In addition, this study not only examines the bad relationship but also examines the good relationship between humans and nature. The findings of this study indicate that the relationship between humans and nature is very significant in contemporary life. To ensure the continuity of the earth for future generations, humans and the environment must coexist in harmony. Children's understanding of this topic is very important because they will inhabit this planet in the future. Therefore, picture books can be used to increase children's knowledge about nature conservation. These environmental challenges are communicated effectively to readers using literary elements such as characters, themes, plots, and settings. By having literary elements that suit the reader, the reader will also enjoy the story, such as understanding the meaning of the story and the more the reader absorbs the values in the story, the more the influence of the work can change one's mindset. When viewed in another way, the story of Kirin and the Tooth Fairy, if told with the right literary elements, can be a helpful force to gently introduce the topic of human-nature relations to the reader. As a result, readers who are aware of environmental challenges will begin to appreciate nature and take action to save the environment.

4. Conclusion

On the whole, both the picture books show a bad and good relationship between humans and nature but different factors. *Kemana Tomat Pergi* shows how humans used nature to fulfill their daily needs, so at the same time, humans treat nature well to be able to get the result well too. On the other hand, *The Tooth Fairies and Cleaning Factory* picture book from England, show that human use nature more abusively not only for the priority for human but also for industrial reason in the name of national pride as a developed country.

References

- Aminudin. (2006). *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktek*. Jakarta: PT Asdi Mahasatya.
- Barry, P. (2020). *Ecocriticism*. In *Beginning theory* (fourth edition) (pp. 248-278). Manchester University Press.
- Buanadewi, R. H. S. (2013). *Sustainable Development in the "a Song of the Rolling Earth" the work of Walt Whitman: a Study of Ecocriticism*. Thesis, Universitas Airlangga
- Glothfelty, C dan H. Froom (eds.). (1996). *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. London: University of Goergia Press.
- Huck, C. S. (1993). *Children's literature in the elementary school*. Harcourt Brace, 6277 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, FL 32887.
- Junaid, S. (2014). *Children's Literature and Character Building*. Makassar: Alauddin Univesity Press.
- Keraf, A. S. (2010). *Etika Lingkungan Hidup*. Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas.
- Lukens, R. J. (2003). *A Critical Hand Book of Children's Literarture*. Ally and Bacon. The United State of America.
- Nahdhiyah, Rahman, F., Abas, H., & Pattu, M. A. (2023). Ecocritical study on relationships between humans, nature, and god in the novel the Alchemist. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10(1), 1-11.
- Rahman, F., & Amir, P. (2019). Trends in Reading Literary Fiction in Print and Cyber Media by Undergraduate Students of Hasanuddin University. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(2), 66-77.
- Rahman, F. (2018). The Constraints of Foreign Learners in Reading English Literary Works: A Case Study at Hasanuddin University. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 7(2), 01-12.
- Romadhon, R. (2011). *An Analysis of Environmental Issues with Using of Ecocriticism in Avatar the Movie James Cameroon*. Skripsi. English Letters Dapartment, Letters and Humanities Faculty, Universitas Islam Negri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.
- Takeuchi, K. (2010). Rebuilding the relationship between people and nature: the Satoyama Initiative. *Ecological research*, 25(5), 891-897.
- Thahier, P. A. (2017). *Analysis of Ecocriticism Nature and Culture in the Novel the Trilogy Maze Runner by James Dashner*. Skripsi. English Letters Dapartment, Letters and Humanities Faculty, Universitas Islam Negri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.

Wellek, R., & Warren, A. (1995). *Theory of Literature atau Teori Kesusastraan*. terj. Melani Budianta. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.