



ECOLOGICAL STUDY OF LITERATURE IN GEGURITAN KENDENG KAYA AMBENG

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the Kendeng Kaya Ambeng geguritan text using literary ecology. This research uses qualitative descriptive research. The data were collected using reading and note-taking techniques. This research utilises literature study techniques to strengthen the primary data collected. After that, the collected data are processed through a series of stages, including 1) data selection, 2) data interpretation, and 3) concluding the research results. Through a literary ecology approach, "Kendeng Kaya Ambeng" can be understood as a sharp criticism of environmental exploitation that harms local communities, especially farmers. The text highlights the conflict between development (which often only benefits certain parties) and the need to maintain ecological balance and the sustainability of human life. This genre's representation of environmental damage reminds us of the importance of harmony between humans and nature to prevent a bigger crisis.

Keywords: geguritan, literary ecology, kendang kaya ambeng

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a beautiful essay resulting from human creative activities in expressing their thoughts and feelings in written language, reflecting an event that occurs in people's lives (Sari, 2018). A literary work produced is a picture of the author's expression, which can provide an overview of the living conditions of the society in which the literary work exists.

Literary work is created for aesthetic purposes. Plato (in Faruk, 2012: 47) mentions that the world in literary works imitates reality, the world of ideas. The world in literary works forms itself as a social world that imitates the social world that exists in reality. Based on this description, it can be understood that life in literature is a reality imitation of the objective reality.

Among the forms of literary works is poetry. Poetry is the most beautiful words in the most beautiful arrangement (Samuel Taylor in Suryaman and Wiyatmi: 12). Poetry is an imaginative literary work. Literary language is connotative, because it contains many figures of speech and symbols (*majas*). Compared to other forms of literary works, poetry is more connotative, has more possible meanings (Reeves in Waluyo, 2010:25). Poetry is a form of literature that uses words as a medium of delivery to produce illusion and imagination, just as paintings use lines and colors to describe the painter's ideas (Kartikasari and Suprpto, 2018: 18).

The natural environment influences literature and human life's needs (Sari, 2018). A literary work in the creation process cannot be separated from the conditions of the natural environment, mainly where the author or creator of the work composes their creations. The term poetry epistemologically comes from the Greek word *poeima*, which means making, or *poesis*, which means

making; in English, it is called poem or poetry. Poetry means making and making. Through poetry, a person has created a world of their own, which may contain messages or descriptions of certain physical and inner feelings (Aminuddin in Wisang, 2014: 12).

There is a modern Javanese poem titled *Kendeng Kaya Ambeng*. This modern Javanese poem is published digitally on a blog, <https://geguritanku.wordpress.com/2010/08/29/kendeng-kaya-ambeng/>. Judging from the title, this poem contains an event in the Kendeng mountain or a mountainous area. Kendeng Mountains are limestone mountains that can be utilised as raw material for cement production, so this area is the target of cement companies in Indonesia. On the other hand, this area is a water source and an agricultural area for all Samin tribe residents. The Samin tribe is one example of an Indonesian community that still lives by maintaining local wisdom. This tribe is in Central Java and occupies parts of Pati, Rembang and Blora regencies (Subekti, 2016, p. 190). A literary work can be studied using several theories that become "knives" to analyse existing components. The theory applied to analyse *Kendeng Kaya Ambeng's* geguritan is literary ecology.

Endraswara (2016:2) argues that ecology combines two Greek words: *oikos*, which means home, and *logos*, which means science or study. Etymologically, ecology means the science of living things and their habitats, so literary ecology also examines literature from its ecological side. In other words, ecology is a science that studies the mutual relationship between living things and their environment. Based on the aforementioned description, this study aims to examine the geguritan *Kendeng Kaya Ambeng* by applying literary ecology.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative research, qualitative research is descriptive research and tends to use analysis with descriptive analysis methods, descriptive analysis is a method used to describe or provide information, provide insight into the subject being studied through data or samples that have been collected (Sugiono: 2009: 29). The data is collected using reading and note-taking techniques. This research utilises literature study techniques to corroborate the primary data collected. After that, the collected data were processed through a series of stages, including 1) data selection, 2) data interpretation, and 3) summarising the research results (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following describes the results and discussion of the analysis of the geguritan text *Kendeng kaya Ambeng* by Allief Billah. The discussion begins with the presentation of the geguritan text, free translation into Indonesian, content review, and then literary ecology analysis of the geguritan text.

