

# Nature Representation in Ahmad Tohari's Works of Fiction

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine the forms of nature represented in the fiction written by Ahmad Tohari. The source of this analysis is Ahmad Tohari works entitled (1) Kubah, (2) Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak, (3) Lingkar Tanah Lingkar Air (4) Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk, (5) Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari, (6) Jantera Bianglala, and (7) Orang-orang Proyek. Data were collected by means of reading and note-taking technique. Semantic validity was used to measure the data validity, while intra-rater and inter-rater were used to check the reliability. The collected data were then analyzed using the descriptive qualitative technique. The results show that many works written by Ahmad Tohari represent nature. His works show nature in the story setting, characters, and titles. In terms of story setting, the fertile soil, the variety of plants, and small animals usually found in the countryside and forests are presented. The writer describes various places, such as the forest around Cibawor River, Cigobang forest, Citandui River creek, Cibalak Hill, Tanggir Village, and Dukuh Paruk where various plants and animals are found. Then, in terms of representation of nature in the names of characters, there is a character named "Srintil". In Banyumas area, Srintil refers to a type of tobacco that has a fairly higher economic value compared to other types of tobacco. Srintil tobacco may have a high economic value if only it is cared properly, and the green leaves are not damaged. At last, the nature representations in the novel titles are shown in Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak, Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk, Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari, and Jantera Bianglala. The nature representations in Ahmad Tohari's works add aesthetic values and deliver the message of environmental protection.

**Keywords:** Ahmad Tohari, nature, representation

## Introduction

Literary work is a writer's response to the world around him. Pradopo (1995: 178) stated that it is rather the creation of a writer as a member of society. The work does

not come from “a cultural vacuum but from a complex reality of life existing around the writer (Teeuw, 1980: 11). According to Faruk (1988: 7), literary works are semiotic facts that view a cultural phenomenon as a cognitive sign system.

Literary works and life are two social phenomena that complement each other as something existential. This implies that literary works and real life, apart from having their own autonomy, have a reciprocal relationship (Mahayana, 2007: 5). The writer's initiative in creating literary works is inspired by life phenomena. However, it does not mean that every phenomenon may be captured and written about. In order to create a literary work, there is a need to contemplate the phenomenon before interpreting it and then making it into a literary work. There are mainly three issues related to human life. They are (a) personal problems, (b) interpersonal problems with other people and their environment, and (c) problems with God (Nurgiyantoro, 1998: 323).

Environmental problems are society's problems because they show the social realities that have existed for a long time. Environmental problems do not occur only in Indonesia but also in other countries because it has become a global issue. There are many writers who have considerable concern for the problems of the natural environment. Nature has become a part of literary works as a number of writers, especially poets, use the words forests, seas, and trees in their works. Nature is the inspiration for creating literary works, and at the same time, it needs writers to be preserved (<https://fatchulkip.wordpress.com/2013/01/06/ekokritisisme-kajian-ekologis-dalam-sastra-oleh-fatchul-muin>).

In the treasures of Indonesian literature, the writer's attitude toward nature has been existing since the era of classic and modern literature. The poems written by Muhammad Yamin, Ramadhan KH, Amir Hamzah, Sanusi Pane, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, Abdul Hadi WM, and Sapardi Djoko Damono often represent the nature. In addition, nature is often represented in prose (Mahayana, 2009). One of the writers who express a lot about nature in his work is Ahmad Tohari. According to Yudiono (2003: 150) rural nature and the life of the poor are the main characteristics of Ahmad Tohari's works. The rural environment is especially evident in the description of the setting of the story. Environmental issues are also highlighted in Ahmad Tohari's work (Mahayana, 1989). Hall (1997: 15) reveals that representation is part of the process of producing and exchanging meaning, and language plays an important role in the process.

