



Deforestation in the Short Story "Curse of the Teak Dragon" by Teguh Satriyo

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ABSTRACT

Abstract: This study aims to examine the intrinsic elements of Teguh Satriyo's short story "Kutukan Naga Jati" specifically the plot, setting, characters and the theme. A descriptive qualitative method and sosiological approach were used to analyze the intrinsic elements of the literary work, involving a literature review and content analysis approach. The theories used focus on the intrinsic elements of the literary work and sociological approach, which view the literary work as a reflection of its society or social reality. This study found that of the four elements analyzed reflected the deforestation that was caused primarily by human's greediness to fulfill his needs regardless of ethical consequences and the damage to the nature it may cause

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1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional One of the functions of literature or literary works is to be a mirror or reflection of their society. Literature has a role to perpetuate values, cultural norms, morality including social struggles and decisions and actions taken by the community or members of its society in order to face the challenges or obstacles in life they face. Agustin et al (2025) argue that literature, in addition to being able to talk about political pressures caused by identity conflicts, ideological violence, social alienation, gender-based violence, criticism of power hegemony, and tensions between nationalism and the marginalization of local identities, can also talk about socio-economic inequalities that trigger decisions and actions taken by communities or members of society.

Kheertika (2018) also emphasized that literature functions as a mirror of its society because literature reflects human activities as members of society. Literature helps to provide exposure to the community. Many literary works deal with social issues that make people aware of the truth and then change their perspective on the problems they face.

Shalini and Samundeswari (2017) added that in addition to being a mirror of society, literature also has a corrective function, literature describes the shortcomings or diseases of society and makes them aware of these shortcomings and diseases and overcomes them. Furthermore, they illustrate that it is almost impossible for the literary work not to depict the attitudes, morals and values of the society because there is no writer of literary works who are not in contact with the life of the people.

Short stories (short stories) are literary works that fall into the prose genre. Short stories, like other literary genres, also function as mimesis or mirrors that represent what is happening in society. Singh (2022) said that all literary writers record real events in the form of creative works so that people can reflect and implement the necessary changes.

To produce a quality short story, a short story writer must pay attention to the way he builds the elements in the short story he writes, or also known as intrinsic elements.

The first element that a writer must pay attention to is that the *plot* or storyline that he or she arranges must be interesting. To create an interesting storyline, short story writers need to pay attention to the *stages of plot* in their short



stories. The most commonly known stages of the plot are the four stages that start from exposition, conflict, climax and resolution. Sudjiman (in Ramadhanti, 2024) completes the four stages into eight stages, namely:

- Paparan (*exposition*)
- Inciting *moment*
- Gawatan (*rising action*)
- Konflik (*conflict*)
- Rumitan (*complication*)
- Klimaks (*climax*)
- Leraian (*falling action*)
- Resolution

The presentation introduces the reader to the main characters (or characters) in the short story, as well as to the setting of the time and place. Stimulation is a stage where a snippet of an event is displayed to invite the reader's curiosity. The stage that follows it, the challenge, increases the tension in the mind of the short story reader, before reaching the next stage, the conflict, when the protagonist is confronted with a party who is opposed to his interests or is antagonistic to him. The conflicts experienced by the main characters can be in the form of conflicts:

- Characters against other characters
- Figures against society
- Figures against nature
- The character fights against himself, and so on.

Complexity is a stage that comes after the reader realizes that the conflicts that occur in the short story become increasingly complex. At this stage, the conflict is felt to be increasingly challenging for the protagonist. This makes it even more difficult for readers to guess who will win after this conflict.

The peak of the complexity stage is the climax stage, which is followed by the dissolution stage. In the resolution stage, the tension created gradually decreases in intensity where the reader already understands the end of the protagonist's fight versus the conflict. The final stage of the plot, the completion, is the stage where the reader can come to the conclusion that the protagonist's conflict ends in victory, defeat, or a combination of victory and defeat, or ends with a question mark where the short story writer hangs on the ending of the story and leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions.

Burt-Thomas (2010) stated that because short stories have a limited number of pages, usually short stories focus on one main plot, without any additional plots (subplots).

