

Chirps and Silence: A Study of Ecocriticism in Poetry's by Sugiarto B. Darmawan

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ABSTRACT

In an era where environmental degradation is accelerating due to human activities, research on ecology has become very important. For this reason, Sugiarto B. Darmawan's poems are essential for exploring the relationship between humans and nature. The purpose of this research is to explore the poems of Sugiarto B. Darmawan from the perspective of literary ecocriticism. The research data source is a poem by Sugiarto B. Darmawan published in the Borobudur Festival Writers. The research method uses hermeneutics. The study results show that the poems by Sugiarto B. Darmawan represent environmental wisdom. Literary ecocriticism in Sugiarto B. Darmawan's poem describes the beauty and diversity of nature and its interaction with human life. In his poems, Sugiarto B. Darmawan lovingly and appreciatively describes the flora and fauna that adorn the surrounding nature, from the birds that enliven the morning with their chirping to the various types of trees and plants that cover the hills and valleys. These poems invite readers to reflect on the importance of maintaining the balance of nature. The lives of animals and plants described in his poem show how nature and humans are interdependent. A harmonious life in nature reflects the balance that humans must maintain. The practical implication of this study is the use of literature as a tool for education and public awareness about the importance of protecting the environment. By depicting the beauty and diversity of nature, as well as the negative impacts of environmental damage, these poems can be an effective tool to inspire conservation and conservation actions.

Keywords: *Ecocriticism, Poetry, Literature, Borobudur Festival, Sugiarto B. Darmawan*

INTRODUCTION

Literary ecocriticism is an analytical approach that explores the relationship between literature and the natural environment (Garrard, 2004; Oppermann, 2019; Pamungkas, 2021). In this modern era, where climate change and environmental damage have become urgent global issues, ecocriticism is essential in reminding humans of the importance of protecting and preserving nature. One of the rich literary works on the theme of ecocriticism is the poems by Sugiarto B. Darmawan. Darmawan describes the beauty of nature, flora, fauna, and human interaction with their surroundings through his poems. These poems offer an aesthetic of natural beauty and convey a profound moral message about the importance of ecological awareness.

Although the theme of ecocriticism in literature has been widely explored, several research gaps still need to be answered. First, the study of literary ecocriticism in Indonesia is still limited compared to Western countries. Although some works describe ecology, the analysis focuses on structural, aesthetic, and literary approaches (see, e.g., Ali Imron & Nugrahani, 2019; Indrastuti, 2019; Septia et al., 2019; Suyitno, 2017; Thabroni et al., 2020)). Most literary ecocriticism research focuses more on works from the West, so it pays less attention to local literary works rich in ecological themes (Dewi, 2017; Manugeran et al., 2023; Wardani, 2022). Second, although Sugiarto B. Darmawan's poems describe the beauty of nature and the importance of ecological awareness, no studies have specifically analyzed the messages of ecocriticism in his poems. Third, the existing research tends to focus on thematic analysis without exploring poets' literary techniques to convey ecological messages in depth.

For this problem, this study aims to fill the existing research gap by conducting a literary ecocriticism analysis of the poems by Sugiarto B. Darmawan. The primary purpose of this research is to explore how Darmawan describes the relationship between humans and nature and how he conveys ecological messages through his poetry (Keller, 2018; Olausson & Ugglå, 2021; Zapf, 2016). Darmawan deeply explores how human life is inseparable from nature, where every human action directly impacts the balance of the

ecosystem. It is very important to provide insight into the importance of human ethics to nature as part of the spirit of ecocriticism. For this reason, this research is expected to significantly contribute to the study of literary ecocriticism in a global context. By exploring the poems of Sugiarto B. Darmawan, this research not only adds to our understanding of the relationship between literature and the environment but also inspires concrete actions to protect and preserve nature.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the hermeneutic method was used to analyze the poems by Sugiarto B. Darmawan with the theme of ecocriticism. The primary data used are the texts of these poems, such as "When you wake up this morning, friend," "I don't know when the fireflies possessing amazing light disappear from the night sky," and "Amazing Wooded Little Hill." Secondary data include literature and articles that discuss the theory of literary ecocriticism, as well as reviews of the works of Sugiarto B. Darmawan. The data collection process begins with collecting relevant poetry texts and supporting literature, followed by an in-depth study of ecocriticism theory and hermeneutic principles (Andimba, 2017; Borlik, 2019; Tyson, 2023). For this, hermeneutics was chosen because it is a research method focusing on text analysis (George, 2020; Ricoeur, 2016), primarily narrative texts.

