



Characteristics of Environmental Love in a Child in Partikel Novel by Dewi Lestari: An Ecofeminism Study

Sumartini Sumartini; Agus Nuryatin; Ida Zulaeha; Yusro Edy Nugroho

Department of Indonesian Language and Literature, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v10i2.4389>

Abstract

As a medium or means to grow public awareness about environmental preservation, literary works have advantages and strategic roles due to their wide distribution in the form of narratives and ease of distribution as well as production (in this case printing). One of the novels about nature that is worth researching is the Partikel novels. In the Partikel novels, there is a picture of attitudes that correspond to principles in the ecofeminist movement. The picture of that attitude is a way of forming a child's character (Zarah) to love the environment or nature. The purpose of the study was to reveal the way in which the authors formed the character of environmental love in children according to ecofeminist theory. This research is included in qualitative research. The approach in this study is phenomenology with the focus of this research is to describe and analyze the formation of characteristics of environmental love in child in the Partikel novels by Dewi Lestari.

Keywords: *Love of Environment or Nature; Ecofeminism; Partikel, Novels; And Literary Works*

Introduction

Massive development leads to the destruction of ecology and the natural environment. The number of natural disasters such as floods, landslides, melting polar ice caps, and the occurrence of tsunamis, as well as the increasing temperature of the earth are inseparable from the impact of natural damage. This raises awareness in humans that nature must be kept sustainable even though mathematically, the exploitation of nature brings benefits to the industrial world and certain groups of people. Discussions about the environment and awareness related to its preservation need to be spread as effectively as possible. Many scientists and culturalists try to find solutions by sharing thoughts. The scientist shares his findings and findings through the publication of his articles. As for the culturalist, in which there are art activists sharing thoughts through their creative work. One of the tools that can be used to spread awareness about the importance of environmental care and preservation are literary works (prose, poetry, drama).

As a medium or a means to grow public awareness about environmental sustainability, literary works have advantages and strategic roles due to their wide distribution in the form of narratives and ease of distribution as well as production (in this case printing). Literary works, especially novels, are

important objects for study. Literary works are able to become a medium to campaign to save the environment. As a product of contemplation, literary works can critique the realities of the world and provide awareness and persuasive awareness for their readers. Through literary works, certain individuals or groups of people display worldviews or ideologies to become tools to show their partiality (Susanto, 2012: 1 & 10).

Women, have a unique brushing and contemplation related to nature. This is very closely related to the culture that makes women as domestic beings feel the direct impact. Primary human needs, especially food (kitchen needs) are one of the needs that can be affected and feel the impact. Therefore, examining the female author's perception of her views on nature becomes important to know that a woman's contemplation relates to the thing closest to her. One of the novels about nature written by female authors is the *Partikel* novels. This novel is one of the *Supernova* series by Dewi Lestari. The content of this novel tells the search for identity as well as telling Zara's experience in searching for her missing father. She studied nature and made nature the "home" of every place he visited. Thus, she is not only friendly with nature but takes care of what he encounters like taking care of a home in which there is life and peace created.

This novel was chosen from many novels to study because of the following. *First*, this novel was written by a woman, Dewi Lestari. *Second*, this novel is not only rich in imagination, but its writing that also based on in-depth research on history and fungi. Furthermore, this novel also tells the story of Zara, a daughter who is the driving force of the story. In this novel, there is the formation of Zara's character to love the environment or nature. The formation was formed early and started from the family environment. Therefore, this paper is entitled " *Characteristics of Environmental Love in a Child in Partikel Novel by Dewi Lestari: An Ecofeminism Study* ". The purpose of this study is to reveal the way that the author uses to forming a character of love of the environment in children according to ecofeminist theory.

In this regard, in principle the central theme of ecofeminism is freedom and life. The freedom that ecofeminists mean and demand is not the freedom to control or conquer external things such as natural resources. That freedom actually demands recognition of the nature of material things that exist in nature. Its nature is limitations. Therefore, realizing the limitations of natural resources will foster a simple attitude in consuming them. This is oriented towards the survival of later generations. The principle is called the subsistence perspective.

