

An Ecocritical Perspective on Agrarian Symbolism in "Mengantar Benih padi ke Ladang"

Perspektif Ekokritik terhadap Simbolisme Agraris dalam Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the symbolic meanings of agrarian elements in Silvester Petara Hurit's short story *Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang* to uncover the relationship between humans and nature through symbols such as rice seeds and fields. Employing a qualitative method and a descriptive-analytical approach, the research analyzes the short story's text and supporting literature to examine ecological perspectives, cultural values, and the conflict between agrarian traditions and modernity. The findings reveal that the short story represents agrarian symbols like rice, soil, trees, and life rituals as reflections of agrarian traditions, cultural identity, and the human-nature connection. The soil is portrayed as a metaphor for Mother Earth, while rice symbolizes life and the pride of agrarian communities. Additionally, the conflict between tradition and development reflects shifts in social values due to modernity. Agrarian symbolism in the story also highlights humanity's view of nature as a living entity with spiritual power while emphasizing the importance of maintaining ecological balance. This study significantly contributes to the understanding of agrarian symbolism in literature, particularly in the context of human-nature relationships, and offers a theoretical foundation for further studies on cultural and ecological dynamics in literary works.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi makna simbolik agraris dalam cerpen *Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang* karya Silvester Petara Hurit untuk mengungkap hubungan manusia dengan alam melalui simbol-simbol seperti benih padi dan ladang. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis, penelitian ini menganalisis teks cerpen dan literatur pendukung untuk menggali pandangan ekologis, nilai budaya, serta konflik antara tradisi agraris dan modernitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa cerpen ini merepresentasikan simbol-simbol agraris seperti padi, tanah, pohon, dan ritual kehidupan sebagai refleksi tradisi agraris, identitas budaya, dan hubungan manusia dengan alam. Tanah diangkat sebagai metafora Ibu Pertiwi, sementara padi menjadi lambang kehidupan dan kebanggaan masyarakat agraris. Selain itu, konflik antara tradisi dan pembangunan mencerminkan perubahan nilai-nilai sosial akibat modernitas. Simbolisme agraris dalam cerpen ini juga mengungkapkan pandangan manusia terhadap alam sebagai entitas hidup dengan kekuatan spiritual, sekaligus menunjukkan pentingnya menjaga keseimbangan ekosistem. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi signifikan dalam memperkaya pemahaman tentang simbolisme agraris dalam sastra, khususnya dalam konteks relasi manusia dengan alam, serta menawarkan landasan teoritis untuk kajian lebih lanjut tentang dinamika budaya dan ekologis dalam karya sastra.



1. Introduction

Language plays a crucial role as a tool of communication, not only for conveying messages and ideas but also for representing deeper meanings through specific symbols. In the *nunas neda* tradition of the Sasak community in Kesik Village, language and symbols such as prayer rituals, traditional attire, and communal activities strengthen social solidarity and foster a sense of togetherness (Ningsih et al., 2024). Similarly, in the *rambu solo'* ceremonial rites of the Tana Toraja community, symbols like buffaloes, *tongkonan* houses, and various objects represent not only physical elements but also social status and profound cultural values, serving as a means of communication among community members (Lisda et al., 2020). The symbolic dimension of language enables humans to comprehend abstract concepts hidden behind words, making language more than a mere communicative tool. It functions as a bridge connecting humanity to the deep and complex meanings implicit in communication.

Symbolic analysis is an approach used to uncover the hidden meanings of symbols in language, whether in texts, phrases, or visual elements. This approach reveals meanings that go beyond the literal, helping readers understand deeper concepts, values, or perspectives (Unsha & Abrian, 2024). For instance, Unsha and Abrian's (2024) research revealed how Kaesang's choice of wearing a t-shirt with Prabowo's image symbolizes political values and personal admiration. Margareth, Sijabat, and Sinulingga (2024) highlighted that Ulos Mangiring not only functions as traditional attire but also represents the social identity and cultural values of the Batak Toba community through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. Meanwhile, Anindya, Yani, Sarmini, and Suprijono (2024) found that the motifs of Batik Jetis embody character values aligned with the Pelajar Pancasila profile, demonstrating its potential as an ethnopedagogical medium for strengthening character education.

This research explores the representation of agrarian symbolism in the short story *Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang* by Silvester Petara Hurit. The short story is notable for its depiction of the human-nature relationship through agrarian symbols such as rice seeds, fields, and other natural elements. These agrarian symbols not only enrich the literary value of the story but also amplify its message about humanity's relationship with the environment.

The analysis of these agrarian symbols aims to delve deeper into the perspectives on human dependence on nature, shifts in agrarian viewpoints in modern society, and conflicts between traditional values and contemporary developments as conveyed through literature. The agrarian symbols in the short story are expected to provide insights into how literature reflects ecological and cultural issues.