In hermeneutic analysis, initial readings are conducted to understand the poem's theme, narrative, and structure (George, 2020; Tanagerås, 2018). . The author's historical, cultural, and biographical context places poetry in a broader framework. The interpretation process involves identifying ecocritical elements, such as descriptions of nature, flora, fauna, and human interaction with nature (Borlik, 2019; Jha, 2015; Schröder, 2019). Reflection is carried out by comparing the interpretation results with the ecocriticism theory, allowing for a continuous dialogue with the text for a more profound revision of understanding. The final results of the research are presented systematically in scientific reports or articles, with recommendations for further study and their application in education and conservation

efforts. Through this method, this study reveals that the poems of Sugiarto B. Darmawan convey the message of ecocriticism and its contribution to ecological awareness.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Sugiarto B. Darmawan's poems represent the spirit of ecocriticism. The spirit of ecocriticism in literature is believed to provide education to literary readers. As acknowledged by experts, literature is a very subtle educational medium. Literature provides education without having to teach directly, like teachers in the classroom (Endraswara, 2016; Pamungkas, 2021). At the same time, ecocritic themes are representations of the relationship between ecology and literature. Human ethics towards nature is an essential orientation in the goal of ecocriticism.

For this reason, themes about the condition of plants, animals, and all non-human forms reflect the condition of human behavior towards nature. For this reason, Sugiarto B. Darmawan's poem reflects the natural conditions at the time the poem was created. At the same time, it is also one of the media that seeks to provide environmental ethics education to readers.

For this, the themes of ecocriticism in Sugiarto B. Darmawan's poems represent literary thought about the spirit of ecology. The findings of the research are presented in order according to the theme related to the exploration, that is, about animals and forests as a significant part of the relationship between humans and nature in the study of ecocriticism (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015; Mishra, 2016; Schröder, 2019). First, the analysis was carried out based on the theme of animals. Second, the analysis of forest themes. The findings of the study are described as follows.

a. Animal Representation

Animals are an essential part of the spirit of environmental wisdom. The poem "When you wake up this morning, friend" offers a profound view of the relationship between humans and nature, primarily through the lens of ecological change and its impact on animal life (Artmann, 2023; Clayton & Myers, 2015; Harper & Snowden, 2017). Starting with a

picture of life full of biodiversity, this poem takes the reader back to the author's childhood colored by an orchestra of bird sounds and animal activity in the wild. The sounds of finches, *kepodang*, *perkutut*, *starlings*, and *prenjak* present a morning atmosphere full of harmony and cheerfulness. Each bird and animal have a significant role and presence in the ecosystem described. However, as poetry develops, there is a sharp shift towards a picture of environmental damage. Bamboo clumps that were once home to many creatures are now gone, animals such as swamp snakes, bandotans, and various types of fish are losing their habitats, and sewage and pesticides contaminate water and soil, causing suffering to small creatures such as insects and eels. The description that was once colorful and life has now turned into a story of destruction and loss, describing the negative impact of human activities on nature, as the following poem quotes.

When You Wake Up This Morning

*When you wake up this morning, my friend
No longer expect to be greeted by the boisterous chatter of finches
Like your childhood
Where the orchestra sings birds
From the top of the randu kepodang tree with golden yellow feather color
Perkutut who has just woken up lazily saying greetings
Suren starlings peeping crickets in the rice paddies
Prenjak playing jumping jumping from branch to branch
The charming Javanese gelatik is ready to fly to the expanse of rice fields
The low noise of the chatter of the manyar from its nest hanging on the coconut fronds
The naughty crow doesn't want to be left behind*

...