In the terminology of Shiva and Mies (2005), the subsistence perspective focuses on several fundamental principles as follows. *First*, The purpose of economic activity is not to generate heaps of commodities and money, but to regenerate life. *Second*, Economic activity is based on relations that respect natural and non-exploitative wealth. *Three*, increased participation or grassroots democracy by respecting all economic, social and technological decisions. *Four*, environmental problems require an approach to solving multidimensional or synergistic problems. *Five*, environmental problems demand a new paradigm in the fields of science, technology, and knowledge. *Six*, everything that is done leads to the re-creation of cultural and work integrity, whether work is interpreted as a responsibility or work that is interpreted as enjoyment. *Seven*, reject privatization of public property and/or commercialization: water, air, land, natural resources. *Eight*, the existing characteristics should be adapted to the concept of society that drives ecofeminism. *Nine*, eliminating the life-producing dichotomy, maintaining life and commodity production activities that synergize and do not overexploit nature.

Methods

This research is included in qualitative research. Qualitative research is a type of research whose findings are not obtained through statistical procedures or other forms of counting (Strauss and Corbin, 2017). This research seeks to describe the expressions of female authors about nature, especially related to the education of environmental or nature-loving characters in *Partikel* novels. The approach in this study is phenomenology. In particular, phenomenology is interpreted as the science of the symptoms that

manifest themselves in our consciousness (Darmodiharjo & Shidarta, 2006:77). In this regard, the focus of this study is to describe and analyze the character building of love of the environment in a child in the *Partikel* novels by Dewi Lestari. Furthermore, the data collection technique is carried out by "reading-taking notes", that is, reading carefully and repeatedly the entire novel that is the object of study.

In literary research, this technique is called heuristic reading, which is the study of the literal meaning of words in literary works without involving the context of the literary text. In this study, the context is the character building of love of the environment in a child (Zarah, the son of Firas characters). Then, in analyzing the data, the researcher describes and conducts a thorough analysis of the existing phenomenon by making a systematic and factual picture, then the author correlates it with the ecofeminist theory. The following are the steps in data analysis that the author does, (1) the data that has been collected is compiled and entered into instruments according to the formulation that has been classified and correlated with ecophemistic theory, the next is to describe the data, (2) after the data is described, then interpretation is carried out according to the data obtained. This is done in order to find the meaning contained in the data, (3) the last step is to draw conclusions.

Discussion

In the results and discussion section, data analysis will be described related to the formation of environmental love characters in children in the *Partikel* novels by Dewi Lestari. Quotation of data in the novel related to this matter, will be re-interpeted according to the study of ecofeminism theory to see the details of the substance about the practice of building the character of environmental love in children in the *Partikel* novels by Dewi Lestari.

This section will examine how Firas educates Zara to become a person who has a love for the environment and nature.

Basic Respect for Nature and Non-exploitative

According to Gunawan Hidayah (2009:10) at a certain age, many children experience a period of growth. The growth of a child's brain and head is faster than the growth of other organs. Judging from the aspect of the development of toddler intelligence, many experts say: (a) at the age of 0-4 years it reaches 50%; (b) at the age of 4-8 years it reaches 80%; and (c) at the age of 8-18 years reaches 100%. In the *Partikel* novels Firas (Zara's father) gives stories about living things, in particular fungi and chimpanzees. Zara, who was eight years old at the time, was experiencing growth for her brain of 80%. While her sister, two-year-old Hara is entering the golden age with 50% brain growth. They both listen to stories from their father (Firas) regarding matters related to the environment in which creatures live. Firas first tell about the human brain, here is the quote.