Ahmad Tohari is one of the Indonesian prolific writers whose almost all of his works show social criticism, including criticism of the environment in Indonesia. Some of his works are *Kubah/Dome* (1980), *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk/The Dancer of Paruk Hamlet* (1982), *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari/A Shooting Star at Dawn* (1985), *Jantera Bianglala/The Rainbow's Arc* (1986), *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak/On the Foothill of Cibalak* (1986), *Senyum Karyamin/Karyamin's Smile* (1989), *Bekisar Merah/The Red Bekisar* (1993), *Lingkar Tanah Lingkar Air/Soil Circle Water Circle* (1995), *Orang-*

*Orang Proyek*/People of Construction Site (2002), dan *Belantik* (2000). Nature representation is seen in those works. More importantly, nature is dominantly represented in the setting and characters of the novels. The nature is highlighted clearly and in detail in each of the works.

Some theories to analyze the representation of nature in these works of fiction are ecocritical and sociology theories of literature. Ecocriticism is the latest literature approach that examines the relationship between literature and its physical environment (Glotefelty, 1996: xix). Ecocriticism examines the ideas of the environment and how they are represented in literary works. Ecocritical literature has several criteria. Buell (1995: 7-8) states that ecocritical literature uses nature to show how human life correlates with nature. Ecocritical literature usually tells about how someone escapes from a city to a country (pastoral). Then, ecocritical literature describes the village by contrasting it implicitly and explicitly with the city (Giffort, 1999: 2). Jonathan Bate in Juliasih (2012: 87) points out that ecocriticism talks about environmental awareness in literary works. Ecocritical analysis is interdisciplinary in nature, extending to other disciplines, namely literature, culture, philosophy, sociology, psychology, history, environment, politics, economics, and religious studies.

According to Harsono (2008:35), the ecocritical theory is multidisciplinary as it uses both literary and ecological theories although those theories are multidisciplinary in nature. Literary theory is the basic assumption that literature is related to realities. This relationship makes literary works a form of social criticism that can be used as objects of research. This present study focuses on how nature is represented in Ahmad Tohari' fictional works and the functions of the representation.

Theoretically, this study provides an alternative to literary theory application, specifically ecocritical and sociology theories of literature in Indonesian literary works, especially fiction. Practically, this research provides a basis for appreciating novels by Ahmad Tohari that raise environmental issues, thus improving people's abilities in understanding and appreciating Indonesian literary works. Describing the environmental issues in Ahmad Tohari's works, this study is expected to increase society's appreciation of the novels and find values that are useful for society. Thus, these values are expected to add insight and appreciation of society towards Indonesian writers in general, and novels that represent the environment written by Ahmad Tohari.

## **Research Method**

The subject of this study is Ahmad Tohari's novels that include environmental issues. The novels are (1) *Kubah*, (2) *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak*, (3) *Lingkar Tanah Lingkar Air*, (4) *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, (5) *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*, (6) *Jantera Bianglala*, dan (7) *Orang-Orang Proyek*. Data of this study are in the form of discourse taken from the novels. The data were collected through reading and note-

taking. The reading process was done repeatedly to find the main ideas that contain the representation of nature in the story. Then, the data were written on data cards and considered research data. The data validity was measured through semantic validity, while the reliability was measured through intra-rater and inter-rater reliability.

The data were analyzed using the descriptive qualitative technique. This technique is used to describe the forms of the representation including the representation of nature and the functions of the representations. The data description also serves as the interpretation and analysis of nature representation and realities existing in society.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Nature Representation in the Settings**

Ahmad Tohari is one of the writers that show the natural environment as the story setting in his works. The natural environment becomes the characteristic and charm in his works. In his works, especially novels, many stories are introduced with a detailed description of nature as shown in *Orang-orang Proyek* novel below.

This morning, Cibawor River looks exhausted. Three days ago, heavy rains upstream made this river in flood. Fortunately, it is normal that the flood drains quickly because it is a mountain river in nature. The water, which was originally clear, started to cloud up in the morning, rose, and soon surged half an hour later. It was as if Cibawor was being poured from upstream with a large, thick, muddy sump carrying all kinds of garbage like rubber sandals, plastic bottles, banana trunks, and mahogany branches. (*Orang-orang Proyek: 1*)

At the beginning of this novel, it is presented in the setting that there was a heavy flood caused by environmental damage that occurred in the Cibawor river creek. Various garbage brought by the heavy flood indicates that environmental damage does exist. Very detailed setting that shows the natural environment is also found in other novels, namely *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak* on pages 5-7, *Lingkar Tanah Lingkar Air* on pages 7-8, and *Kubah* on pages 6 and 7.