The poem also shows the contrast between the harmonious past and the present, full of corruption. The life of animals and plants that used to be so abundant is now just a story. The author quietly recalls the past full of natural life and how everything turned out to be lonely and full of suffering. The loss of various animal species and deteriorating environmental conditions are portrayed very touchingly, inviting readers to reflect on human actions damaging the balance of ecosystems. Personification in these poems is essential for building

empathy and awareness (Breen, 2021; Simecek, 2019). Birds and other animals are described as having meaningful feelings and lives, such as a mischievous crow, a bouncy starling, and a lazy *derkuku*. This personification adds emotional depth to the description of nature, making the reader feel more connected and concerned about the fate of these creatures (Letheren et al., 2017).

In turn, this poem is a call for ecological awareness. The author invites us to look around and realize the damage that has occurred and hopes that what remains can still give meaning and inspiration to action. (Felstiner, 2009; Manugeran et al., 2023; Schuster, 2015). It is a profound call to safeguarding and preserving nature, reminding us that every action we take impacts this fragile and precious ecosystem. With its flowing and soulful description, this poem becomes a powerful literary work in advocating for environmental conservation and raising our awareness of the importance of maintaining the balance of nature.

Furthermore, the poem "Hikayat Fireflies" raises the theme of losing fireflies and their impact on children's memories and imagination. The poem begins by reflecting on the disappearance of fireflies, the owner of a stunning light, from the night sky. The fireflies that used to show off their silent flickering in the moonlight are now no longer visible, disappearing from view. Children who used to play in dim light while singing mushroom songs now feel lost (Didi-Huberman, 2018; Owen Jr, 2017; Swale, 2017). The visualization of the poem is as follows.

Encouragement to Be Wise

*I don't know when the fireflies that have an amazing light disappear from the night sky.
Never show off his silent blink again
Accompanying children to play under the dim flood of the moon
Sambil menyanyikan lagu jamur.
Mencoba memberi arti dengan kepak sayap kecilnya di keluasan samudra langit sunyi tiada tara
O charming little fairy
Bring! Bring children
Into your bright world.*

...

The poem describes fireflies as charming little fairies, trying to give meaning with their little flaps of wings in a silent sky. With their natural light, fireflies bring joy and wonder to children (Payne, 2016). Its loss creates emptiness and confusion in children's minds, who hold the question of where the fireflies go when morning falls (Lack, 2015; Nezhukumatathil, 2020). Do they hide in the bushes, sneak in children's dreams, and return every night? The bewildered children missed the fabulous flicker of the fireflies' stomachs, wondering how the little creatures stored their light. Did they eat sunlight and keep it in their stomachs or borrow the angels' lanterns? These questions reflect the wonders of nature that were once an integral part of children's lives, now a mystery that leaves curiosity and longing (Miller-McLemore, 2019).

The poem also conveys a message to the fireflies, pleading them not to dance alone on a lonely night but to invite children to play until morning, or at least lend their rays for eternal joy. The author reminds of the times when the light shone in the evening *rembang*, radiating the love of human children on the earth through the joy of children (Loleng, 2019; Sideris, 2017). However, season after season continues to change, and the fireflies that are so famous have left without saying goodbye, without leaving a trace. They disappeared like being dragged into a dream, leaving the moon and stars telling stories alone. Children have forgotten the verses of the mushroom song, and the loss of the fireflies makes their magic no longer work. The dim light has now disappeared from the silence of the sky on the eve of the evening, leaving behind a deep sense of nostalgia and loss (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2018; Wood et al., 2015).