"Malam hari, Ayah mengantarku dengan cerita pengantar tidurnya. Berbeda dengan anak lain yang didongengi Timun Mas dari buku dengan ilustrasi lucu berwarna-warni, Ayah menggambar anatomi otak." (Lestari 2012:19)

Of course, it doesn't end there, Firas is not explaining the structure of the brain without meaning. He relates to life and life to be used as a memory for children to remember themselves to always maintain the environment and good attitude. Firas continues the core story in the next paragraph.

Setelah gambarnya selesai, ia pun berkisah, "DNA-mu 99,6 persen identik dengan simpanse. Hanya beda 0,4 persen. Bahkan, selisih genetika antara simpanse dan gorila itu 1,8 persen. Carolus Linnaeus bikin istilah hominidae untuk manusia dan memisahkan simpanse dengan kata pongidae gara-gara dia takut dimarahi pihak gereja. Jadi, kita ini binatang, Zarah. Binatang yang berkemampuan linguistik tinggi karena punya Area Broca."

Kemudian, Ayah menempelkan gambarnya tadi di dinding sebelah ranjangku...(Lestari 2012:19)

On the quote, Firas is forming an understanding of the closeness of humans to animals. This understanding of closeness is used as a basis so that children feel that they have something in common so that they will be the farthest from arbitrary attitudes towards creatures that are felt to have closeness to them. In the advanced stages of internalizing the character, Firas draws and pastes the related drawings he tells on the wall. This will strengthen the imagination and provide a carrying capacity to the child's memory. Scientifically, according to Kenneth (2003:78) The most important aspects in shaping a child's memory are; (a) visualization of imagination, this gives rise to imaginary power for the child, (b) thinking in images, this is done by the child and for the child, (c) the association of images is the merging of several images that have been made. Firas did two things at once to support his son's memory of the story that Firas wanted to internalize on Zara and Hara. Firas combines many images to connect one story to another.

In addition, Firas also continued his story. He closes his story with koda. According to Pulungan (2017), koda is the final part of a story given by an author who voices a moral message in response to the conflict that occurs. Before Zara fell asleep, Firas said so.

“Jangan pisahkan dirimu dari binatang,” pesannya. “Kamu lebih dekat dengan mereka daripada yang kamu bayangkan,” lanjutnya lagi. Aku pun bertanya, seperti biasanya, “Biar apa, Ayah?” “Biar kamu tidak sombong jadi manusia,” ujarnya sambil tersenyum. Ia lalu mengecup keningku, menebarkan selimut ke atasku. Mematikan lampu. Keluar dari kamarku tanpa suara (Lestari 2012:20).

This had a good effect on Zara when Zara grew up and became a photographer. Zara meets Ibu Iga, an environmental activist who cares about orangutans. In one of his conversations, the attachment and closeness that Firas built when he was a child made him critical with a love for the environment. In this case, his love for animals is orangutans (*chimpanzees*). Here is the conversation that shows.

“Menurut Ibu, bisakah orangutan bertahan?” tanyaku. “Orangutan cuma bisa bertahan kalau hutan bertahan. Kalau manusia tidak bisa mempertahankan hutan, tidak cuma orangutan yang hilang...”

“Manusia juga,” sambungku. (Lestari 2012:221s)

Such thinking will certainly have the effect of opening horizons to think and act in order to maintain life by loving the survival of other creatures. If this awareness is present, then the 2nd principle of Shiva's ecofeminism can be implemented. Economic activity is based on relations that respect natural and non-exploitative wealth.

Economic Activity Brings Back Lives, not to Hoard Money

The first principle that Shiva conceived in her ecofeminism movement was that economic activity was not to generate heaps of commodities and money, but to regenerate life. This is found in the storytelling of Firas in the *Partikel* novels by Dewi Lestari. Firas, who is known as an outstanding lecturer and the youngest lecturer to become a molecular expert, when he was offered a house in the lecturer's housing, he refused. He chose to develop his knowledge and research in his village to maintain the natural and economic stability of the villagers. This is told by Zara when describing her father figure as follows.