A short story writer must carefully consider character creation and character development. The writer must determine the protagonist—the central figure in the narrative—as well as the antagonist (whose interests are at odds with the protagonist's), the *foil* or supporting character, and the *stock character* (a complementary figure with a small but crucial role in the overall story). Effective methods of character creation and development must, among other things, include the uniqueness of each character in terms of physical appearance and temperament, including the traits that accompany it. Christie and Kempton (2020) assert that fiction writers must integrate a variety of overarching components for the main character, including strengths, weaknesses, social interactions, and other relevant factors.

A crucial component that requires careful preparation is also the setting, which includes location, time context, and objects, as well as atmospheres and nuances, whether geographical, historical, or artificial. The writer must choose the right setting and time to reinforce the narrative impact. Therefore, after determining the location and period as the setting of the story, the author must also consider the relevant historical and cultural dimensions. If Jakarta is chosen as the setting, the author must understand the specific decade depicted; Jakarta in the 1970s was very different from Jakarta in the 1980s, 1990s, or today. Weaver (2021) states that location and time can be described based on their scope, ranging from small to large, which includes a specific region, city, hamlet, or even a country as a whole. The characters have to interact with the setting, which in turn is expected to reinforce the other elements of the short narrative. Settings that function in this way are classified as "*integral settings*", while settings that only provide location and time without substantially affecting other components are referred to as "*backdrop settings*".

No less important than these elements is also the theme, or message behind the short story that is presented, both those that are conveyed explicitly, or those that are presented subtly and implicitly. Theme is the main message that is the core of the short story, as well as the main thing that the short story writer wants to convey about the subject of



the short story he writes. Negara et al (2024) say that the theme or message in a short story is influenced by issues that arise in society in the era or in the era in which the short story writer lives.

One of the important issues or events in people's lives is environmental damage. Environmental damage is a decrease in environmental quality that occurs due to a reduction in the quality and quantity of natural resources of air, water, soil, etc., including damage to ecosystems and the extinction of natural habitats and species.

Changes that occur in the environment are actually events that occur naturally or naturally. However, looking at the environmental damage that has occurred so far, it can no longer be said to be natural processes, because it turns out that the human factor is the main cause of the damage to nature and the environment.

Azami & Kustanto (2023) stated that the root cause of environmental damage is humans. Human causal factors are larger and more complicated in impact than natural factors themselves. Human beings with their various dimensions, especially with the factors of mobility of their growth, the intellect with all the development of its cultural aspects, and likewise with the factors of the process of time or times that change the character and view of humans, are factors that are more appropriately associated with environmental problems because development is carried out without paying attention to environmental balance factors which in turn will cause environmental damage and pollution life.

One of the prominent environmental damage is forest destruction. Forest destruction is divided into two, namely degradation and deforestation. Degradation is the decline in the quality of forests and the biodiversity in them, while deforestation is the permanent loss of forests. Degradation and deforestation occur due to several factors, including illegal logging, forest fires, land conversion, forest encroachment, and forest environmental pollution.

Deforestation according to Jong (2026) is caused by 3 (three) main factors, namely: 1) expansion of food coverage, as occurred in the development of rice fields in Papua, 2) electrification, namely the clearing of forests for nickel mining as occurred in Sulawesi and North Maluku, and 3) deforestation for industry, such as for the expansion of oil palm plantations and biodiesel fuel production, especially in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the majority of the causes of deforestation are due to human actions.

Deforestation will further trigger massive environmental damage such as global warming, animal extinctions, floods and landslides and other natural disasters, and of course threaten the lives of people who depend directly on forest ecosystems.

This research focuses on the portrait of deforestation depicted in the Short Story "Curse of the Teak Dragon" (KNJ) by Teguh Satriyo, a short story published by Kompas Daily on June 16, 2024.