The poem is a profound reflection on man's relationship with nature, specifically through childhood memories and the wonders brought by small creatures such as fireflies. The loss of fireflies is not only a physical loss but also a loss of meaning, memories, and happiness that once existed. Through vivid and soulful descriptions, this poem invites readers to feel the wonders of nature that are now increasingly lost and the importance of

preserving the memories and beauty of nature for future generations (Celeste, 2020; De Oliveira, 2016; Taussig, 2020).

b. Forest Representation

Forests are the most important part of the spirit of ecocriticism as an effort to instill ecological wisdom (Arianto et al., 2021; Classen, 2015; Rosenberry, 2023). The poem "Amazing Wooded Small Hills" elevates the beauty of nature with a focus on the forests and plants that adorn the small hills. This poem opens with an image of forested hills that are so beloved by fog. The fog visited it every afternoon and enveloped it throughout the night until morning came, creating a calm and magical atmosphere. The existence of various types of trees such as *angsana*, *mahogany*, *trembesi*, *kamboya*, *goat waru*, *lamtoro*, *sea sengon*, and *sengon buto* adds to the natural beauty of the hillside, making it home to various wildlife, as shown in the following poem quote.

Amazing Wooded Hill

*Amazing wooded hills
So much his love fog to him
So visit it every afternoon before
Envelope it all night until morning comes
Angsana mahoni trembesi kamboja sonokeling bambu jati waru lamtoro sengon laut sengon
buto
Decorating the slopes of the slopes*

...

The forest on this hill is home to many types of singing birds, such as *derkuku*, finches, *perkutut*, *tengkek buto*, *prenjak*, *sribombok*, woodpecker, and *mantenan*. These birds make beautiful nature concerts every day. At sunset, egrets return to their nests at the top of the *angsana* after a day of hunting prey in the rice fields scattered in the hilly valleys. This natural beauty provides a dazzling view and illustrates the balance of the maintained ecosystem. The forests in these hills are also home to various other types of animals. Long-tailed macaques are seen making love and raising their young, while snakes, cobras, bandotans, and various

other animals such as *dumung kebo*, *dumung sapi*, and *gadhung* fill the forest with diverse lives. The antelope and *kancil* shyly visited the fields of the inhabitants on the edge of the forest, demonstrating the harmonious interaction between humans and nature. However, the poem also records the legend of a leopard stealing prey from the villagers' livestock pens, adding a touch of mystery and vigilance to the forest's wildlife. This leopard's presence reflects nature's power and majesty, which sometimes poses a challenge to humans. For this, it is important to note that the representation of the harmonization of the relationship between nature and animals is a picture of the ethical attitude of humans towards them. That is, the existence of trees and animals in a particular habitat shows that humans at that time were still caring for them (Clayton & Myers, 2015; Dewey, 2023; Martin et al., 2016). Animals and plants are still allowed to live. For this reason, poetry in this context illustrates that if humans are still good, then the beauty of nature will be maintained. Likewise, rare animals are also still present.

With its flowing description, this poem invites readers to feel the beauty and wonder of nature in small forested hills. Every element of nature, from fog, trees, and birds, to wild animals, is depicted with love and admiration. This poem conveys visual beauty and the peace and balance created in an intact ecosystem (Baumgarten, 2022; Leavis, 2015; Lerner, 2016). Various living things' presence and interaction with nature show how important it is to maintain and preserve this environment so that it remains amazing for future generations.

Then, the representation of ecocriticism is also found in the poem "**When Acid Blossoms**". This poem invites us to enter into a melancholic atmosphere after the rain poured down the previous afternoon (T. Arianto & Simanjuntak, 2020; Guanio-Uluru, 2019). The tamarind tree in the cemetery, which is flowering, takes center stage. The sour flowers that fall on the wet ground, carrying a scent that wanders into the corners of the village. The traces of pain felt abandoned as if the season was playing with feelings. The question of what lies at the heart of longing arises, adding to the mysterious and poetic feel, as the following poem quotes.

When Acid Flowers

*After being showered with rain yesterday afternoon. A flowering tamarind tree in a cemetery.
Falling on wet soil.*

The fragrance wanders to the corners of the village

Leaving a trail of pain. Played with the seasons. Is That Another Love Language?

What lies in the heart of longing?

