

## ECOCRITICAL STUDY ON THE "SENDHANG TIRTA PANGGESANGAN" GEGURITAN

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**Abstract:** *Geguritan* (Javanese poetry) is a fascinating literary work to study from various perspectives, one of which is from the perspective of ecocriticism. Ecocriticism examines environmentally oriented criticism of literary works. This research examines ecocriticism in the *geguritan* "Sendhang Tirta Panggesangan," created by S. Wignya Raharja. This type of research is qualitative descriptive research. The data in this research is in the form of sentences in the "Sendhang Tirta Panggesangan" *geguritan*. The data collection technique used was the literature study technique, which involved studying reference sources from similar articles regarding literary ecocriticism. The data analysis technique used is content analysis, which is carefully reading the *geguritan* and analyzing it using literary ecocriticism. The results of the research show that there is ecocriticism contained in the "Sendhang Tirta Panggesangan" *geguritan* in the form of a depiction of the *sendhang* environment, which has been polluted and is no longer natural as a result of human activities.

**Keywords:** Ecocriticism, ecology, *geguritan*

### INTRODUCTION

Literature is a work of fiction created by spontaneous outbursts of emotion and can express aesthetic aspects based on linguistic aspects and meaning (Muzakki, 2007). Meanwhile, Sukirman (2021) states that literature is generally defined as a branch of art created based on creative ideas, feelings, and thoughts related to cultural elements expressed through language. A writer creates literature not to teach people but to remind them about humanitarian problems. Literary works should be read, observed, and appreciated in a pattern of behavior based on ethics and aesthetics. They are a creative form expressed through language and contain information about humanity to be appreciated.

Literary work always has a particular position and function (Rosita, 2013). Literature is part of culture and is an essential aspect of a nation's life (Slamet, 2018). It also has a social function in society since it expresses phenomena that exist in a society in

written form. Since literature is closely related to culture, it contains society's cultural values which have many different meanings because the phenomena are very complex.

Literary works result from creative and imaginative actions that describe human life and are expressed in real and unreal written forms. Literary works are also tools used to express the author's thoughts and feelings so that they can serve as guidance or learning for readers (Hermawan & Shandi, 2019). It contains expressions about something the author wants to express about something happening in society. Literary works function as a revelation of human life and the values emulated in life.

Among other things that provoke the birth of the literary works, environmental damage becomes one of the phenomena triggering the creation of literary works. Such works are then studied using literary ecocriticism. The term ecocriticism comes from the English words ecology and criticism. Ecology is a scientific study of the patterns of

relationships between plants, animals, and humans with each other and with the environment. Meanwhile, criticism is a form and expression of judgment about the good or bad qualities of something. Ecocritical studies can be based on an idea in the form of a modern environmental movement that criticizes worrying environmental problems. Ecocriticism can be understood as criticism that has an environmental perspective (Harsono, 2008).

According to Chandra (2017), ecocriticism studies the relationship between literature and the environment. Additionally, ecocriticism is a science that investigates how humans present and describe the synergy between humans and their environment as a form of expression of cultural results (Khomisah, 2000). It focuses on the earth in literary investigations (Govindappa, 2020). Ecocriticism is a part of literary science that specifically discusses environmental issues.

Environmental issues are not only discussing about physical nature but also the relationship between humans and other creatures naturally. The relationship between the two must be in harmony to create a balanced ecosystem. The connection between the two produces a bond that becomes the basis of ecocriticism (Mishra, 2016). According to Al Fawareh, Dakamsih, and Alkouri (2023), one of the main goals of ecocriticism is to study how people behave and respond to environmental and ecological issues in their culture. Ecocriticism provides an overview of a person's attitude towards an environmental problem.

Ecocritical studies, also known as green studies or green literature, discuss 1) the way nature is represented by poetry, 2) how to explain the characteristics of the environmental literary genre, and 3) the way the environmental crisis enters contemporary literature. Nature and the environment are not only the background and atmosphere in creating stories in literary works but are also aspects that help build the aesthetics of a literary work (Asyifa & Putri, 2018). The environment is an aspect that plays a crucial role in ecocriticism.