This study adopts a linguistic analysis approach to address these questions. By examining the agrarian symbols in depth, the research aims to

uncover the views, values, and meanings embedded in the short story, contributing to an understanding of the human-nature relationship in literature. Additionally, this study seeks to demonstrate how language and symbols play a role in representing the social and cultural realities of society.

This study integrates several theories to analyze agrarian symbolism in the short story, focusing on the relationship between humans and nature manifested through agrarian symbols. Symbolism in literature serves to reveal deeper meanings beyond the surface text, where natural elements such as crops, fields, and rice seeds not only represent physical realities but also act as metaphors for the cycle of life and cultural values associated with agrarian life (Abrams, 1999). A linguistic approach enables an exploration of how the story's language structure and word choices enhance agrarian symbolism and how the symbolic meanings illustrate the human connection with nature (Halliday, 1985).

Furthermore, ecocritical theory is employed to examine how the short story portrays human interaction with the environment and humanity's dependence on nature in the context of agricultural life (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996). Semiotic theory aids in deciphering how agrarian symbols function as signs with broader meanings, reflecting the author's worldview and creating a relationship between the symbols and their interpretation (Chandler, 2002). By integrating these theories, this research aims to uncover the layers of meaning embedded in the agrarian symbols of the short story and provide deeper insights into the human-nature relationship in literature.

Anggraini's (2023) research analyzed narrative perspectives in the short story collection *Macan* (Kompas Selected Stories 2020). The findings indicate that most stories use the first-person perspective ("I"), while a few employ the third-person omniscient ("He") perspective. The study also revealed that these stories convey moral messages applicable to daily life. Haryanto (2022), meanwhile, aimed to describe the social values in *Macan*, identifying three main social values: ethics, culture, and religion reflected in the stories.

In another study, Pulungan (2023) examined the process and symbolic meanings in the *marpanggang* tradition of Siunjam Village, related to agricultural prosperity. The findings highlight symbols representing strength, hard work, social closeness, and kinship. Sartini's (2017) study focused on agricultural rituals in Bali, where farmers perform rituals reflecting religious values, cultural traditions, and the *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy. Lastly, Hapsari et al. (2024) analyzed the symbolic meaning of the *pacul* (hoe) as a farming tool, uncovering its religious and social significance in the community's life.

Building on these prior studies, the novelty of this research, titled *Beyond Nature's Limits: Interpreting Agrarian Symbolism in "Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang"*, lies in its deeper approach to agrarian symbolism within a literary context. This study focuses on analyzing agricultural symbolism in Silvester Petara Hurit's short story *Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang*, part of the *Macan* short story collection (Kompas Selected Stories 2020).

Unlike previous studies that examined social values in *Macan*, narrative perspectives, or symbolic meanings in other agrarian traditions, this research

focuses specifically on how agrarian symbolism is translated into literary texts as representations of broader cultural and social values. It interprets agrarian elements—such as rice seeds, fields, and farming processes—not merely as parts of daily life but as deeper symbols connected to struggles, hopes, and social resilience. This unique focus on symbolism within the agrarian context of literature provides new insights into the human-nature relationship and demonstrates how this symbolism reflects local and social values within the narrative.

This study aims to contribute to the theoretical understanding of the use of agrarian symbols in literary works. These symbols serve to represent the complex relationship between humans and nature while reflecting cultural values, perceptions, and human perspectives on the environment. By analyzing the symbolic dimension of agrarian elements, this research seeks to enrich linguistic and literary comprehension, particularly in interpreting literary works that carry profound meanings beyond the surface level of the text.

Additionally, the study seeks to uncover the symbolic meanings of agrarian elements in literary works as representations of human interaction with nature. Through a symbolic analysis approach, it aims to clarify how literature reflects societal views of nature, especially in the context of agrarian traditions, shifts in mindsets, and social developments related to human-nature relationships. The research focuses on agrarian symbolism in literature as a representation of the human connection with nature, as well as the social and cultural values embedded within the text. To support an understanding of this agrarian symbolism, several relevant theories are employed, including semiotic theory, ecocritical theory, and cultural theory.

First, semiotic theory, as proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce, provides the foundation for understanding how symbols in literary texts can be interpreted as signs with deeper meanings. Saussure (1916), in his theory of signs, explains that a sign comprises two components: the *signifier* and the *signified*. In this context, agrarian elements such as rice seeds, fields, and farming processes serve as signifiers, implying profound meanings related to struggle, hope, and social resilience within agrarian societies. Peirce, with his triadic theory of signs, further emphasizes how these symbols connect to broader cultural and social values, interpreted through a society's collective understanding of nature and life.

Second, ecocriticism is a relevant approach to analyzing the human-nature relationship in literary texts. According to Buell (1995), ecocriticism highlights how literature reflects the interactions between humans and the environment and their implications for societal and ecological perspectives. In an agrarian context, ecocriticism allows this study to explore how natural symbols in literature, such as fields or rice seeds, not only depict the daily lives of farmers but also carry ecological messages related to environmental and social sustainability. This approach is also pertinent for uncovering how shifts in social values and mindsets are mirrored in human-nature relationships, whether within agrarian traditions or in confronting modernity.

