



Representation of Ecoteological Ideas in the Collection of Poetry After the Sixth Day by Ahmad Nurullah

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the ecoteological dimension in Ahmad Nurullah's poetry collection *Setelah Hari Keenam* by the Sixth Day, focusing on a reading that integrates ecocritical approaches and theological reflection. The research method used is qualitative analysis with an ecocritical approach based on an ecoteological perspective. The research data consist of poetic texts in *Setelah Hari Keenam*, which were purposively selected based on the relevance of their ecological and theological themes. The analysis was conducted by interpreting symbols, metaphors, and poetic structures to identify representations of nature, ecological submission, and spiritual reflections contained therein. The conclusion of this study is that Ahmad Nurullah's work functions not only as an aesthetic expression, but also as a theological-ecological text that encourages reconciliation between humans and the earth. An ecoteological reading of this work demonstrates the potential of literature in mediating spiritual relationships with nature and fostering collective awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability. This research is expected to expand the repertoire of Indonesian literary studies based on ecocriticism and become a reference for interdisciplinary research that connects literature, theology, and environmental studies.

KEYWORDS:

ecocriticism, ecoteology, poetry, Ahmad Nurullah, *After the Sixth Day*, ecological crisis, Indonesian literature

1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental damage is a consequence of human activity. In this century, ecological conditions are extremely worrying. Research presented by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2019 found that the Earth's temperature has risen by 1.5 degrees Celsius. This has led to an increase in global warming. This has led to the melting of polar ice caps and a significant rise in sea levels. This global warming, to name just three examples, is caused by pollution, deforestation, and difficult-to-decompose plastic waste.

In the Indonesian context, the Ministry of Forestry released a book in 2018 that showed that Indonesia's forests were beginning to dwindle due to illegal logging and rampant deforestation. This forest destruction ultimately resulted in the deterioration of wildlife and forest ecosystems. Animals sought food in people's homes due to the deterioration of their territorial boundaries. Water and food sources for indigenous communities were also declining.

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The current ecological crisis can no longer be interpreted solely as a failure of the natural resource management system. It also stems from spiritual, epistemological, and cosmological crises (Ganaie, 2018). In this sense, the destruction of planet Earth is not only caused by the exploitation of nature, but also by the assumption that humans are the center of the universe. This paradigm is known as anthropocentrism.

Efforts to restore the earth ultimately require a shift in perspective on the world, on humanity, and on theology (religiosity). Humans have the right to use natural resources to sustain life on earth. However, irresponsible attitudes toward nature have resulted in the earth's destruction. Anthropocentrism, which views humans as the center and benchmark of arbitrary values, has reduced nature to a mere entity to be exploited at will. This materialistic perspective on nature has led to the earth's severe damage (Ganaie, 2018).

It is at this point that ecoteology becomes a crucial theological discipline in transcending the assumptions of anthropocentrism. However, ecoteology is not merely a narrow branch of environmental theology, but also a critique of the structures of modern civilization that have disconnected from nature and cosmic reality (Glottfelty & Fromm, 1996).

Literary works are a space in which poets and writers respond to the world around them. In the face of a damaged world and a deteriorating natural environment, poetry serves to record this, acting as a warning and a message (Ganaie, 2018). In the current global ecological crisis, poetry serves as a medium for responding to the ongoing environmental damage. Poetry can raise readers' awareness and demonstrate how poetry can play a role in repairing the natural world, which is being destroyed by human activity.

The selection of Ahmad Nurullah's poetry collection *After the Sixth Day* as the object of research is based on the thematic relevance and reflective depth presented by the work. This poetry book *After the Sixth Day* not only presents a landscape of the earth's destruction due to human hands, but also invites readers to reconsider the relationship between creation, nature, God and humanity. In this context, Ahmad Nurullah's poetry *After the Sixth Day* becomes a text worthy of being positioned as a locus of alternative ecotheology. Thus, Ahmad Nurullah's poetry in this book, in addition to describing a world destroyed by human greed and negligence, also contains reflections on creation, destruction and whether it is possible to be saved.