The calm and quiet Gobang forest depicted in *Lingkar Tanah Lingkar Air* novel is the hideout of the main character of the novel. Amin, the main character, is a DI troop. How the forest is depicted is shown in the excerpt below.

Very early in the morning, I went out, armed with a sarong wrapped around my waist. I left the weapons with Kiram and Jun who stayed at the secret post. I only brought a machete. I really needed this item, especially as a means of disguise. When going out of the forest was really necessary, I needed to pretend that I roamed around looking for firewood.

From Cigobang forest, I crawled under the dense teak forest to the north and later turned to the west. There was no wind in the forest, so the forest looked like a giant

lying still. A piece of rotting twig that fell would be enough to disturb the silence let alone the crowing of partridges. Meanwhile, the sound of crickets creaking softly on the slopes was clearly audible.

The closer to the edge, the more dreamy the forest because many teak trees were cut down by the illegal loggers. There had been various plants and trees, so it was not only teak trees. I started seeing butterflies and dragonflies, and birds chirping. There are turtledoves and spotted doves perched on a branch of a *wangkal* tree. There was a pair of parrots perched near their nest in a rotting wood hole. They are chatty, but their red beak and green feathers were a real beauty. Then, I saw a Javanese eagle that suddenly swoop down from the sky. His stout body shot down, and it instantly disappeared among the trees. When I went up again, I saw that the mighty bird was already carrying a snake in its claws. It reminded me of venomous vipers that always gave me the chills. Still, the bird ate it instead. (*Lingkar Tanah Lingkar Air*: 117-118).

Ahmad Tohari's *Kubah* represents the poor society. Besides presenting rice fields as local wisdom, the rice fields also symbolize poverty in society. Poverty is caused by horizontal conflicts, and it is clearly depicted in the setting of the story. It is described that the soil is fertile but uncultivated. Such an illustration can be found in the following excerpt.

In Kokosan sub-district, Pegaten village is the most remote. There was a vast teak forest in its south. Meanwhile, its western part was rubber plantations and swamps. The rice fields and the other fields are fertile. That some of its' residents lived in poverty, it was certainly not the condition of the soil to be blamed. One of the facts that had spread misery in the area was the upheavals that were caused Japanese colonialization. There was also the struggle for independence which practically lasted until the early fifties. The peaceful life lasted only a few years, at the end of that decade. (*Kubah*:134-135)

The representation of nature is mainly shown in *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* Trilogy. At the beginning of the novel, readers are provided with a pleasing village environment.

A pair of cranes soared in the wind high in the sky. Without even flapping their wings, they moved in harmony for hours. Its voice was shrill. It sounded like a long groan. Water. These two birds had drifted hundreds of kilometers looking for puddles. They had longed for the mud on which they sought prey; frogs, fish, shrimp, or other aquatic insects.

However, the drought is not over. Thousands of hectares of rice fields surrounding Dukuh Paruk had been barren for seven months. The pair of cranes would not find any puddle of water. The rice fields turned into gray dry fields. All kinds of grass died. The green spots here and there were *kerokot* (a pest plant looking like a

cactus), the food for grasshoppers and crickets. This type of cactus plant actually only appeared during summer.