KNJ tells the story of Kasbi, the main character, a villager who can no longer stand living in poverty. His fate began to change when he saw Nasirun, his friend, who became increasingly wealthy after deciding to become a logger in the forest near their village, to be sold to Juragan Ali. Kasbi also decided to follow in Nasirun's footsteps. After becoming quite rich, Kasbi was tempted to become the village head, but his wealth was not large enough to buy the votes of the residents to win in the village head election, especially since his rival to become the village head was very tough, namely the son of the current village head. Tempted by the lure of large money from Juragan Ali, Kasbi also invited his friends to cut down the largest teak tree sacred by the residents, even Nasirun did not dare to cut it down. A major disaster finally hit the village.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was carried out using a qualitative descriptive method where the research approach is directed to describe the phenomena that exist in literary works in detail. Data collection was carried out by analyzing the intrinsic elements of the short stories that were researched to answer the research question, namely, how forest destruction, especially deforestation, is depicted in the KNJ short story. The approach in this study is a sociological approach to literature, namely with the method of analyzing literary works that focuses on the reciprocal relationship between literary texts and social realities of society. This approach sees literary works not just as imaginative fictitious works of art, but as imitations or mirrors, or historical documents, which are often accompanied by criticism of the social phenomena that short story writers portray in their work. Larasati and Irmawati (2022) stated that sociology is the study of social life and its changes, complete with its causes and effects, so literary sociology is a study that seeks the relationship between literary works and the social structures in which the literary work was born.

Khofifatin & Shofah (2025) translate the sociological approach into a literary ecological approach, which then gave birth to ecocriticism. Literary ecology is called the perspective of discussing the relationship between literature and the environment. Literature is believed to come from the environmental conditions that are then described in it. In this perspective, literature that is involved in stopping the further destruction of nature by humans in the sense of literature is a warning for humans not to cause further damage to nature. Like Khofifatin & Shofah, Noho (2026) also began to use the term literary ecology in his research; Literature is not only entertainment, but also a mirror of the reality of life. Through literary works, the author describes the natural conditions, including the damage that occurs.



Literary ecology reveals the mutual relationship between humans and nature. Nevertheless, literary ecology is still included in the realm of literary sociology because, as Wiyatmi (2013) revealed by Wiyatmi (2013), the sociology of literature, especially the sociology of literary works, is a development of the mimetic approach, which understands literary works in relation to the reality and social aspects of society. This point of view is motivated by the fact that the existence of literary works cannot be separated from the social reality that occurs in society.

3. Results and Discussion

The KNJ storyline is effectively intertwined, there are no redundant parts. The narrative technique of this short story is made linear, chronological.

The exposure stage begins by introducing Kasbi, the main character of this story, who feels increasingly suffering because of the poverty that has befallen him.

He rode a buffalo bicycle. Pedals pedal
slowly. Although he actually wanted to
Sprinted. However, last night's rain that
to make a village road that is still
The ground yellow is really slippery.
Every now and then Kasbi almost slipped. Again
He is so shrewd in conquering the slippery road.
He didn't want to fall. Especially until he fell down
as his fate.

The stimulus stage appeared when Kasbi saw the change in the fate of Nasirun, his friend who had become more prosperous after becoming a bartender, cut down a teak tree, and then sold the wood to Juragan Ali. The stage of hardship that followed, briefly there was doubt in Kasbi's heart to follow in Nasirun's footsteps, before finally deciding to work for Nasirun, a choice that ultimately changed his fate to be as prosperous as Nasirun.

The conflict stage does not occur between one character and another, but occurs between the character and himself. Kasbi is not strong against the trials of his life. He once tried to infiltrate Malaysia to become an illegal worker but was caught by Malaysian immigration and detained before being repatriated in miserable conditions. The dawn prayer that he usually carries out in congregation at the mosque, he chooses to do at home, so that he can shoot faster into the forest to cut down trees.

Rumitan, which is the next stage, highlights Kasbi's anxiety to expedite his ambition to become the village chief, where the only way is to cut down the sacred teak tree in order to sell it to Juragan Ali who intends to pay him one hundred and fifty million rupiah, a sufficient amount of money to buy the votes of the residents in the village head election, because his rival is very hard to defeat unless Kasbi can get that amount of money. In his confusion, Kasbi even had time to consult with his spiritual teacher.

The climax of this short story is when Kasbi decides to cut down the sacred teak tree even though many remind him that there is a sacred tree waiting for him, namely a giant dragon. Even Nasirun did not dare to join when Kasbi invited him. Kasbi, who was determined, then succeeded in inviting several people to cut down the sacred tree. Armed with amulets from "smart people", Kasbi invited nine tree loggers to work together to topple the sacred teak tree. After cutting down the sacred teak tree, Kasbi thought that he had won and survived. At night he is haunted by a nightmare visited by the dragon waiting for the giant teak tree that he has collapsed.

The unraveling and finishing stages of this short story are made symbolically metaphorically with,

In the morning, Kasbi woke up. He felt his body heavy and stiff. The fingers are difficult to move. His eyes were still dim.