Kendeng Kaya Ambeng

Allief Billah

Nagari kang kawentar ing pangucap
gemah aripah tata tur raharja
nanging sanyatane mung aran

Tata tingalana
tentrem mlempem
kerta tumraping sapa
raharja kanggone durjana

Sawah pategalan dadi rebutan
antarane aktivis lingkungan
saha para tiran

Tahun 2010 iki gumrembyeng
dadi pacelathon lan rerasan
gunung Kendeng kaya ambeng
padha reroyokan murih seneng

Ora mrayogi kadang tani
saha sumber-sumber sing padha mati
Blora Rembang Engga Pati
pengusaha lan panguasa atine mati

Dhuh Gusti kawula satemah memuji
karaharjan kawibawan kang sejati
nagari kang kawentar gemah aripah loh jinawi
panjang dawa pocapane
punjung luhur kawibawane
ora mung ana lambe
(Rembang, 29 Agustus 2010)

In English:

Kendeng Kaya Ambeng

Allief Billah

The country (Indonesia) is known as
gemah ripah tata raharja,
However, that is just a title.

Look at the (existing) order,
peace (is also) sluggish,

Kerta to whom,
welfare (is instead reserved for) criminals.

Paddy fields and pategalan are a bone of contention
between environmental activists and tyrants.

In 2010, this echoed,
a topic of conversation and discussion,
kendeng mountain like tumpeng,
being fought over to achieve pleasure.

Not paying attention to the farmers,
Moreover, the sources that died.
Business people in the areas of Blora, Rembang, and Pati
have a dead heart.

O God, I pray.
The welfare of the proper authority.
A country that is known as gemah ripah loh jinawi,
which has high authority and nobility,
It is not only on the lips (but a reality).

Geguritan Content Review

Kandeng Kaya Ambeng's poem was uploaded on a blog containing several literary works in Javanese poetry, also known as geguritan, especially geguritan gagrag anyar, not geguritan gagrag oldas. This geguritan consists of six stanzas. One stanza and another are interrelated in an inseparable way to form a geguritan as a whole literary building with meaning. The following is a review of the geguritan Kandeng kaya Ambeng content that will lead to an analysis using the literary ecology approach.

In the first stanza, the author describes Indonesia as a country with gemah aripah tata raharja. The Javanese language has two similar expressions: gemah ripah loh jinawi karta raharja and tata titi tentrem. Sajid (1958: 53) describes the meaning of each word in the expression gemah ripah loh jinawi karta raharja. Loh means sincere, kang sarwa tinanudur 'what is planted grows well'. Jinawi means cheap kang sarwa tinuku, 'what is bought is cheap'. Gemah means katandha ingkang laku dagang rintem dalu lumampah tan ana pedhote, that the traders pass by day and night without stopping. Ripah means katandha ingkang sami gegriya salebeting nigari ing Mandraka, jejel, riyel, saban cukit tepung taritis saking gemah raharjaning nagari 'The prosperity of the Mandraka country is evident in the crowded houses of the people. Karta means tebih saking parang muka, far from enemies'. Raharja means 'the village people live in peace and tranquillity'. Overall, the meaning of the expression is a description of a country where the land is fertile and the people live prosperously,

safely, serenely, and peacefully (Depdikbud, 1984, p. 58). Tata titi tentrem consists of three parts: 'good practice, orderly', 'meticulous, careful in action', and 'serene and peaceful'. From the description, the author illustrates that Indonesia is famous as a prosperous country with a large population, full of order, and full of serenity and peace. However, that is not a reality, only a slogan. It is as in the following excerpt from the first stanza.

*Nagari kang kawentar ing pangucap
gemah aripah tata tur raharja
nanging sanyatane mung aran*

Still related to the first stanza, in the second stanza, the author makes several invitations and asks several questions through several indicators of gemah ripah tata raharja attributed to the state. The author invites us to see what order/compliance with existing rules looks like, as in the quote tata tingalana. A statement that tells us that the peace is sluggish (*tentrem mlempem*), a peace that is not realised. Then, it is questioned for whom the welfare is intended (*karta tumraping sapa*). Ideally, welfare should be the right of all people without exception. Meanwhile, welfare and glory are instead directed to thieves or criminals (*raharja kanggone durjana*).

The irregularity that occurred at that time (the time setting of the writing of the geguritan) was that rice fields and tegal or garden land became the subject of a struggle between environmental activists and tyrants. It is further explained in the next stanza that the year that became the time setting for the writing of Kendeng Kaya Ambeng geguritan was 2010. That year, conversations and speeches echoed, and Kendeng Mountain became the subject of a struggle. Suppose it is likened to a tumpeng (*ambeng*) that many people contest. Many parties want to own/occupy the mountain to achieve happiness. It is in line with the third and fourth stanza of this geguritan.

*Sawah pategalan dadi rebutan
antarane aktivis lingkungan
saha para tiran*

*Tahun 2010 iki gumrembyeng
dadi pacelathon lan rerasan
gunung Kendeng kaya ambeng
padha reroyokan murih seneng*

If in the fourth stanza the time setting and the object of the problem in the geguritan are depicted, in the fifth stanza the author adds information in the form of a place, where the struggle for Kendeng Mountain took place, namely between Blora, Rembang, and Pati Regencies. It is also illustrated that the hearts of the business people and rulers (government) at that time were dead; in

other words, they all had no hearts or feelings. The evidence is as written in this stanza's first and second lines, *ora mrayogi kadang tani saha sumber-sumber sing padha mati*.