In the other part of the field, a sparrow was trying to defend its life. It flew like a rock from a slingshot while screaming wildly. A kestrel chased it at an excessive speed. The air that the two beasts traveled through made a whooshing sound. The screech of the sparrow was heard as the beak of the kestrel bit its head. .... (*Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, 1982: 5)

Ahmad Tohari describes the setting of the story in detail. Nature as the setting of the story has become the charm of the story because only competent writers can depict nature thoroughly. Mahayana stated that:

The issue of the environment, which is rarely used by Indonesian writers has become the charm of Ahmad Tohari's works. The situation of the rural village is somehow perceived to have innocent, slum, open, naive, and natural sense, but it still promises a sincere and selfless peace. The situation is an honest world that prioritizes harmony between living beings and the environment in their surrounding. This is – at least – the impression that is conveyed in almost all of Ahmad Tohari's works (Mahayana, 1989: vii).

The representation of nature is also found in *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* trilogy. At the beginning of the second novel entitled *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*, nature is depicted to introduce the story. The description of nature is presented on pages 7 and 8. The morning situation in Dukuh Paruk, as well as the animals and plants found in the area, are described in detail.

Dukuh Paruk is quiet even though various animals were awake because the dawn was breaking. The goats began to get restless in their cages. The crowing of the roosters was heard once at a time and then more intensely. *Sikatan* bird scurried from its hiding place. It was ready to take off when it saw the first insect passing in its' sight. .... Crickets, big head crickets, and bugs had been silent for a long time. The big head crickets hid themselves in a hole in the ground that was plugged from the inside. A grasshopper blended itself with the green color of the leaves.

There was a rose apple tree in one corner of Dukuh Paruk. In the midst of the lush tree, a harmony of nature is being performed. Hundreds of honeybees very diligently gathered the pollen. Their wings were soothing as they filled the dim morning. (*Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*, 1985: 7-8).

Similarly, at the beginning of *Jantera Bianglala* novel, Dukuh Paruk situation in early 1966 after the fire incident is described. The damaged nature is caused by the rebellion of the Communist Party of Indonesia in that small and remote area.

When Dukuh Paruk became *karang abang lemah ireng* (damaged by fire) in early 1966, almost all of those 23 houses turned into ashes. At that time, many people thought it was the end of the hamlet. Those who wanted to survive should leave

Dukuh Paruk because all property, rice, and *gaplek* (sliced dried root of cassava) were burnt to ashes, so were chicken and goats (their farm). (*Jantera Bianglala*, 1986: 7)

The representation of nature in Ahmad Tohari's works shows his awareness of the sustainability of green nature in a remote village. In *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*, Ahmad Tohari shows his awareness of the damaged environment caused by irresponsible people.

When the forests had been damaged. When the rice fields smelled like pest spray, and when too many youths had air rifles. So, the Segara Anakan area and the marshy area around was the last place for various types of birds to survive. (*Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*, 1985: 94)

Ahmad Tohari also describes the condition of Dukuh Paruk by revealing the natural environment. Dukuh Paruk is like moss on a rock. The writer describes the setting of the story by depicting the natural environment, with moss as an analog. The life of the people in Dukuh Paruk is described as the growth and development of the moss. How moss grows and develops and its resilience in facing environmental drought and speed in responding to air and water to regrow are associated with the people of Dukuh Paruk.

Regarding the ability to survive, Dukuh Paruk could only be compared to moss on a rock. Moss was silent and seemed to die in the dry season. Dry and peeled. But in its death, a moss held the life force. The spores were encased in cysts that were capable of immediately turning their life cycle when the first drop of water or even the mere humidity of air touched it. Dukuh Paruk was a moss that was apparently created to fulfill the needs of living in the most minimal conditions. Dukuh Paruk was still there even without a smile or even a laugh. It was still there even though he barely knew the meaning of his existence anymore. (*Jantera Bianglala*, 1986: 10)

Nature representation was also carried out by Ahmad Tohari by revealing the life of various types of animals that live in the countryside, especially in Dukuh Paruk. The lives and habits of various types of birds are described by Tohari in his novel. The type, color, behavior, and food are described in detail and clearly.

Quiet morning. The sun rays in small beams went through the shade of the Dukuh Paruk cemetery. Drops of dew on the leaf tips caught the light and refracted it into a soft rainbow that glowed. A squirrel slid down from the tree.

In the thick of the parasite, a pair of honey birds chased. The red-colored male chased the female. After being caught, the two wrestled for a moment and then fell down while making love.