Third, cultural theory, as articulated by Raymond Williams (1977), offers insights into how social and cultural values are represented through societal symbols. Williams underscores the importance of understanding culture as an evolving entity that interacts with social and economic conditions. In this study, agrarian symbolism is understood as a representation of the social values embedded in farmers' lives. These symbols function not merely as economic indicators but also as representations of social struggle and the resilience of agrarian communities in the face of changing times. This theory also sheds light on how these symbols can serve as tools of social critique, conveying messages about social injustice or the dependency on nature amid life's challenges.

By integrating these three theories, this study aims to provide deeper insights into the use of agrarian symbols in literary works and to enrich the understanding of the relationship between humans, culture, and nature through a symbolic approach. This approach also contributes to the development of literary and linguistic studies by introducing a broader symbolic dimension in literary analysis.

Practically, this research seeks to offer new insights to various stakeholders, including readers, educators, and literary writers. It can serve as a reference for understanding agrarian symbols as literary tools that convey ecological and social messages. Furthermore, the findings are relevant for enhancing literary teaching materials that emphasize symbolic approaches in interpreting literary texts.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to expanding both theoretical and practical understanding of agrarian symbols in literature. By exploring representations of the human-nature relationship through symbols, this study not only supports the advancement of literary and linguistic studies but also opens new perspectives in cultural and ecological studies. The findings are expected to foster a deeper appreciation for literary works, both as reflections of cultural values and as mediums for social and environmental critique.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach to explore and understand the use of agrarian symbols in the short story "Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang" by Silvester Petara Hurit. This method was chosen for its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of the representation of agrarian symbols in literature and their relevance to the human-nature relationship. The approach enables the analysis of narrative and symbols, resulting in rich interpretations of the meanings and messages embedded in the text.

The primary data for this research is the text of "Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang", which will be analyzed in-depth to identify and interpret agrarian symbols. The source text is obtained from official publications to ensure authenticity, while supporting data is derived from scholarly literature on symbolism, agrarian literature, and human-environment studies. Data selection

is conducted carefully, ensuring the reliability and accuracy of sources to support the validity of the research findings.

The short story will be obtained from an official source to confirm its authenticity. Sections containing agrarian symbols, such as rice seeds, fields, harvest seasons, or other agrarian elements, will be noted and classified. Supporting literature on agrarian symbolism and the human-nature relationship will be reviewed to provide a strong theoretical context. The short story will be read thoroughly to understand its narrative context and main themes. Agrarian symbols will be identified through descriptions, dialogue, and narrative structure. The analysis will focus on the roles and functions of these symbols in illustrating the human-nature relationship.

This stage involves examining agrarian symbols as metaphors that represent more than their literal meanings. These symbols will be analyzed in relation to ecological themes, cultural values, or conflicts between modernity and tradition represented in the story. The findings will be integrated to interpret the human perspective on nature reflected through the agrarian symbols in the short story.

The research will uncover the deep messages conveyed by the author, such as humanity's dependence on nature, the agrarian life cycle, or the challenges in maintaining ecological balance. By analyzing agrarian symbols, the study aims to highlight the interplay between tradition and modernity while showcasing the profound connection between humans and their environment.

In the social and behavioral sciences, it is important to always provide sufficient information to allow other researchers to adopt or replicate your methodology. This information is particularly important when a new method has been developed or innovative use of an existing method is utilized. Last, please avoid making a subsection in method.

3. Finding and Discussion

The Representation of Agrarian Symbols

The representation of agrarian symbols in the short story, as illustrated in "Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang," reflects the deep connection between humans and nature, which lies at the heart of agrarian life. Buell (1995) emphasizes that agrarian symbols in literature often portray the struggle of humans to sustain their livelihoods while maintaining a harmonious relationship with their ecosystems. In this context, rice seeds symbolize hope and continuity, while the fields represent a life-giving space that serves as both a source of sustenance and a site of cultural and ecological interaction. Saussure (1916) posits that symbols in narratives derive meaning from societal sign systems, suggesting that the agrarian elements in this story also reflect local values, traditions, and societal perceptions of nature. Williams (1977) further argues that agrarian representations in literature often act as a medium of social critique, highlighting the tension between agrarian traditions and the changes brought about by modernization, a theme evident in this story. The short story showcases powerful representations of agrarian symbols, including:

Rice is symbol of live

In Asian culture, rice is deeply rooted as a symbol of life. The practice of planting rice transcends mere subsistence farming, embodying profound spiritual significance. This view holds that rice cultivation is not only an effort to meet human needs but also a form of reverence for ancestors and nature. Planting rice becomes a ritual laden with meaning and symbolism, reflecting a belief system where rice is seen as a sacred gift requiring careful stewardship as a sign of gratitude.