This research starts from the assumption that the poems collected in *After the Sixth Day* can be read as ecotheological texts that aim to convey an idea of ecological spirituality through poetic strategy. This research is also intertwined with the ideas of ecotheological hermeneutics, the process of creation, and the eschatology of the earth. Ecotheology presents as a critique of the paradigm of anthropocentrism and ecotheology based on earth-centric spirituality. Therefore, in this research, ecotheology is used to explore how poetry can become a space for spiritual reflection on the condition of the earth and how this spirituality appears in poetry.

With this background and initial findings, namely the importance of discussing current issues such as the ecological crisis, the researcher decided to raise the idea of ecotheology in literary works, in this context, Ahmad Nurullah's poems in *After the Sixth Day*. This research also attempts to combine ecocritical and theological approaches equally and not in a subordinate relationship. From this description, the researcher intends to conduct a study entitled *Representation of Ecotheological Ideas in the Collection of Poems After the Sixth Day* by Ahmad Nurullah.

III. RESULTS

Research on Ahmad Nurullah's poetry collection *After the Sixth Day* shows that the book offers the idea of ecotheology as a profound critique of the contemporary ecological crisis. From a semiotic and hermeneutic reading of the poem's lines, it is found that *After the Sixth Day* articulates three main nodes: the idea of ecotheology, symbols of subjugation and destruction of nature, and forms

of ecological crisis presented through the richness of metaphor, imagery, and narrative structure of the poem.

Nurullah constructs poetry as a theological-ecological reflective field, a literary tool for examining the relationship between humans, nature, and God. In his poems, particularly **Adam & Hawa: Myth in a Restless Day**, it appears that the creation of the world was not only a cosmological event but also a spiritual one. Every creature—from stone, wind, dew, to spinach—is presented as an entity possessing divine dignity. Humans are not the absolute center, but rather part of God's interconnected community of creation.

Poets interpret the fall of Adam and Eve not only as a theological sin but also as an ecological sin: the moment when humans separated from cosmic harmony and began to establish power relations with the earth and each other. These poems imply that spirituality divorced from nature gives rise to violence, greed, and ecological destruction.

The verbal symbols in *After the Sixth Day* reveal the layers of human domination over nature that have occurred historically, politically, and ideologically. In poems such as "Barito," "Echo," "From a Country: Fragmentaria," and "At the Sperm Bank," the poet uses diction such as gripping nails, wooden blocks, bombs exploding, the world packed, and words breeding into lightning to show the shift in human relations towards nature from a sacred relationship to an exploitative relationship.

The dualistic paradigm between humans and nature—between culture and nature—is identified as the root of oppression. Using allegorical and metaphorical language, Nurullah explains how the projects of modernity, capitalism, and developmentalism have diminished the value of ecological spirituality, replacing it with the logic of the market and industrialization.

In the poem "Barito," for example, it appears that modernity has invaded the sacred territory of indigenous communities and replaced spiritual rites with symbols of global consumption such as satellite dishes and tape recorders. Here, spirituality is replaced by commodification; and the sacred relationship between humans and nature is replaced by the logic of production.

The poetry collection *After the Sixth Day* also presents concrete forms of ecological crisis with great intensity and depth. This crisis is not merely ecological in the physical sense, but encompasses spiritual, social, and ontological ecocrisis. The poet depicts not only the destruction of rivers, land, or trees, but also the psychological and moral suffering of humanity resulting from its alienation from the earth.

In the poem "From a Country: Fragmentaria," the earth is depicted as an "old giant" hiding within its own body, embracing history and treasures, leaving behind "dry rivers, porous soil, a dying country, and corpses." This is a symbol

of structural ecocide, where the state and economic system have exploited nature.