*The singing of kepodang on the top of the tamarind that is flowering It breaks kuntum the
floreets. My longing is folded in the shadow of the frozen shadow. Behold, beloved, my soul is
burning growing from the depths of my dreams.*

*I can no longer translate the crowing of the chicken as a gratitude to welcome life. The bird
that woke up began to fly. Like no master. Dawn must be soon datang. .Dan kupu kupu mulai
beterbangan menyerahkan kepakan sayapnya diterkam keheningan.*

...

The singing of the kepodang bird from the top of the flowering tamarind tree actually broke the flower florets. The longing that folds in the frozen shadows, as if communicating with a lover, carries a spirit that flickers from the depths of a dream. The crowing of chickens can no longer be translated as gratitude to welcome life. The birds that woke up began to fly like no one, adding to the lonely atmosphere of the morning that was sure to come. The butterfly that begins to fly surrenders its flapping wings to silence, adding a touch of solitude and loss (Stroebe, 2018; Tietjen & Furtak, 2021).

Life and vegetation in the midst of this forest are depicted in touching detail. The tamarind trees that are flowering in the cemetery create an atmosphere of contrast between life and death. The falling flowers add to the impression that nature also feels sadness and loss. The fragrance that wanders into the corners of the village seems to carry a message of pain felt by nature (Pain & Smith, 2016; Scott et al., 2017).

The spirit of dew and sunlight is achieved, but the silence that eats away at age, shows how loneliness can permeate the soul. The heart that continues to beat with the rhythm of silence shows the deep feeling of loss and isolation. The silence that had been lodged in the blood of time finally made itself realize that silence came from various directions. Sour flowers that have just sprouted and fallen in an uncertain direction decorate the wet soil left

over from yesterday's rain at dusk, creating a beautiful but sad picture. The fragrance that is captured and embraced in the wound, adds a deep emotional dimension to this poem (Ahmad et al., 2020; Knoop et al., 2016; Wassiliwizky et al., 2017).

This poem beautifully describes the relationship between humans and nature. Sour trees, *kepodang* birds, chicken crows, and butterflies symbolize human feelings. Longing, loneliness, and loneliness feel at one with nature, suggesting that nature also feels the same emotions (McColley, 2017; Snyder, 2018; Weber, 2019). Life and death, happiness and sorrow, are all intertwined in deep and soulful descriptions of nature. This poem reminds us of our relationship with nature and how important it is to understand and feel its presence in our daily lives.

In addition, environmental wisdom is also represented in the poem "**Amazing Forested Small Hills**". These small forested hills are so enchanting, and they love the fog that always comes in the afternoon. The fog blankets the hill throughout the night until morning arrives, creating a cool and mysterious atmosphere (Goldhill, 2024; Simanjuntak, 2020). The hillsides are decorated with various types of trees, such as *angsana*, mahogany, *trembesi*, *frangipani*, *sonokeling*, bamboo, teak, *waru*, *lamtoro*, *secong laut*, and *secong buto*. This diversity of plants enriches nature's beauty and provides habitat for various types of flora and fauna. The excerpt of the poem is as follows.

Amazing Wooded Little Hills

*Amazing wooded hills
So much his love fog to him
So visit it every afternoon before
Envelope it all night until morning comes
Angsana mahoni trembesi kamboja sonokeling bambu jati waru lamtoro secong laut secong
buto
Decorating the slopes of the slopes*

*Amazing wooded little hill House of all kinds of chatter
Derkuku kutilang perkutut tengkek buto prenjak sribombok pelatuk bawang mantenan
berkisar*

*Where do egrets come home at sunset
And rest in his nest at the top of the shoots of angšana
After a day of tirelessly hunting prey in the expanse of rice paddies spread out in the valley
Enchanting hill valley*

*Amazing wooded hills
Long-tailed macaque house and raises her cubs
Ular sawa cobra bandhotan dumung kebo dumung sapi gadhung
Kijang and kancil are embarrassed to visit the fields of the people on the edge of the
wilderness
The legendary leopard steals prey from the villagers' cattle pens*

Tegalmade, Mei 2023.

