

CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUE IN *THE NEW WILDERNESS* BY DIANE COOK: ECOCRITICISM STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the climate change issues represented in the novel. The object of this study is a novel entitled *The New Wilderness* (2020) by Diane Cook. This study applies the qualitative research method as the analysis is presented in the form of text. To guide this study, the writer uses the perspective of Garrard (2004) in ecocriticism and Alberth (2011) in psychoterratic. The analysis results of climate change issues contained three aspects from Garrard's scopes there are pollution, wilderness, and apocalypse. The scope of pollution described is air pollution and global warming. Then in the aspects of wilderness as a place of escape to survive and scope of apocalypse live life in the wilderness. In addition, the main character's response to climate change phenomenon contained two scopes from Alberth's perspective there are solastalgia and ecoanxiety. The main character respond to solastalgia by longing for a place to live that is safer than his home environment. Meanwhile, in ecoanxiety, the main character lost the behavior of her daughter, Agnes, because she has become one with nature.

Keywords: *climate change, ecocriticism, ecoanxiety, solastalgia, psychoterratic*

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisa isu-isu perubahan iklim dalam novel. Objek dari penelitian ini adalah novel yang berjudul *The New Wilderness* karya Diane Cook (2020). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif yang menyajikan analisis dalam tulisan. Untuk memandu penelitian ini, perspektif dari Garrard (2004) menerapkan pendekatan teori ekokritisisme dan Alberth (2011) psikoteratik. Penelitian ini menghasilkan isu-isu perubahan iklim mencakup tiga aspek dari perspektif Garrard yaitu polusi, belantara, dan wahyu. Cakupan polusi adalah pencemaran udara dan pemanasan global. Kemudian pada aspek belantara sebagai tempat pelarian untuk bertahan hidup dan cakupan wahyu menjalani kehidupan di hutan belantara. Selain itu, respons tokoh utama terhadap fenomena perubahan iklim mengandung dua aspek dari sudut pandang Alberth yaitu solastalgia dan kecemasan lingkungan. Tokoh utama merespon solastalgia dengan merindukan tempat tinggal yang lebih aman dari lingkungan asalnya. Sementara itu dalam kecemasan lingkungan, tokoh utama kehilangan perilaku anaknya yaitu Agnes, karena sudah menyatu dengan alam.

Kata Kunci: *perubahan iklim, ekokritisisme, kecemasan lingkungan, solastalgia, psikoteratik*

INTRODUCTION

The writer is interested to analyze climate change, that is represented in novel entitled *The New Wilderness* (2020) by Diane Cook. The novel tell about a city, and its

stricken are plagued by dangerous pollution, and overpopulation, except for one state of the wilderness. Experiment with people from nomadic hunting, and gathering communities to survive. The

mother-daughter relationship, the mother struggles to save her daughter from a world ravaged by climate change. In the purpose of collecting prove of climate change issues. The writer aims to arrange a scientific study based on it using ecocriticism Garrard (2004) to identify climate change issues containing three aspects there are pollution, wilderness, and apocalypse. Moreover, psychoterratic Albercth (2011) to identify the main character's responses to the climate change phenomenon containing two aspects there are solastalgia and ecoanxiety.

1.1 Statements of the Problem

1. How is the issue of climate change depicted in *The New Wilderness*?
2. How does the main character respond to climate change issue in *The New Wilderness*?

1.3 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is Literature.

The Limitation focuses on climate change in *The new wilderness* novel, by applying the ecocriticism theory (Garrard, 2004). This research only focuses on three aspects; pollution, wilderness, and apocalypse. This study also attempts to described the main character's responses to the climate change phenomenon by applying the psychoterratic theory of solastalgia and ecoanxiety (Albrecht, 2011).

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze how issue of climate change in *The New Wilderness*.
2. To analyze the main character's respond to the climate change issue *The New Wilderness*.

1.5 Functions of the Study

1. Theoretically, research results are expected to contribute to developing the research and analysis of literary studies related to ecocriticism and psychoterratic theory. This research is expected to

give a broader explanation of ecocriticism and psychoterratic theory applied in literary works. Then, it is expected to explain living with nature, the obstacles that the main character experienced, and the struggles to overcome when living with nature in the main character represented in *The New Wilderness* novel.

2. Practically, this research is also expected to give and inspire others about ecocriticism theory for other studies or academics, especially in the English Department. Also, it can be a helpful reference for other writers who are interested in conducting further research.