The large banyan tree as the crown of the Dukuh Paruk cemetery was the palace of the birds. On a hidden branch perched a plop. He was dozing off after spending the night hunting for mice, fish, or frogs. Only the little magpie bird dared to disturb the

king of birds at night. The pitch-black crickets and the green stilts perched in groups (*Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, 1982: 65-66).

The detailed illustration of nature in Ahmad Tohari's fictional works not only bring its own charm to readers but also provides criticisms for Tohari regarding the use of the environmental setting. Dermawan (1992) in his thesis stated that there are elements of illogical background in the *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* Trilogy. The illogicality is related to the area of Dukuh Paruk which is not too wide but there are a lot of animals and plants. In the Dukuh Paruk area, there are no less than 38 types of birds, 21 types of insects, 15 mammals, 10 types of reptiles, and 15 other types of animals, and there are 48 types of plants in various varieties. Also, the number of types of animals and plants in Dukuh Paruk which is not too wide is illogical.

Writing his novel, Tohari did not think logically and illogically. Tohari wants to convey to his readers how the beauty of the natural environment with various living creatures in it can always live in balance. The balance and harmony of life with the natural environment, both plants and animals must always be maintained properly to make a better life.

The problem of the life balance related to the environment is also represented by Ahmad Tohari in the novel *Lingkar Tanah Lingkar Air* and the novel *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak*. In both novels, Ahmad Tohari describes the good relationship between humans and animals and their environment. The character of the story can live in the forest without the threat of wild animals; tigers become his friend because they take care of each other.

When there was a fairy tale about a friendship between a wild animal and a human, we really felt it in real experience. *Si Tutul* (leopard) got closer and stopped just a few meters in front of us. *Si Tutul* hid his body behind the hanging roots as if asking for protection from us. Me, Jun, and Kiram were used to seeing *Si Tutul* (*Lingkar Tanah Lingkar Air*: 132).

*Si Tutul* is the name of the leopard that lives in the forest where they hide. They are used to seeing the animal. They look after each other, and no one interferes. The beginning of the novel *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak* tells about the good relationship between humans and wild animals in the environment.

Once Mbok Sum's buffalo didn't come home for three days. On the fourth day, the animal appeared with its newborn cub in the forest. At that time there were still many Javanese tigers in the teak forests of Cibalak, but the wild animal preferred to pounce on monkeys or langurs, and there were still many wild boars there (*Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak*: 6).

The teak forest environment in Bukit Cibalak was well maintained. No community members harmed the forest. The forest and everything in it was always guarded. There were foremen with swords and mustaches in charge of guarding the teak

forest. Plants and animals thrived there, and the ecosystem chain was well maintained. (*Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak*: 68-69)

## 2. Representation of nature in Characters

The main characters in *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* Trilogy are Srintil and Rasus. The name Srintil in Javanese culture represents its own meaning. Tohari chose the name of the main character, Srintil, which has a meaning related to the natural environment. There are some people who liken Srintil to goat dung. Although goat dung is dirty and disgusting, it has great benefits for the environment for plant fertilizers. *Beribil* is one type of organic fertilizer made from animal waste which has better quality than other types of fertilizers'. Although Srinthil is considered dirty, it has great benefits for the environment, especially for the people of Dukuh Paruk.

The first neon light in Dawuan was a witness that what happened to Srintil was something unique. Its historical background was destitute and rural like goat dung. Even though goat dung was smelly and disgusting, it was able to fertilize tobacco leaves in an arid land. Srintil was not torn apart by her history. On the other hand, Srintil rose to form itself with its backward history. The results began to be exposed under the light. Srintil became the center of interest and She sat controlled the situation (*Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*, 1985: 120).

In addition, in the Banyumas community, Srintil is also known as the name of a type of plant, namely tobacco which tastes the best when made into cigarettes. This type of tobacco needs to be developed continuously because it contributes great benefits to tobacco farmers. Do not let it be extinct. The price of this type of tobacco is the most expensive one. The name Srintil still represents an object or goods that have a high value in the environment. Srintil as the main character in the novel represents a plant that is familiar to farmers, namely tobacco which has great benefits in their lives.