This small, wooded hill is also home to various birds whose voices echo throughout. From derkuku, kutilang, perkutut, tengkek buto, prenjak, sribombok, onion woodpecker, to the ex-ranging, all play a role in creating a natural symphony that welcomes the sunset. Egrets that return home at sunset and rest on the shoots of the orchids provide a picture of harmony between animal life and the forest environment (Cuckston, 2021; Yeates, 2022).

This small hill is home to various wild animals, not birds. Long-tailed macaques making love and raising their young in the middle of the forest reflect an ongoing life (Jaroszewicz et al., 2019). *Sawa* snakes, cobras, *bandhotans*, *dumbung kebo*, *dumung sapi*, and *gadhung* add to the diversity of fauna in this forest. At night, shy antelopes and *kancils* are often seen visiting the people's fields on the edge of the forest, foraging for food under the shade of the trees. The leopard, which is legendary as a thief of prey from the villagers' livestock pens, adds a sense of myth and mystery to this forest. Its presence depicts the balance of nature that sometimes tests the courage of humans to coexist with wildlife (Spykman, 2017).

The beauty and diversity in these small hills show how important it is to maintain the balance of the forest ecosystem. Plants and animals depend on each other for their survival. Life on this small hill is a perfect example of how nature can live in harmony if it is well-maintained (Goodenough, 2023; Jordan & Kristjánsson, 2017; Lowenthal, 2019; Suzuki, 2022), reminding us to continue to care for and appreciate the natural wealth that exists

because every element, from trees to birds, from apes to leopards, has an important role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem.

For this, the relationship between humans and nature is a central theme underlined in this analysis, specifically through the representation of animals in the chosen poem. The importance of maintaining the balance of ecosystems and ecological awareness is strongly emphasized, where nature and living things in it are positioned as an integral part of human existence. In this context, the poems also critique human actions that ignore the impact of nature's exploitation. Animals that used to coexist with humans in harmony are now threatened by human activities that damage the environment. The destruction of habitats and the shift in ecosystems that occur harm animals and endanger the survival of humans. This transformation illustrates how human interaction with nature, which was initially harmonious, has now turned into a destructive relationship. This highlights the urgency of collective awareness to protect nature for the sustainability of life in the future. This awareness needs to be instilled from an early age and become part of education so that future generations care more about the environment. Animal representation is not just an ornament in poetry but a reflection of the state of nature that is increasingly deteriorating due to human actions and a reminder of the importance of maintaining this balance.

CONCLUSION

The poems by Sugiarto B. Darmawan represent environmental wisdom. Literary ecocriticism in Sugiarto B. Darmawan's poem describes the beauty and diversity of nature and its interaction with human life. In his poems, Sugiarto B. Darmawan lovingly and appreciatively describes the flora and fauna that adorn the surrounding nature, from the birds that enliven the morning with their chirping to the various types of trees and plants that cover the hills and valleys. These poems invite readers to reflect on the importance of maintaining the balance of nature. The lives of animals and plants described in his poem show how nature and humans are interdependent. A harmonious life in nature reflects the balance that humans must maintain. In addition, the poems also describe the negative impact

of environmental damage, such as the loss of animal habitats and changes in ecosystems that threaten the preservation of nature.

The practical implication of this study is the use of literature as a tool for education and public awareness about the importance of protecting the environment. These poems can be an effective tool for inspiring conservation actions by depicting the beauty and diversity of nature and the negative impacts of environmental damage. For this reason, poetry education is different from direct education, such as in school. Poetry provides indirect education. The process of poetry education is to provide a message that the reader himself must interpret. The spirit of this poem about ecological wisdom will become very important again if ecological themes are included in school textbooks. This is expected to be an early preventive step to instill human ethics towards the environment. However, this study also has some weaknesses. One of the weaknesses is the limitation of the subjective perspective of Sugiarto B. Darmawan's poetry, which may not cover all aspects of ecocriticism and the environment. The hermeneutic interpretation used in this study is also subjective and can vary from researcher to researcher, so the analysis results can vary.

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