Dewi (2016) states that ecocriticism is a view that questions nature as an inseparable part of humans yet has been exploited by themselves for their economic and political

interests. Operationally, ecocriticism is defined as a study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment that emerged due to the global environmental crisis, accompanied by various practical and theoretical efforts to remedy the crisis. Literary ecocriticism also strengthens the relationship between the environment and social justice issues (Singh, 2019) because, with ecocriticism, authors can express their concerns about environmental issues that need attention and resolution.

One of the literary works that represent ecocriticism is *geguritan* or Javanese poetry. The definition of *geguritan* is a poem composed of a series of words using Javanese (Prakosa, 2023). According to Sukmadewi and Sulanjari (2022), *geguritan* as a literary work is unique. It delivers a message that can be used as a lesson for the people who read it.

The language of *geguritan* is straightforward and concise. It also uses many connotative words that describe the writer's expression. However, people cannot interpret a *geguritan* by explaining the meaning of each word, but people need to read it more than once to interpret its meaning (Setyawan & Saddhono, 2020). *Geguritan* is written in the form of verse, the number of words is more diminutive than literary works in the form of prose. According to Slamet (2018), some poets have different characteristics from most proseists; usually, poets are more direct when expressing their criticism, even though the level of their criticism is different.

*Geguritan*, in a view of ecocriticism, is a form of protest regarding human attitudes that do not protect the environment adequately because they exploit it for specific interests. Humans, as intelligent creatures who live alongside nature, should protect the natural environment to avoid environmental problems. According to Anggraini (2017), environmental damage depicted in *geguritan* portrays environmental damage and the relationship between humans and the social environment.

Currently, research on literary ecocriticism mainly focuses on novels (Sutisna, 2021; Bagtayan, 2021; Yudari, 2020; Putri, Afifah, & Rahman, 2019). *Geguritan* research from the perspective of literary ecocriticism still needs to be explored extensively. *Geguritan*, unlike novels or short

stories, has yet to be studied much in terms of literary ecocriticism. In response, this research studied *geguritan* from the perspective of literary ecocriticism.

This research analyzes the ecocriticism in the "*Sendhang Tirta Panggesangan*" *geguritan* created by S. Wignya Raharja. The *geguritan* contains ecocritics about "*sendhang*," which is no longer as natural as it used to be. The current research is essential to do to make the readers more aware of the importance of preserving nature. Apart from that, this research can also be used as a reference and add to the treasures of literary ecocritical research.

## METHOD

This type of research is qualitative descriptive research. The data source is the "*Sendhang Tirta Panggesangan*" *geguritan*, created by S. Wignya Raharja which was obtained from the *geguritan* collection website (<https://rahasiabelajar.com/geguritan-language-jawa/>). The data in this research are verses of "*Sendhang Tirta Panggesangan*" *geguritan*. Literature study technique is also employed in this study. According to Zageto et al. (2019), library study techniques, or literature studies, are techniques for collecting information from books and other reference sources related to the problems and objectives of the research. The data analysis technique used is content analysis. According to Asri (2020), content analysis focuses on the characteristics of a language as a means of communication by paying attention to the content or contextual meaning of a text.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The *geguritan* that will be studied using literary ecocriticism in this research is the *geguritan* entitled "*Sendhang Tirta Pagesangan*," created by S. Wignya Raharja. The lyrics of the *geguritan* are as follows.

### *Sendhang Tirta Panggesangan*

*Kinlong, klimpah-klimpah, kumricik  
ilining toya  
Pating sliri tawes, wader, pari, dalasan  
anggang-anggang  
Sedaya memuji mring Hyang Widhi  
Tanpa sih Paduka Gusti*

*Dados punapa awak mami?*

*Widodari kayangan sami lelumban  
Tumurun madyaning sendhang  
Jamas, reresik tan emut ing wanci  
Kamanungsan si Tarub  
Segering tirta sendhang dadya  
panjanging yuswa  
Saiba bombong kula nyumurupi  
Sesami titahing Gusti anjagi lestari*

*Punapa boten rumaos  
Punapa sampun wuta tyasira  
Kutu-kutu walang ataga sami sun  
cawisi  
Kanthi lelahanan tanpa nyulih  
Ngantos telas tan nyisa kula legawa*