RESEARCHED

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Approach of the Study

This research was qualitative. In this type of research, the researcher

collected, classified, analyzed, and drew a conclusion based on the data analysis without generalizing. Creswell (2009, p. 4) states that, qualitative research is a study to investigate, and understand the meaning individuals or groups assume to be a social or a human problem. It is used to find out and know why and how a social phenomenon happens. The qualitative descriptive method serves to see and describe the data contained in *The New Wilderness* novel.

This study was also descriptive and qualitative. It was used as an approach to the qualitative study because the result of the analysis was the description of a certain phenomenon. According to Minhas (2019), the researcher also uses the qualitative approach to analyze the form, and content of narrative data and examine how these elements serve the storyteller, and the story. It indicated that a qualitative approach is suitable for analyzing the climate change issue presented in *The New Wilderness* novel.

3.2 Data Source

The main source of data was in *The New Wilderness* novel. All the words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs related to the climate change issue. The researcher also used other secondary sources. They were books, articles, and information, either printed or electronic sources related to the topic of this research.

3.3 Data Collection

To collect the data to analyze the object of research, some steps are done by the writer. The first step is for the writer to read the novel by Diane Cook entitled *The New Wilderness*. After the first read, the writer reread the story comprehensively, and paid attention to every detail of the topic to identify the issue contained within the stories before starting to mark the data. The data then classified according to the similarities or differences to narrow down the selected data analysis. Following the former steps, the classified data is patterned out to draw a conclusion based on which of

the data is dominating while the other is not.

The last step is for the writer to develop the data based on the supporting theories of the main issue of this study, climate change.

3.4 Data Analyzing

In analyzing all data which support this research, the descriptive method is applied. Descriptive research is used to describe the main data from the *The New Wilderness* novel. Those main data are given in quotation form to prove the analysis. Robert K. Yin (2011, pp. 177-179) conducted data analysis using some steps: Compiling Database, Disassembling Data, Reassembling and Arranging Data, Interpreting and Concluding Data. After collecting and selecting the data, the next step is to start to analyze the selected necessary data. In this step, the researcher will analyze the data, which has information about ecocriticism via words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs so that the researcher can conclude.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Therefore, this study explains how climate change is represented through the novel *In The Wilderness* (2020) by Diane Cook which describes toxic air pollution and the main character, living experiment in the wilderness according to community rules. And describes the main character's responses to the climate change phenomenon by longing for a place to live that is safer than their home environment and loses the behavior of her daughter, Agnes, because she has become one with nature. Based on that, the study found that:

4.1 The Depiction of Climate Change

Issues in *The New Wilderness*

Climate change creates extreme damage to an environment. In the long run, this phenomenon will upset the balance of nature and human living peculiarly. Therefore, humans should change their mindset to be more eco-centric, focusing on how to preserve nature in the anthropocene era. This action is crucial because climate change has affected almost all aspects of human life due to its massive occurrence in

terms of pollution, wilderness, and apocalypse.

4.1.1 Pollution

Pollution is one of the significant causes of climate change. It intolerably influences the stability of nature and the environment. Modern life contributes to new kinds of pollution, such as plastic pollution, weapon testing, oil leaks, and nuclear waste. These kinds of waste pollute the air, water, and ground. Air pollution has often been found in the environment, as mentioned in, "Around her, the singular song of crickets expanded. Bea's skin prickled from heat. Sweat dried on her back and face. The sun had crested and would, more quickly than seemed right, fall again." (Cook, 2020, p. 9). This shows, situation experienced by Bea and her daughter, who is giving birth to Agnes, "The sun had crested," which means that the increase in the temperature of the earth's surface is getting hotter to the point of hurting Bea's skin. The term "fall again" this condition can occur repeatedly, causing the earth's

average annual temperature to continue to increase.

4.1.2 Wilderness

Wilderness is identical to a place of no human contamination, an ideal living place for animals and plants. Most people associate the term wilderness with "jungle." However, in this novel wilderness is one of the places that the main character visits as a place to stay because life in the capital city has been polluted by excessive pollution and dust. This implied in this quote:

She left for the Wilderness. These were her secret treasures she'd smuggled in from the City, and rather than carry them place to place, facing scorn from the others and damage from the elements, she hid them, blatantly disregarding the rules laid out in the Manual. (Cook, 2020, p. 14).

The quote above describes, Bea illegally obtaining information from the government to leave the city for the wilderness. They must adhere to strict rules: not to build permanent residences, tame animals, or leave any traces. Every rule that is violated results in a fine.