Beyond its spiritual connotations, rice symbolizes simplicity, hard work, prosperity, and abundance. The cultivation and harvest processes demand human effort in collaboration with nature. A bountiful harvest ensures the survival and well-being of communities, symbolizing the prosperity that many aspire to achieve.

The act of tending and growing rice mirrors the human journey, requiring patience, struggle, and continuous dedication. This metaphor underscores the interconnectedness between human resilience and natural cycles, emphasizing a worldview that aligns human existence with the rhythms of nature.

The significance of rice as a symbol of life and spirituality is deeply explored in studies of culture, anthropology, religion, and ethnographic literature. These fields shed light on traditional values and agrarian spirituality in Asian societies. Academic works on traditional farming and agrarian beliefs further enhance our understanding of rice's symbolic meaning within this cultural context.

Thus, rice emerges as not only a material source of life but also a spiritual cornerstone in Asian societies steeped in traditional values and beliefs. This dual role underscores the holistic integration of material sustenance and spiritual fulfillment in agrarian life.

Soil as the mother and ancestor

In many traditions and belief systems, soil is regarded as a maternal figure that births and nurtures human life. This perspective transcends mere economic dimensions, encompassing profound spiritual and social aspects. Soil is often seen as an ancestral heritage that must be preserved, respected, and protected.

The view of soil as both mother and ancestor has deeply permeated human culture and thought throughout history, reflecting humanity's dependence on it as a source of both material and spiritual sustenance. Economically, soil provides vital natural resources for agriculture, fisheries, and other industries. However, this perspective also embraces a profound spiritual dimension, where soil is perceived as a living entity that sustains life and thus commands reverence. In many cultures, traditional practices such as offering ceremonies or religious rituals are often conducted to honor soil as a life-supporting force.

Beyond its spiritual significance, soil also plays a crucial role in shaping social relationships. For instance, in traditional societies, land distribution is often based on lineage, forging strong ties between individuals, families, and

the land they inhabit. This illustrates that the human connection with soil extends beyond economic or physical dimensions to encompass complex social aspects as well.

Understanding soil as both mother and ancestor can be enriched through anthropological studies of spiritual beliefs and practices across various cultures. Additionally, literature on cultural ecology, religious texts, and philosophical works often portrays the human relationship with soil as something far beyond a source of natural wealth—positioning it as an integral part of human existence on Earth.

Offering and life rituals in agrarian societies

Offerings and life rituals hold a central role in agrarian communities, particularly in ceremonies surrounding the sowing of rice seeds and other agricultural practices. These rituals extend beyond practical farming activities, reflecting the profound relationship between humans, nature, and their ancestors. In agrarian culture, rice seeds are not merely agricultural commodities but carry deep symbolic meanings. The act of sowing rice seeds is not a mere technical process but a sacred event marked by offerings and prayers to ancestors and nature deities. This practice embodies the agrarian community's belief in their dependence on nature and the need for blessings and protection from ancestral spirits.

As an integral part of the life cycle, these offerings reinforce the bond between humans and nature and shape the unique cultural identity of these societies. Rituals like these serve as a bridge between the material and spiritual realms, demonstrating the community's respect for the forces of nature that sustain their livelihood.

To support this analysis, various sources can be consulted, such as cultural anthropology, religious studies, and ethnographic literature on agrarian societies worldwide. Works like *The Sacred and the Profane* by Mircea Eliade or *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* by Marcel Mauss provide profound insights into the role of rituals and offerings in traditional societies. Additionally, field research by anthropologists and ethnographers in specific agrarian communities offers concrete examples of how such rituals are practiced daily and their significance to those communities. Understanding the vital role of offerings and rituals in agrarian life provides a deeper appreciation of the intricate connections between humans, nature, and culture in traditional agricultural contexts.

The role of large trees and natural environment

Large trees and natural environments hold profound significance in the identity and livelihood of agrarian communities. These are not merely striking visual elements in the landscape but embody deep cultural and spiritual values for local populations. Often considered sacred and historical landmarks, large trees are carefully preserved and revered, symbolizing local wisdom and the interconnected relationship between humans and nature. Additionally, diverse natural environments serve as habitats for various plant and animal species,

playing a crucial role in maintaining the ecological balance essential to human life and broader ecosystems.

However, large trees and natural environments are increasingly vulnerable to external threats such as deforestation, land degradation, and climate change. The loss of these natural assets can result in severe consequences, including diminished biodiversity and disrupted ecological equilibrium, impacting both human livelihoods and environmental health.

Safeguarding large trees and natural environments requires collaborative efforts involving local communities, governments, and conservation organizations. Through joint initiatives in sustainable management and a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving nature, agrarian societies can ensure these invaluable resources are maintained for future generations. Recognizing the cultural and ecological significance of large trees and natural environments is an essential step toward fostering environmental sustainability and securing the continued well-being of humanity and the planet.