Meanwhile, in the poem "Genesis," the poet describes destruction with apocalyptic diction: "smoky silence," "torn earth," "writhing breath among holes and charred stone fragments." Here, destruction leaves not only sadness but also a sense of helplessness as time continues to "wander away, carrying its broken beats"—suggesting that even ecological time has been broken and lost its cycle.

The ecological crisis referred to in this poem is cumulative and multidimensional:

Physical crisis: forest destruction, dried-up rivers, barren land.

Spiritual crisis: humanity's disconnection from God and the cosmos.

Linguistic crisis: when even "words" burn, freeze, or explode along with the world (as in "Maybe It's Just Words").

Biological crisis: when the human body undergoes decay, deformation, or manipulated reproduction, as in the poem "At the Sperm Bank."

All this suggests that *After the Sixth Day* rejects a partial view of ecology. It offers a total ecology, integrating body, language, history, time, and faith into a complex ecological landscape.

A comprehensive reading of *After the Sixth Day* demonstrates that the ecotheology in this poem exists as both a critical and transformative discourse. It not only serves as a medium for addressing the crisis but also offers ethical and spiritual solutions to overcome it.

Ahmad Nurullah recasts myths, religious symbols, and modern narratives into a poetic form that argues that ecological solutions do not simply rely on technology and policy, but also require cosmic repentance, namely:

Restore the human relationship with nature to a spiritual, not a transactional, one.

Cultivate an awareness that all creation is part of a sacred cosmic body.

Reject the dominance of modern words and logos that separate the body and nature from spiritual meaning.

Thus, poetry becomes a means of resacralizing the world, and poets act as ecological prophets—those who remind us that when trees are cut down, rivers are drained, and the land is dug up, what is destroyed is not only the objects, but also the soul of the world.

Looking ahead, the results of this research open up new possibilities for building literary ecotheology as an interdisciplinary approach, which connects literary studies, theology, environmental philosophy, and postcolonial studies in understanding the destruction and healing of the earth.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. The Idea of Ecotheology in the Poetry Collection After the Sixth Day

Ecotheology, also known as environmental theology, is a response or reflection of religious scholars on environmental issues. Ecotheology is so important because, as Sayyed Hossein Nasr (1976) stated, religion possesses moral values and wisdom that can serve as a basis for preserving and maintaining the balance of the earth. Ecotheology, or environmental theology, can be interpreted as a way to "bring God into every human activity—especially in managing the environment (Ilyas, 2011). Thus, there is not only a functional relationship between God, humans, and nature, but also a close spiritual one.

Within ecotheology, religion is encouraged to take action to save the environment. Humans can no longer remain silent in the face of the imminent ecological crisis. This integration of ecology and theology aims to foster human awareness and a full sense of moral responsibility for preserving the environment on Earth. In essence, as God states in every holy book, humans are creatures who must care for the environment and are strictly prohibited from causing damage (Dewi, 2021).

In the discourse of ecotheology, humans are no longer the determinants of all things. Humans are no longer the anchor of reality, viewing nature as a mere entity whose existence can be exploited for human benefit. In short, the discourse of ecotheology seeks to transcend anthropocentrism, and the environment must be given the right to exist. Within ecotheology, humans' infatuation with the destruction of the earth must be addressed and transcended. This is clearly evident in Ahmad Nurullah's poetry collection "After the Sixth Day." This poem will be read both heuristically and hermeneutically.

B. Symbols of Submission and Destruction of Nature Used After the Sixth Day

The perspective that views nature as something that must be conquered and subdued stems from the dualism of nature and culture. Plumwold (2002) states that Western culture tends to view the relationship between humans and nature as a dualism, a binary opposition. This dualism is the foundation of the Western paradigm and has become the basic logical structure of the West's view of nature and humans. Dualism, therefore, can explain the various forms of oppression that humans perpetrate on nature and the problematic features of the West that cause environmental crises and violence between humans. Within this Western dualistic paradigm, nature is treated merely as an object, not a subject, and is not encompassed within the moral domain. Therefore, destructive treatment of nature ultimately becomes something that is considered normal.