As *beribil*, goat dung provides the environment with great benefits because it can be used as fertilizer. The environment becomes greener and the plants are fertile. As one of the most delicious types of tobacco when smoked, it also has great benefits for the environment. In this case, there has been the production and exchange of meanings as revealed by Hall (1997: 15) that representation is part of the process of producing and exchanging meaning and through language, the process is carried out.

The name of the character Srintil as a ronggeng dancer in Hamlet Paruk also represents nature, and the ronggeng dance is related to fertility. Ronggeng or tayub dance is closely related to agrarian society, especially for ritual ceremonies, such as village cleansing (*bersih desa/ metri desa/sedhekah bumi*). This dance is believed to have magical powers related to fertility purposes (Suharto, 1999: 15, Soedarsono, 1991: 35). Initially, the ronggeng dance was a fertility rite among the farming communities (Simatupang, 2013: 230). The survival of agrarian communities in

rural area is the result of the interaction between human work and the natural environment, such as soil fertility and rainfall. This shows that the choice of the type of art in Ahmad Tohari's novel is not arbitrary because it represents a separate message from the writer to his readers. The message of fertility is the one that must always be maintained and preserved, including, the natural environment in an agrarian society.

The characters in the *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* trilogy are always close to nature and maintain harmony with the natural environment. The beautiful natural environment with the plants and animals that inhabit it is described to live side by side with humans. The characters in the story are always united and integrated with nature, taking care of the natural environment properly. The characters in the story presented by Ahmad Tohari in his story live together and unite with all living things and nature around them. Almost all of the characters created by Ahmad Tohari are depictions of people who always emphasize the importance of establishing harmonious relations between humans, living things, and the universe (<http://sastra-indonesia.com/2009/03/lingungan-dunia-dalam-sastra>).

In addition, the representation of the natural environment can also be seen in the use of the novel title used by Ahmad Tohari. The title of the first novel is *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*. *Ronggeng* as a form of folk art is related to fertility problems in agrarian societies or farmers. *Dukuh Paruk* also revealed a hamlet with a rural natural environment. The second novel is *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*. 'Lintang Kemukus' is one of the types of stars in the universe which according to Javanese belief is a sign of a big event in nature. 'Early morning' is also a representation of the natural environment in the form of time. It is a change of time from night to morning and related to the natural environment. The third novel is *Jantera Bianglala*. The *Jantera Bianglala* also represents natural events. Rainbow is a natural event related to the environment and it will usually look clear and beautiful when it rains, especially in rural areas.

Through his work, Tohari wants to give a message to readers about life and how the examples in the story solve a problem that is sometimes intelligent but absurd in the view of the readers (Roqib, 2007: 116). The stories in the novels *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*, *Jantera Bianglala*, *Orang-Orang Proyek*, *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak*, and other novels are packaged in simple terms with straightforward and communicative language and a natural environment setting that can soothe the hearts of readers. Although sometimes it is exaggerated in its expressions, readers can happily enjoy it. For Tohari, the broadest and deepest motivation for writing a trilogy of novels is to achieve "nur", the light of life. Therefore, he is more solemn in describing nature, especially humans, animals, and plants (Roqib, 2007: 155). The illustration of the natural environment in the three novels is more dominant. Each chapter or section in these novels always has a description of the natural

environment, especially the rural natural environment which is still well preserved and beautiful with various plants and animals that live and thrive in it.

The novels *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak*, *Bekisar Merah*, and *Lingkar Tanah Lingkar Air* also imply the use of the environment. The titles of these novels stimulate the readers to imagine a good environment, even though the title of the novel *Bekisar Merah* is only used as an analogy, not the real red bekisar, namely the jungle fowl.