The struggle between agrarian traditional and modernity

The analysis of the short story reveals a complex struggle between agrarian traditions and modernity. Agrarian traditions embody a way of life passed down through generations, encompassing values, farming practices, and the human connection to nature. Conversely, modernity brings rapid social, economic, and technological changes, often posing a threat to the sustainability of these traditions.

The conflict between agrarian traditions and modernity is depicted through the looming threat of development projects to communal lands in the story. Urban infrastructure projects or environmental changes jeopardize traditional agricultural lands, forcing communities reliant on farming to choose between preserving their ancestral lands or embracing modernization. While modernization may offer economic advantages, it risks eroding cultural identity and the continuity of agrarian traditions.

The story highlights this dilemma, illustrating how agrarian communities must fight to retain their identity and traditions amidst the inescapable tide of modernization. The tension between upholding traditional values and adapting to the demands of economic and technological development is a central theme explored in depth.

To support this analysis, various sources can be referenced. Scholarly articles examining the impact of urban development on traditional farming, books addressing conflicts between traditional values and modern economic growth, and research reports on social and economic changes in agrarian societies provide deeper insights into this complex struggle. By integrating these resources, the analysis can broaden its perspective on the themes presented in the story and their real-life implications.

The Symbolic Meaning of Agrarian Elements in Human Perspectives on Nature

The human connection to nature, as conveyed through agrarian symbols in the short story, can be analyzed through the perspectives of Buell, Saussure, and Williams. Lawrence Buell (1995) argues that agrarian symbols such as rice seeds or fields in the narrative reflect a deep ecological relationship between humans and nature, where nature is perceived as a partner in the cycle of life. Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) emphasizes that these agrarian symbols go beyond representing physical objects; they carry social and cultural meanings that mirror humanity's view of nature as a source of values, traditions, and spirituality.

Raymond Williams (1977) further elaborates that this relationship is not solely individual but also collective, where agrarian symbols embody social solidarity and traditions passed down through generations. The symbols serve as cultural anchors that reinforce community bonds and shared values tied to the natural world.

Through these agrarian symbols, the short story portrays a profound interconnectedness between humans and nature, imbued with ecological, social, and cultural significance. The narrative invites readers into an agrarian world rich with symbolism, depicting humanity's enduring relationship with nature and ancestral traditions. This perspective underscores the story's role in exploring the intricate, multifaceted bond between human existence and the environment.

The prominent symbol of land as a metaphor for mother earth

One of the most striking symbols in the short story is land, elevated as a metaphor for Mother Earth. In the narrative context, land is not merely a space where plants grow but is considered a life-giving source that sustains human existence by providing food and shelter. This metaphor emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature, a connection rooted in prehistoric times when humans not only extracted from nature but also gave back through respect and stewardship.

However, in the story, the land also undergoes exploitation and destruction due to the construction of a luxury hotel. This act symbolizes a shift in the modern human perspective on land, prioritizing economic value over spiritual and traditional significance. It reflects a profound conflict between agrarian traditions, which revere land as a nurturing and life-giving mother, and the drive of modernity, which often disregards these values for economic gain.

The analysis of the symbolism of land in this story is enriched by understanding literary symbolism and exploring humanity's evolving views on the environment in the context of modern society. Relevant references for this analysis include academic texts on literary ecology, cultural studies, and scientific articles addressing the impact of environmental exploitation on human life. By drawing on these sources, the analysis provides a deeper insight into the complexity of land as a symbol and its implications within the story.

Rice as a symbol of life and pride in agrarian communities

Rice becomes a powerful symbol of life and pride for the agrarian community depicted in the story. The way Nara and her family care for rice with reverence and admiration highlights its importance to them. Rice is not just a crop for food sustenance but represents the cycle of life and the well-being of the agrarian community. The respect shown toward rice reflects wisdom in how nature is treated and underscores the importance of maintaining balance between humans and their environment.

Moreover, rice symbolizes sustainability. Each planting and harvesting cycle is integral to the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature. By tending to rice with wisdom and care, the agrarian community ensures the continuity of their life and the lives of future generations. Thus, rice is not only seen as a food source but also as a spiritual and cultural symbol that embodies local wisdom and sustainability.

This analysis is based on understanding the symbolic role of rice in agrarian cultures and observing how rice is nurtured in the story. References that can support this analysis include cultural anthropology studies focusing on the role of plants in agrarian societies, research on plant symbolism in traditional cultures, and literature addressing sustainability and human-nature relationships. Relevant sources might include books like *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature* by David Suzuki, *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity* published by the United Nations, and works on ethnobotany and ethnolinguistics that explore the relationship between local cultures and nature.

Tradition and culture in the human-nature relationship

In the analysis, the short story highlights the importance of tradition and culture in the human-nature relationship. The rice planting ceremony described in the story serves as an expression of the deep connection between humans, their ancestors, and the natural world. This ceremony illustrates how tradition and culture play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance and spiritual harmony between humans and nature. The author may aim to convey the message that such traditions are not only a part of cultural heritage but are also key to preserving harmony between humanity and the environment.