After a while, he realized that he was no longer on a couch with money. Kasbi was lying on a giant teak root that he had recently cut down.

Kasbi's eyes widened. He found his fingers, the tip of his nose, the edge of his lips, the curve of his ears, almost all over his body stiff, broken, petal, growing warts large and hard as wood.

Major disaster due to Kasbi's incompetence is over



cutting down a sacred giant teak tree, already described earlier at the end of his dream; People cried all the way, with faces writhing with regret. Their houses were submerged. There is no pleasure, no happiness, no peace, all that is presented is the sight of misery.

The setting of this short story, both in terms of time and place, is not explicitly conveyed. The time setting is most likely the present time because everything that happens is still relevant to the current condition of Indonesia.

The setting of the place can clearly be concluded to be a village located near the forest, so the setting of this place can be found on any island in Indonesia. Teguh Satriyo appropriately chose the setting of the story in the form of a village because the people of villages in Indonesia are indeed famous for being religious and at the same time superstitious. Heryansyah (2018) stated that the tendency for village people leads to religious and religious life, while urban people are more inclined to worldly life. On the other hand, Nugraha (2024) states that not a few Indonesian people, especially the lower middle class, believe in shamans more than modern medicine. Many Indonesian people still believe in superstitions and shamanic practices. What they believe is that superstition and shamanism can provide solutions to the problems they face, both health, sustenance, and social interaction. And this practice occurs generally in rural areas.

The next element, namely the character and characterization, it is undeniable that the most complete depiction of the character is in the protagonist of this short story, namely Kasbi.

It is described that Kasbi was initially a religious and patient person despite various life trials that often befell him, especially related to economic problems. However, the worldly temptation to become rich eventually changed Kasbi,

Dawn is not yet over. He did not
congregation at the mosque, already about one
this week to be exact. He chose to
Pray alone at home, so that you can quickly
Rush into the forest...

This change in Kasbi's character is even described as worse than the change that occurred in Nasirun. Nasirun was indeed the one who invited Kasbi to become a bartender or logger of trees in the forest, but Nasirun was not brave enough to cut down the giant teak trees that were sacred by the community. Nasirun was quite satisfied with having twelve plots of rice fields and five cages filled with buffalo. Kasbi doesn't want to just be like Nasirun. He became more greedy and thought that the only way to fulfill his ambition was to win the election of the village head.

Apart from Nasirun, the character of Juragan Ali also completes the attraction of this story. Juragan Ali, the timber harvester from the logging of the forest, played a role in changing the character of villagers such as Kasbi and Nasirun to be greedy, including promising a prize money of one hundred and fifty million rupiah for anyone who dared to cut down the largest teak tree which was said to be guarded by a giant dragon snake.

The characters of Nasirun and Juragan Ali can be said to be supporting figures or *foils* because their existence confirms the changes that occur in Kasbi the protagonist.

The theme or message element of this short story is quite easy to understand, namely greed turns humans into daring to justify all means, even though it results in disaster for many other people. Although the end of this short story is not explicitly explained, but is displayed in a symbolic, metaphorical way, the theme of this short story can be understood in a bright light.

With the linear narrative technique or *ab ovo*, Teguh Satriyo manages to present a straightforward, concise story, without wasting much explanation. It manages to keep the tension in check, which is necessary for the reader to enjoy it. Each part that is spoken concisely records the journey up and down the fate of the protagonist, Kasbi.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Of the four intrinsic elements of the KNJ short story (storyline, setting, characters and theme), all of them clearly support the explanation that Teguh Satriyo's short story is a perfect mirror of the causes of deforestation in Indonesia and the consequences it causes; Deforestation is caused by human greed so that he does not care about the balance of the environment, as a result of which natural disasters hit the area around the forest. Human greed causes deforestation because humans prefer to obtain wealth in a quick way without paying attention to the balance of nature, which makes humans choose to cut down forests illegally without caring that it will bring disaster and destruction.

5. SUGGESTIONS

The author suggests that the study of literary sociology related to environmental damage is further encouraged, especially for longer literary works such as novels, as well as choosing literary works from foreign writers who



photograph environmental damage in their respective countries. Studies like this are important to make the global community more aware that the problem of environmental damage cannot be underestimated because it has the potential to present a global disaster with indescribable consequences.

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