“Meski sudah ditawari sebuah rumah dosen di dekat kampus IPB tempatnya mengajar, Ayah memilih tetap tinggal di rumah lama kami, di mana ia masih bisa bersepeda ke Batu Luhur.(Partikel, 2012 : 9)

Rejection of a material offer in this case of the house is a sign of a simple attitude. Such simplicity is a good potential to develop into a non-hoarding attitude. Thus, work is a means of creating, not solely for making money.

One of the actions taken by Firas in protecting nature is to create rainwater reservoirs which are then connected to reservoirs and filtered water so that village communities do not lack clean water. Here is the quote.

Batu Luhur tidak pernah kekurangan air. Bogor, kota bercurah hujan tertinggi, dimanfaatkan Ayah dengan merancang penampungan air hujan yang disambungkan ke sebuah reservoir. Di penampungan itu, air hujan difilter dengan biji kelor, kerikil, dan ijuk, hingga setiap tetes air yang dihasilkan layak minum. (Partikel, 2012: 13)

Indirectly this also reflects the attitude on the 7th principle of Shiva's ecofeminism. Reject privatization of public property and/or commercialization: water, air, land, natural resources.

Firas teaches his son to love nature by setting himself as an example. He, not only theorized but practiced directly. Gives Zara a memory record of how to cultivate the natural resources that are available and also abundant.

Increased Grassroots Participation in Respecting All Economic, Social, and Technological Decisions

The next principle that Firas taught Zarah was the third principle of Shiva's ecofeminism. On the third principle, Shiva appealed to increased participation or grassroots democracy with respect to all economic, social and technological decisions. Dewi Lestari describes in the *Partikel* novels through what Firas did. This is what Zara witnessed as an exemplary from her father. Firas does not only filter water and produce clean water. With his knowledge and education, Firas urged residents to use pest-resistant plants, instead of displacing synthetic chemicals that pollute the environment. If needed, Firas has just distributed herbal liquid from the results of his research to residents. Here is the quote.

Ayah menemukan cara untuk mengadakan pupuk dan obat-obatan sendiri. Ia mendayakan ibu-ibu untuk mengumpulkan semak kirinyuh dan sampah-sampah organik, lalu membangun mesin-mesin pengolah kompos dengan tenaga kayuh. Di sebuah gubuk, ratusan kilogram kompos dan berjeriken-jeriken pupuk cair dihasilkan setiap bulannya. Untuk penangkal hama, Ayah meminta masyarakat menanam pohon mimba sebanyak mungkin. Sebagian besar ditanam mengelilingi ladang, diselang-selingi kembang tahi kotok. Ayah bilang, tanaman-tanaman itu mengusir serangga pengganggu secara alami. Jika dibutuhkan, baru ia membuat ekstrak dari air daun dan biji mimba untuk disemprotkan ke ladang. Sisanya dipakai untuk pemakaian antiseptik rumah tangga. (Partikel, 2012 : 12)

From the quote, it appears that Firas told residents to use natural plants to repel pests, namely using *neem* trees and *kotok* moles, instead of using synthetic midges. In addition, to maintain the nutritional stability of the farmland, Dad empowered the community, which in the novel tells the story of mothers to make organic fertilizer or compost. This is a form of grassroots participation in respecting economic, social, and technological decisions that do not harm nature. Firas became a good example remembered by Zara. Until Zara says.

Bila setiap anak diajari untuk mencintai kedua orangtuanya sama besar, dengan sangat menyesal aku harus mengakui bahwa cintaku menggunakan peringkat. Ayah adalah dewa. Aku ini anak blasteran dewa. Sejenis Hercules. (Partikel, 2012: 9).

Acknowledgements

This article is dedicated as the final assignment for doctoral program at Universitas Negeri Semarang.

Conclusion

In this novel, there is the formation of a Zarah character to love the environment or nature. The formation was formed early and started from the family environment. In addition to providing stories to enter the child's subconscious, Firas characters provide exemplary attitudes with a simple life attitude and make good use of natural resources without destroying them. Among other things, Firas made rainwater reservoirs and then filtered them so that clean water reserves for residents increased. In addition, Firas also empowers mothers in her village to make compost from organic waste and empowers local farmers to grow pest-resistant plants, not using synthetic chemical drugs. The things Firas did synergized with the principles of ecofeminism that Shiva echoed.