However, conflict arises when individuals or groups representing modern values take steps to sacrifice traditional aspects for the sake of development. The destruction of rice by individuals who seek to take land for development projects represents the conflict between traditional and modern views of the natural world. This reflects an ongoing debate within society about the importance of preserving traditions and culture in the face of modernization pressures.

Relevant references for this analysis may include scholarly works on ethnography, cultural anthropology, or literary criticism that discuss themes such as the human-nature relationship, the conflict between tradition and modernity, and the importance of cultural heritage in society. Examples of references include books like *Ecology, Culture, and Human Development: Lessons for Adivasi Education* by Janaki Nair and *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Language and Literature* by Mohammed Arkoun. Additionally, literary

works such as traditional stories or contemporary short stories that explore these themes can also be relevant sources.

Human-nature relationship in the short story

The analysis of the human-nature relationship in the short story emphasizes the view of nature as a living entity with spiritual power and life. In the story, nature is not merely a backdrop or a source of material needs; it is a vibrant entity full of wisdom and strength that deserves respect. The harmonious relationship between humans and nature is reflected in the way the characters treat nature with reverence and gentleness. This approach illustrates the deep understanding that humans are inseparable from nature, and their dependence on it necessitates respect and protection.

This view can be further explored through human ecology theories, environmental philosophy, and interdisciplinary studies from anthropology, sociology, and environmental literature. Theoretical works such as *The Ecology of Freedom* by Murray Bookchin offer a holistic view of the relationship between humans, society, and nature, while literary works like Romanticism's nature poetry or writings on local wisdom and indigenous traditions can provide deeper insights into human perceptions of nature.

By grounding the analysis in these sources, a richer understanding of the complexity and importance of the human-nature relationship in the context of the short story can be achieved. This not only helps readers delve deeper into the story's meaning but also fosters greater appreciation for the sensitive and mutually supportive relationship between humans and their natural environment.

Conflict between tradition and modernity in the short story

The analysis of the conflict between tradition and modernity in the short story reveals the complex dynamics within an agrarian society, where traditional values clash with pressures from development and industrialization. This conflict manifests in the resistance of Nara's family against individuals wanting to take their land for a development project, highlighting the tension between steadfast agrarian traditions and the drive toward modernization.

The agrarian traditions that have become an essential part of Nara's family's life collide with modern ideas about land use that may be promoted by the development project. This reflects a battle between traditional values such as a close relationship with the land, family heritage, and environmental sustainability, and the demands of development, which often emphasize economic and technological progress.

In analyzing such conflicts, it is important to consider diverse perspectives and examine their root causes carefully. Relevant references for understanding such dynamics can include studies on the development of agrarian societies, land conflict, and literature on social change and modernity. For instance, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* by James C. Scott offers a case study on how agrarian societies preserve their traditional values in the face of pressures from development and social change.

Thus, the short story symbolically illustrates the complexity of the relationship between humans and nature, as well as the conflict that arises between traditional and modern values in human perspectives on nature. It provides profound insight into the challenges faced by agrarian societies in confronting the changing times and how they struggle to preserve their identity and values amidst the forces of modernization.

The Relationship Humans-Nature Through Agrarian Symbols in the Short Story

The relationship between humans and nature through agrarian symbols in the short story can be analyzed using the perspectives of Buell, Saussure, and Williams. According to Lawrence Buell (1995), agrarian symbols such as rice seeds or fields in the story depict the close ecological relationship between humans and nature, where nature is seen as a partner in the cycle of life. Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) emphasized that these agrarian symbols not only represent physical objects but also carry social and cultural meanings that reflect humans' views of nature as a source of values, traditions, and spirituality. Raymond Williams (1977) adds that this relationship is not only individual but also collective, where agrarian symbols represent social solidarity and traditions passed down through generations. Therefore, through agrarian symbols, this short story illustrates a deep connection between humans and nature, imbued with ecological, social, and cultural meanings. The story reveals the relationship between humans and nature through rich and profound agrarian symbols. Through the narrative, several agrarian symbols that illustrate the human-nature relationship can be analyzed:

Rice as a symbol of human life and its connection to nature in the story

In the story, rice is elevated as a symbol of human life and its connection to nature. The planting of rice is not merely seen as a routine agricultural activity but as a manifestation of the close relationship between humans, the sky, and the earth. This reflects the human dependence on the natural cycle, involving the processes of growth and harvest as integral parts of daily life. The flourishing rice becomes a metaphor for fertility and prosperity, while crop failure or drought symbolizes uncertainty and tension in human life.

Cultures around the world often view rice as a symbol of human life and its connection to nature. Rice is not only seen as a source of food but also as an important spiritual and cultural symbol. In traditional ceremonies, rice is revered as a manifestation of rice gods or as a representation of fertility and blessings. This shows that the relationship between humans and rice is not merely material but also has a deep spiritual dimension.