To discuss human domination over nature and the ecological crisis resulting from this domination, this subchapter employs an ecocritical approach, with the primary paradigm being the binary opposition between nature and culture, specifically between nature and humans. Regarding

"cultural biology," Garrad (2004) argues that the idea of humans as the sole form of life has led to a shift from nature to culture. For Garrad, dualism is a failed paradigm, and the duality between nature and culture is a profound error. He also emphasizes that it is time for humans to abandon the concept of dualism within the Cartesian logical structure. Therefore, after abandoning Cartesian dualism, it is time for humans, for Garrad, to align themselves with their external environment.

As a crystallization of verbal symbols, poetry appears unique. This uniqueness of language will ultimately give rise to its own obstacles in the activity of interpreting meaning. These obstacles can be overcome if the reader understands that the truth in literary works is purely imaginary. Therefore, in the activity of interpreting literary works, a reader must understand the literary work as a total system (Teeuw, 2015). This means that literary works are not merely understood as a strategy of internal language forms, but also contain aspects beyond language—in this context, ecocriticism and ecoteology.

Thus, borrowing Teeuw (2015), poetry has always been at odds between convention and invention, between general agreement and new discovery. Language is initially tied to common understanding, to society and culture. Language has always been a form of sign system, a semiotic system, possessing certain meanings and significance agreed upon by society. The sign conventions within that society are accompanied by a specific conceptual set used in everyday communication within social life. It is precisely at this point that convention in the hands of the poet begins to be manipulated. The poet's strategies, and often what occurs is a violation of convention, create a new invention or discovery in the style of expression or language. Poetry, therefore, is a second-level sign system that transcends the conventions of language used by the masses.

As a second-level system, poetry ultimately possesses three types of conventions. First, linguistic conventions. Second, literary conventions. Third, cultural conventions. These conventions are interconnected as primary and secondary systems. Analyzing a literary work solely from the secondary system and abandoning the primary system separates the literary work from the cultural context in which it emerged. To read a poem based on an epic story, for example, a good reader cannot simply rely on literary conventions. Likewise, in understanding literary conventions, the frequently violated linguistic conventions within the creative process are crucial to consider (Teeuw, 2015). Cultural conventions also serve as a context for interpretation. This basic understanding will be used in analyzing Ahmad Nurullah's poetry collection "After the Sixth Day" to uncover symbols of subjugation and destruction of nature. This means that researchers strive not only to view the text as a mere text, but also as a totality and a whole.

C. Forms of Ecological Crisis in the Book After the Sixth Day

The various environmental crises that have occurred recently are the long-term consequences of a long-standing legacy that views nature as merely an atomistic, mechanical entity with no right to life. In this perspective, nature is merely property. This relationship is now the root cause of how planet Earth is becoming increasingly unhealthy and fraught with danger. Nature is positioned as a mere economic interest, without considering how humans will also suffer if nature is damaged. The ecological crisis resulting from this anthropocentric paradigm is clearly visible in Ahmad Nurullah's poetry collection, "After the Sixth Day."

In the poem "Adam & Hawa: Myths in a Restless Day," Ahmad Nurullah describes how, after humanity's descent from heaven, violence and bloodshed ensued. In stanzas 15-17, the poet depicts the first murder that would be inherited throughout human history. This initial violence would metamorphose over time, causing widespread destruction on planet Earth.

V. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that Ahmad Nurullah's work functions not only as an aesthetic expression but also as a theological-ecological text that encourages reconciliation between humans and the earth. An ecoteological reading of this work demonstrates the potential of literature to mediate spiritual relationships with nature and foster collective awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability. This research is expected to expand the repertoire of Indonesian literary studies based on ecocriticism and serve as a reference for interdisciplinary research connecting literature, theology, and environmental studies.

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