*Nanging geneya?  
Kori kula kasumpet aspal  
Beton, ngantos nduwa margi kula  
Kados pundi punika Gusti?  
Nyingkur kawula, Gusti ...*

*Sok sintena ingkang mireng pisambat  
kawula  
Keparenga paring margi  
Satemah boten namung kabuncang  
muspra  
Kepara damel kasangsaran dhumateng  
manungsa  
Kula kapang dados sendhang tirta  
panggesangan*

## The Fountain of Livelihood

Clear, abundant, gurgling water flow  
Tawes fish, wader fish, stingrays, and  
water strider roam around  
All praise to God Almighty  
Without Your love  
What will become of me?

Heavenly angels playing in the water  
Go down to the middle of *sendhang*  
Shampooing, cleaning until they do not  
remember the time  
Tarub's humanity  
The fresh water of *sendhang*, may you  
live long  
Glad I saw it  
We are all under God's commandment  
to be able to maintain sustainability

Don't you feel it?  
Is his heart blind?  
I have prepared grasshoppers  
Free without rent  
Until it is finished, there is nothing left  
of my gift

But why?  
My door is blocked with asphalt  
Concrete, until the road is destroyed  
How is this, Lord?  
I step aside, Lord...

Anyone who hears my complaints  
Please make way  
So it is not just wasted  
In fact, it causes misery to humans  
I long to be the *sendhang* of the water  
of life

-S. Wignya Raharja-  
Source: <https://rahasiabelajar.com/geguritan-language-jawa/>

*Geguritan*, entitled "*Sendhang Tirta Panggesangan*," is a literary work in Javanese poetry that implicitly criticizes human actions towards the environment. As a means of criticism, it is hoped to intrigue people who read these literary works to be aware of the importance of preserving the natural environment from any damages.

The environmental focus of this *geguritan* is "*sendhang*," which has undergone changes and is no longer as natural as it used to be. Metaphorically, "*sendhang*" is described as a creature that can speak and protest against the humans due to the damage they create. The ecocritical analysis of the *geguritan* is explained in the description below.

*Kinclong, klimpah-klimpah, kumricik  
ilining toya  
Pating sliri tawes, wader, pari, dalasan  
aggang-aggang*

Clear, abundant, gurgling water flow  
*Tawes* fish, *wader* fish, stingrays, and  
water strider roam around

The sentence from the *geguritan* quote describes a *sendhang*, or pond-shaped body of water, whose water comes from a spring and

is usually used for bathing. The *sendhang* depicted in this fragment has a clear and abundant water. The water is gurgling and used for bathing. There are many *tawes* and *wader* (*Barbonymus gonionotus*) fish, stingrays, and water striders, which illustrate that the spring is still pure and has not been polluted by anything, since so many fish and aquatic animals living in the spring. In rural areas, *sendhang* is where people bathe and wash. The springs in *sendhang* appear naturally, without any influence from human activity, but due to the geological or other natural processes (Firizqi et al., 2019).

*Sendhang* is usually in the form of a large pool containing spring water with many bamboo showers to drain water from the spring pool. Usually, there are many showers in a row so that many people can use them. When it is busy, people usually line up first by waiting at the edge of the *sendhang*. The mat used for washing clothes is usually made of large stones. Some provide washing mats made of cement.

People usually go to the *sendhang* in the morning or afternoon. When people are still busy in the morning, some people go to *sendhang* during the day. Usually, they also bring their children to bathe at the *sendhang*. After or before bathing, children usually play around the spring. *Sendhang* can also be a place for people to gather.

*Sendhang* is a necessity for people in rural areas since it helps people who do not have clean water in their homes. The *sendhang* spring helps the community fulfill their water needs for daily life; the spring also becomes a lifesaver during the dry season. *Sendhang* spring, one of the water resources, has a strategic role as a natural resource that supports the lives of the wider community (Hastanti & Purwanto, 2019).

*Sedaya memuji mring Hyang Widhi  
Tanpa sih Paduka Gusti  
Dados punapa awak mami?*

All praise to God Almighty  
Without Your love  
What will become of me?