By elevating rice as a symbol of life and its connection to nature, the story presents the idea that humans cannot be separated from nature and that the continuity of human life is heavily dependent on ecological balance. The emphasis on human dependence on the natural cycle through rice invites reflection on the importance of maintaining harmony between humans and their

natural environment. It also serves as a reminder that without a strong connection to nature, the survival of humanity is not guaranteed as a whole.

Fields and land as symbols of life-giving motherhood in the story

In the story, the fields and land are seen as a mother that gives life to humanity, a concept that has become an important part of various cultures around the world. Through practices of planting, caring for, and harvesting, humans express their dependence on the land as a source of life. This process is not only a practical action to obtain food but also an expression of gratitude and respect for the land as an entity that provides sustenance.

Respect for the land is also reflected in various traditional ceremonies depicted in the story. These ceremonies are not only spiritually meaningful but also emphasize the awareness of the interconnection between humans and nature. The stories and rituals associated with the land reflect a profound understanding of the role of land as a life source that requires protection and reverence.

In analyzing the concept of land as a life-giving mother, reference sources such as ethnographic literature, cultural anthropology, religious studies, and local traditions can provide valuable insights. Works like *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* by Marcel Mauss or *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari explore how the relationship between humans and nature is reflected in culture and social traditions. Studies in religion and philosophy, such as *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* by Mircea Eliade or *The Earth as Mother in Western Traditions* by Carol P. Christ, also offer a deeper understanding of the reverence for the land in spiritual and philosophical contexts.

By utilizing these reference sources, we can gain a better understanding of the cultural and philosophical significance of the concept of land as a mother in various societies around the world. This helps deepen our understanding of the connection between humans and nature, as well as the importance of maintaining harmony with the life-giving environment.

Ceremonies and offerings to ancestors and nature as symbols of ecological and spiritual balance

In the story, the ceremonies and offerings to ancestors and nature are key elements that reflect the belief in the importance of maintaining the balance of nature and the harmonious relationship between humans and their environment. These practices are not only part of everyday life but also expressions of values passed down from generation to generation.

These ceremonies often involve offerings such as rice, betel leaves, tobacco, or other items considered to have sacred value. The conduct of such rituals is not only an expression of respect for ancestors but also a form of spiritual interaction between humans and nature. The reverence for ancestors indicates a belief in their presence and influence in daily life, while offerings to nature reflect an awareness of human dependence on the environment.

The practices of ceremonies and offerings are also seen as ways to gain protection and blessings from nature and the ancestors. This reflects the belief in a close relationship between humans, nature, and the spiritual world. In this context, these ceremonies are not merely formal rituals, but a means of maintaining ecological and spiritual balance.

The analysis of ceremonies and offerings in the story can be deepened through various reference sources such as ethnographic literature, cultural anthropology, and traditional religious studies. Books like *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature* by David Suzuki provide insight into the concept of balance between humans and nature in various traditional beliefs, helping to understand the meaning and significance of the ceremonial and offering practices in the story.

Destruction of large trees as a symbol of environmental and cultural change

The destruction of large trees in rural areas represents a phenomenon that reflects not only physical environmental damage but also a profound change in the life and values of agrarian societies. These trees are not only natural structures but also symbols of traditional life and the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. In agrarian societies, large trees are considered living entities that bear silent witness to the history and local life. They symbolize the harmonious bond between humans and nature, reflected in the care and respect given by the community towards these trees as an integral part of their lives.

However, with the advent of modernization and development, these traditional values have begun to erode. The destruction of these large trees becomes a tangible symbol of this change. The development process often sacrifices green spaces and ancient trees for the sake of modern infrastructure. With the loss of these trees comes the erosion of local identity and wisdom that were embedded in these natural symbols. Agrarian communities, once living in harmony with nature, are now forced to adapt to changes that are not always in line with their traditional values.

This analysis refers to an understanding of the symbolic role of large trees in agrarian societies and the impact of their destruction on the transformation of traditional values. Reference sources such as studies on cultural ecology, environmental anthropology, and literature on social change and the impact of modernization on agrarian societies can support this analysis. Through academic research on environmental conflicts, scholarly articles on environmental sustainability and local wisdom, as well as documentation on landscape changes and local identity in the context of development, we can deepen our understanding of the complexity of this phenomenon.

Conflict between tradition and development as a central theme

The conflict between tradition and development emerges as a central theme in the story, reflecting the shifting values and priorities in modern society. One example of this is when land previously used for traditional

agriculture is repurposed for hotel construction. This change illustrates the alienation of humans from nature and the traditional values that have been deeply rooted in their culture. On one hand, development can be seen as a sign of economic progress and advancement, but on the other hand, it sparks conflict with the sustainability of culture and the environment.