The principles are as follows. *First*, The purpose of economic activity is not to generate heaps of commodities and money, but to regenerate life. *Second*, Economic activity is based on relations that respect natural and non-exploitative wealth. *Three*, increased participation or grassroots democracy by respecting all economic, social and technological decisions.

References

- Clement, F., Harcourt, W. J., Joshi, D., Sato, C., & Clement, F. (2019). Feminist Political Ecologies of the Commons and Commoning. *International Journal of the Commons*, 13(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.972>.
- Darmodiharjo, Darji & Shidarta. (2006). *Apa dan Bagaimana Filsafat Hukum di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Edwards, S. (2020). Allowing Ourselves to Reimagine Ecologically Responsible Futures for Education Research and Practice Globally : Critiquing the Limitations Imposed by Christian Hegemony. *ECNU Review of Education*, 3(1), 165–168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2096531120908129>.
- Folbre, N. (2020). Cooperation & Conflict in the Patriarchal Labyrinth. *Daedalus: The Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Science*, 149(1), 198–212.
- Gunawan, H. (2012). *Pendidikan Karakter Konsep dan Implementasi*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Harcourt, W. (2019). Feminist Political Ecology Practices of Worlding : Art , Commoning and the Politics of Hope in the Classroom. *International Journal of the Commons*, 13(1), 153–174. <https://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.929>.
- Harris, M. L. (2020). *Ecowomanism : Buddhist – Christian Dialogue from a Womanist and Ecological Perspective*. 36(1), 123–129. <https://doi.org/10.2979/jfemistudreli.36.1.11>.
- Kenneth, May, Adam & Caroline Slim. (2005). *Cara Mengembangkan Berbagai Komponen Kecerdasan*. Jakarta: PT. Indeks.
- Lestari, Dee. (2012). *Partikel*. Yogyakarta: Bentang.
- Murphy, J., & Parry, S. (2020). Gender, Households and Sustainability: Disentangling and Re-entangling with the Help of ‘Work’ and ‘Care.’ *EPE: Nature and Space*, 0(0), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848620948432>.
- Pulungan, R. (2017). “Analisis Struktur dan Tekstur Cerpen Bensin di Kepala Bapak Karya Muhammad Subhan Majalah Horison Edisi Februari 2014,” *Peneliti, Pendidik Bahasa dan Sastra*. Vol. 2, No. 2.

- Sato, C., Maria, J., & Alarcón, S. (2019). Toward a Postcapitalist Feminist Political Ecology's Approach to the Commons and Commoning. *International Journal of the Commons*, 13(1), 36–61. <https://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.933>.
- Setiawan, A., & Musaffak, M. (2020). Praktik mistisisme Jawa dalam novel Partikel karya Dewi Lestari. *KEMBARA: Jurnal Keilmuan Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya*, 6(2), 267-278.
- Shiva dan Mies. (2005). *Ecofeminism: Perspektif Gerakan Perempuan dan Lingkungan*. Yogyakarta: IRE Publisher.
- Strauss, Anselm dan Juliet Corbin. (2017). *Dasar-dasar Penelitian Kualitatif*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar
- Susanto, D. (2012). *Pengantar Teori Sastra*. Jakarta: Caps.
- Susiati, S., Tenriawali, A. Y., Nursin, N., Nacikit, J., & Mukadar, S. (2020). Nilai Edukasi dalam Novel Partikel Karya Dewi Lestari:(The Value of Education in *Partikel* Novels by Dewi Lestari). *Uniqbu Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(3), 176-183.
- Taylor, V., & Gooday, G. (2020). Gender and Agency in the Anthropocene. *RCC Perspectives*, (1), 10–15.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).