4.1.3 Apocalypse

Discussion of apocalypse does not mean discussing the final day on Earth, but the realm of studies, including disaster issues. Apocalypse is an incident that disrupts people's life by natural and unnatural factors, resulting in environmental damages, property losses, and psychological impacts. Garrard (2004, p. 94) explains that, the population will always grow to the point where misery and vice cease to exist, and even the most egalitarian utopia will eventually revert to conflict and competition for scarce resources. By engaging in such competition, humans are constantly attached to their desire to own this world. As a result, they continue to exploit nature to fulfill their will (needs).

4.2 The Main Character's Responses towards Climate Change Issue in *The New Wilderness*

Climate change is one of the main issue in Diane Cook's *The new wilderness*. This novel presents a dystopia in the near future: Earth's geography has been

simplified into a binary of “Cities.” In the City, pollution is so high that children cough up blood. For this reason, the mother-daughter relationship, protagonist Bea and her sickly daughter Agnes, decide to uproot their lives and start over as part of an experimental nomadic “Community” based in the Wilderness state. This novel uses self-insertion; the characters represent the actual author of the novel. Researchers believe the main character is psychologically influenced by climate change in psychological aspects. The influence of the Anthropocene era created a new term called “psychoterratic.” The responses of the main characters in this section are divided into two, namely solastalgia and ecoanxiety.

4.2.1 The Main Character's Ecoanxiety

Climate change has an impact on the mental health of individuals. Whether suffered directly or indirectly, stressors experience depression and anxiety because

they feel they cannot control environmental problems, especially climate change. This mental health condition is called ecoanxiety. In contrast to solastalgia, ecoanxiety in this novel is explained by the main character having anxiety for her child, namely Agnes facing climate change in the “metropolitan” and surviving wildly in the wilderness.

4.2.2 The Main Character's Solastalgia

Initially, solastalgia was applied to criticize the impact of natural disasters on refugees and survivors. However, recently, the scope of solastalgia has expanded into made disasters such as mining land degradation, pollution, and climate change. This psychological phenomenon is recognized by the feeling of loss from people who migrate from the environment where they live. In the novel,

the main character migrates to the wilderness by losing a hostile environment and the state of a person being powerless to live a decent life in the city, the main

character migrates to the wilderness. This implied in this quote:

A wind stirred and she breathed in the dusty heat. She missed the stagnant scent of the hospital room where she'd given birth to Agnes what must have been eight years ago now. The way the scratchy gown had stretched across her chest and gotten tangled up when she tried to roll to either side. (Cook, 2020, p. 10).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusion

After analyzing climate change issues in the novel *The New Wilderness* (2020). This research applies ecocriticism theory by Garrard (2004) consisting of pollution, wilderness, and apocalypse. And investigate climate change phenomenon of the main character response on climate change issues by applying the psychoterratic theory of solastalgia and ecoanxiety Albrecht (2011).

Based on the research questions, the researcher concludes. From the scope of

pollution, evidenced by the toxic air pollution and overpopulation that occurs in the “metropolitan” he calls home, each contributes to an increase in the earth's temperature. Furthermore, in the wilderness, this place is an escape to be able to survive without destroying it. Finally, climate change affects human civilization, the earth is about to collapse, and the character Bea must take steps to save Agnes by following the experiment of a community living in the wilderness. Where they eat raw meat and animal skins used as clothes. The effect of hunting animals continuously for food sources. Also, climate change is jeopardizing human-animal relations. Loss of habitat for some species increases their stress levels and, in turn, affects the stability of food chain patterns. Finally, the community is not allowed to live in one place, they have to move from place to place without leaving their mark under the supervision of the community leader, the Rangers.

In the second study, the researcher investigated climate change phenomenon of

the main character response on climate change issues, which consisted of solastalgia and ecoanxiety. Solastalgia of the main character with the relationship between mother and child is seen when he shows his longing for a quiet rural environment. Yet they survive in the wilderness in the face of this kind of climate change pressure. Meanwhile, environmental anxiety can be seen in his concern about changes in mimicry behavior towards his daughter Agnes, who lives wild in the wilderness.

5.2 Suggestion

This study focuses on the issues of climate change by using three scopes of ecocriticism and psychoterratic theory. The novel *The New Wilderness* fiction has many interesting issues to discuss using other theories or perspectives. Therefore, future researchers can conduct similar environmental-based research with other relevant theories. Another suggestion is for readers, by reading novels, people should increase their environmental awareness and do something useful to preserve nature for

the next generation. Hopefully, this study helps to enrich other researchers' insight regarding climate change issues and provide useful information for the future study in the same field.

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