It is crucial to highlight that the emphasis on development often comes at the cost of pre-existing cultural and ecological values. In this process, the presence of traditional values often becomes a dilemma for modern societies trying to meet the demands of development. The conflict between development and tradition raises profound questions about how modern societies interact with nature and their traditions, as well as the impacts on environmental sustainability and cultural heritage.

To analyze this theme, literature on the conflict between development and cultural preservation, as well as articles on the negative environmental impacts of development, can provide a deeper understanding. References such as academic journals, reports from international organizations, or news articles discussing real-life cases of conflicts between development and tradition can serve as valuable resources. By considering these perspectives, we can gain a better understanding of the complex dynamics between development, tradition, and environmental sustainability both within the story and in modern society at large.

Analysis of resistance to modernization reflected in the father's opposition to hotel development

The analysis of the resistance to modernization, as reflected in the father's refusal to allow the hotel development on their land, demonstrates an awareness of the importance of preserving the relationship between humans, nature, and tradition amid the pressures of modern development. In this context, the resistance can be understood as an effort to protect local identity, culture, and the natural environment from the negative impacts of development that often neglect sustainability and diversity.

When natural resources are exploited excessively for the sake of modern economic development, the natural environment and local traditions often become victims. The father's stance against the hotel development represents a resistance to the hegemony of development that disregards traditional values and environmental sustainability. By rejecting the hotel project, the father reaffirms the importance of maintaining a balance between humans and nature.

This approach aligns with the concept of sustainable development, which emphasizes the integration of social, economic, and environmental aspects. By opposing development that harms the natural environment and threatens the continuity of local traditions, the father shows a commitment to the principles of sustainable development.

To support this analysis, references such as scientific studies on the impact of development on the natural environment and local cultures, theories of resistance to modernization, and literature on sustainable development and the human-nature relationship can be utilized. Relevant sources include

academic journals, books, and news articles that document conflicts between modern development and the preservation of the environment and local traditions. By referring to these sources, the analysis of resistance to modernization can be deepened by considering various perspectives and relevant contexts.

Animal sacrifice ceremony as part of the rice planting ritual: A reflection of the life cycle

The animal sacrifice ceremony, as part of the rice planting ritual, serves as a reflection of the connection between humans and the life cycle, which encompasses both death and birth. In this context, the ceremony acknowledges the natural reality that death is inseparable from the processes of birth and regeneration. The sacrifice of animals in this ritual is a gesture of gratitude for the harvest, symbolizing an inevitable cycle in the universe. The presence of death in the ceremony is not merely an expression of sorrow but a reminder of the potential for new birth and growth within the life cycle.

Furthermore, the animal sacrifice can be understood as a symbol of transformation. The death of the animal allows for new birth and growth, marking the beginning of a never-ending cycle. Through this process, humans come to understand that death is not the end, but rather a necessary stage for new life to emerge. Thus, the animal sacrifice ceremony becomes a reflection on the natural cycle that involves both death and birth as interconnected and inseparable parts.

This understanding can be further strengthened by referring to cultural anthropology studies that highlight the importance of rituals and symbolism in human life, as well as the concept of the life cycle in various cultures. For example, research by anthropologists like Clifford Geertz on religion and cultural symbolism in Bali offers deep insights into how such ceremonies reflect human understanding of death and birth as essential components of the inevitable life cycle. By considering this perspective, we can gain a more profound understanding of the complexity of the relationship between humans and nature, as well as the shifting values within society amid modernization and the dynamics of change.

4. Conclusion

This research focuses on the agrarian symbolism in the short story "Mengantar Benih Padi Terakhir ke Ladang" by Silvester Petara Hurit, with the aim of uncovering the symbolic meanings embedded in agrarian symbols and how the relationship between humans and nature is represented through these symbols. From the analysis, it can be concluded that the agrarian symbols in this short story, such as rice seeds, fields, and other natural elements, go beyond mere physical elements related to agriculture. They function as profound metaphors, depicting the cycle of life, cultural values, and the emotional connection between humans and nature.

These symbols not only represent agrarian life literally but also reveal the dependency of humans on nature. Their symbolic meanings reflect the

complexity of the human-environment relationship, especially in the face of changing times and the ever-evolving social dynamics. Through this symbolism, the short story conveys a message about human awareness of nature as a source of life, which is highly dependent on its preservation and sustainability.

This research also delves into the representation of the human-nature relationship reflected in the agrarian symbols, indicating a sense of nostalgia for traditional life as well as the challenges posed by modernization, which has begun to shift agrarian values. The short story highlights the conflict between tradition and modernity in the management of natural resources, where humans must confront these changes in a wise and responsible manner.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to our understanding of the human-nature relationship through agrarian symbolism in literature. The findings not only enrich agrarian literary studies but also provide deeper insights into how symbols in literary works can reflect the dynamics of the human-environment relationship. Therefore, this research has the potential to become an important reference in literary studies, offering a theoretical foundation for further research and enhancing our understanding of the use of symbols in literature, particularly in the agrarian context.

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