The sixth stanza concludes the geguritan titled Kendeng Kaya Ambeng. In this closing section, the author expresses concern, care, and hope for this country. These feelings are expressed through prayers directed to God, hoping the country known as Gemah Ripah Loh Jinawi can truly possess prosperity and true authority. More than that, the Geguritan writer's desire is illustrated so that this country is widely known and upheld by its authority. This wish is to be realised not only in words.

Analysis of Literary Ecology in Geguritan Kendeng Kaya Ambeng

Representation of Nature as a Victim of Exploitation

*Sawah pategalan dadi rebutan
 antarane aktivis lingkungan
 saha para tiran*

This quote describes the exploitation of the environment in the Kendeng Mountain area. The rice paddies and fields that are the source of livelihood for local communities are contested by several parties. The contending parties include activists fighting for environmental sustainability and rulers/tyrants oriented towards exploitation for personal gain. This text criticises how nature becomes a victim of human conflict of interest.

Ecological Crisis and Natural Resource Destruction

*Ora mrayogi kadang tani
 saha sumber-sumber sing padha mati*

This passage highlights the direct impact of environmental exploitation on farming communities. "Dead sources" means destroying natural resources such as water, soil and other ecosystems due to environmentally unfriendly development. It aligns with data collected by JMPPK (Jaringan Masyarakat Peduli Pegunungan Kendeng). JMPPK consists of Paguyuban Katentreman, Laskar Watuputih, and Barisan Mahasiswa Rembang). As Apriando (2014) mentions, the threat of ecological damage and loss of agricultural land for residents around the Kendeng mountains is very real. In the Watuputih Karst area, hundreds of springs, caves, and underground rivers flow and discharge very well. The review indicates the risk of damage that becomes a threat if karst mining activities in the Kendeng Mountains area continue.

Kendeng Mountain as a Symbol of Exploited Nature

*Gunung Kendeng kaya ambeng
 padha reroyokan murih seneng*

Kendeng Mountain is symbolised as "ambeng", which, according to Kamus Basa Jawa-Indonesia (2021), ambeng means tumpeng. Tumpeng here can also mean something served, such as food, which is one of the sources of human life. It represents the exploitation of mountains as economic resources, especially for industries such as the construction of cement plants. This symbol emphasises how nature is seen not as an entity that must be preserved, but as an object of commodification.

Criticism of Ecological and Social Imbalance

A section of the Geguritan text contains deep meaning about irony and reality that is contrary to expectations. The following quote demonstrates this.

*Nagari kang kawentar ing pangucap
gemah aripah tata tur raharja
nanging sanyatane mung aran*

This quote criticises the discrepancy between the rhetoric of "gemah ripah loh jinawi" (prosperity and well-being) and the reality of environmental destruction and the suffering of ordinary people. The rulers' and businesspeople's actions destroy the ecological balance that is the basis of prosperity. In the first line, a country well-known to many people is often mentioned, and the pride of many places is described. It has a reputation as a promising place, full of positive images in conversation or pronunciation.

The quote gemah ripah tata tur raharja emphasises the description of the country: a prosperous, welfare-filled, well-organised place that provides peace for its citizens. This description refers to the ideal or idealisation of a country that is considered perfect, as if it were a paradise for its inhabitants.

In contrast to this stanza's first and second lines, the third line states a contradictory reality, as in the quote nanging sanyatane mung aran. The reality is far different from what is imagined or said. The country only has a big name, but it does not reflect the situation. It illustrates the disappointment of a reality that does not match the expectations or image that has been created.

This part of the Geguritan reflects ecological and social imbalance. The ecological aspect of the impact of the situation of the idea in the first and second lines is evident. At the same time, according to the text in the third line, social life that has not conformed to ideal conditions is evident.

The Death of Environmental Awareness

Pengusaha lan panguasa atine mati

This phrase underscores that the entrepreneurs and rulers have no empathy for the environment or local communities. They only care about profits without considering ecological and social impacts.

CONCLUSION

Ecocriticism examines the relationship between literature and the environment, particularly how literary texts represent nature, resource exploitation, and human relationships with the environment. This approach is relevant to analyse *Kendeng Kaya Ambeng* because the text reflects social criticism of environmental damage due to development conflicts.

Through the literary ecology approach, "*Kendeng Kaya Ambeng*" can be understood as a sharp critique of environmental exploitation that harms local communities, especially farmers. The text highlights the conflict between development (which often only benefits certain parties) and the need to maintain ecological balance and the sustainability of human life. This genre's representation of environmental damage reminds us of the importance of harmony between humans and nature to prevent a bigger crisis. This approach shows that *geguritan* is an aesthetic expression and an advocacy tool to voice the interests of the environment and affected small communities.

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