### **3. The Function of Environmental Representation in Ahmad Tohari's Fiction Works**

Ahmad Tohari's fiction works make use of and represent the environment. This representation of the environment serves to obtain the aesthetic elements of the story. By utilizing the depiction of the environment in his fiction, Ahmad Tohari managed to make the story more interesting and beautiful. For example, the illustration of the environment at the beginning of the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* is as follows.

A pair of cranes soared in the wind high in the sky. Without even flapping their wings, they moved in harmony for hours. Its voice was shrill. It sounded like a long groan. Water. These two birds had drifted hundreds of kilometers looking for puddles. They had longed for the mud on which they sought prey; frogs, fish, shrimp, or other aquatic insects.

However, the drought is not over. Thousands of hectares of rice fields surrounding Dukuh Paruk had been barren for seven months. The pair of cranes would not find any puddle of water. The rice fields turned into gray dry fields. All kinds of grass died. The green spots here and there were *kerokot* (a pest plant looking like a cactus), the food for grasshoppers and crickets. This type of cactus plant only appeared during summer.

In the other part of the field, a sparrow was trying to defend its life. It flew like a rock from a slingshot while screaming wildly. A kestrel chased it at an excessive speed. The air that the two beasts traveled through made a whooshing sound. The screech of the sparrow was heard as the beak of the kestrel bit its head. ....  
(*Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, 1982: 5)

The beginning of the story in the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* makes readers feel like they are in the real environment told by the writer. The story becomes more attractive and beautiful, and even the description of his living environment is quite detailed.

The same thing can also be seen in the depiction of the environment in the middle or at the end of the story. The example of the environmental illustration found in the middle of the story in the novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* is as follows.

Quiet morning. The sun's rays in small beams went through the shade of the Dukuh Paruk cemetery. Drops of dew on the leaf tips caught the light and refracted it into a soft rainbow that glowed. A squirrel slid down from the tree.

Among the thick parasite plants, a pair of honey birds chased. The red-colored male chased the female. After being caught, the two wrestled for a moment and then fell down while making love.

The large banyan tree as the crown of the Dukuh Paruk cemetery was the palace of the birds. On a hidden branch perched a plop. He was dozing off after spending the night hunting for mice, fish, or frogs. Only the little magpie bird dared to disturb the king of birds at night. The pitch-black crickets and the green stilts perched in groups (*Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, 1982: 65-66).

In addition to obtaining the aesthetic elements of the story, the representation of the environment in Ahmad Tohari's fiction also serves to convey a message for people to maintain the environment. For example, in the novel *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*, Ahmad Tohari is also worried about the damage to the natural environment, which is done by irresponsible people.

When the forests had been damaged. When the rice fields smelled like pest spray, and when too many youths had air rifles. So, the Segara Anakan area and the marshy area around it was the last place for various types of birds to survive (*Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*, 1985: 94).

Protecting the environment is a shared obligation, and Ahmad Tohari through his fiction has tried to remind us all of the significance of protecting our environment. In the novel *Orang-Orang Proyek*, the characters also always take care of the forest environment where they work on the bridge project. In the forest, they are always careful not to damage the various plants and animals that live around the project they are working on. The same can be found in other novels.

## Conclusions

Ahmad Tohari's fiction works often represent the natural environment in his neighborhood. In his works of fiction, Ahmad Tohari represents the environment in the background elements, story characters, and novel titles. In the background of the story, fertility and the variety of plants that grow as and small animals that usually live in the countryside and forests are well narrated by him. The writer describes the setting of the places, for example, the forest environment around the Cibawor River, the Cigobang forest environment, the mouth of the Citandui River, Cibalak Hill, Tanggir Village, and Dukuh Paruk where various types of plants and animals live in the hamlet environment. The representation of the environment through the name of a character, for example, the name Srintil, in the Banyumas area, is one type of tobacco that has a fairly high economic value compared to other types. 'Srintil' tobacco can have high economic value if it is cared for properly; the leaves are green

and not damaged by pests. The representation through the title can be found in the *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak, Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk, Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari, and Jantera Bianglala novels*. The representation of nature in Ahmad Tohari's fiction serves to add an aesthetic element and convey the message to protect the environment.

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