The *geguritan* quote illustrates that everyone praises God Almighty for the gift of abundant spring water from *sendhang*, which

is used for the community's daily needs. *Sendhang* with water and the aquatic animals that live in it is a gift one must be grateful for. Only God has the power to give people the gift of spring water for their daily needs. From this spring, the community gets abundant free clean water from nature. *Sendhang* makes things easier for humans to fulfill their need for water. Humans are intelligent creatures, and with their intelligence, they should be able to manage the gifts given by God as well as possible. Likewise, humans should be able to manage and care for the gift in the form of a *sendhang* well so that it can continue to be used by humans in everyday life.

*Widodari kayangan sami lelumban  
Tumurun madyaning sendhang  
Jamas, reresik tan emut ing wanci  
Kamanungsan si Tarub*

Heavenly angels playing in the water  
Go down to the middle of *sendhang*  
Shampooing, cleaning until they don't  
remember the time  
Tarub's humanity

The *geguritan* quote above depicts the heavenly angels were descended into the middle of the spring and playing in the water. The angels bathe their hair and body until they do not remember the time. It is hyperbole in a literary work. The mention of "angels" describes the village girls who bathe in the *sendhang*. People usually call attractive girls "angels" to describe their beauty. In *Geguritan*, beautiful village girls are described with the word "angels."

Such description aligns with the story of Jaka Tarub in folklore originating from Central Java. This folklore contains the story of a young man named Jaka Tarub who likes hunting. Jaka Tarub once heard several women's voices talking amidst the gurgling sound of water. Jaka Tarub looked for the source of the sound and found several angels from heaven bathing in the lake. These angels are described as very beautiful.

Usually, when the girls are at the *sendhang*, they do not just take a shower but also chat with other girls. It made time went faster, as they lingered at the *sendhang* to shower and chat with their friends. When the day is busy, and they do not have time to meet

friends, a time in *Sendhang* is an opportunity to chat with friends while bathing and washing. Usually, village girls wash clothes or household furniture from their homes. It makes their activities at the *sendhang* quite long.

*Sendhang* is also a place where village girls can play in the water. Together with their friends, they played around by splashing water on their friends so that the atmosphere in *sendhang* became more lively because of the village girls. *Sendhang*, apart from being a place to carry out cleaning duties, is also a place where girls meet with their friends—so *sendhang* functions to fulfill personal needs and the need to connect with other humans.

*Segering tirta sendhang dadya  
panjanging yuswa  
Saiba bombong kula nyumurupi  
Sesami titahing Gusti anjagi lestari*

The fresh water of *sendhang*, may you  
live long  
Glad I saw it  
We are all under God's commandment  
to be able to maintain sustainability

In this line, the author hopes fresh spring water can be sustainable. God's fellow creatures should look after each other. The freshness of *sendhang* water is needed by rural communities as a source of clean water for bathing, washing, and others. The author wants to illustrate that human nature is beautiful. *Sendhang*, with all its ecosystems, is a gift to humans. Fresh, clear, and unpolluted water in *sendhang* is something that must be cared for and preserved.

Humans and *sendhang* are creations of God Almighty. Humans have to take care of God's creation, *sendhang*. Thus, it will remain sustainable. *Sendhang* is not only needed by humans, but in the *sendhang* ecosystem, there are also creatures created by God that live in this ecosystem, such as fish, water insects, water plants, and many more. If humans cannot properly care for the *sendhang* ecosystem, the survival of these living creatures can be disrupted. Humans are creatures who have a role in preserving *sendhang* so that living creatures in the *sendhang* ecosystem are maintained.

*Punapa boten rumaos  
 Punapa sampun wuta tyasira  
 Kutu-kutu walang ataga sami sun  
 cawisi  
 Kanthi lelahanan tanpa nyulih  
 Ngantos telas tan nyisa kula legawa*

Do not you feel it?  
 Is his heart blind?  
 I have prepared grasshoppers  
 Free without rent  
 Until it is finished, there is nothing left  
 of my gift

After describing the beauty of *sendhang*, the author's concern about the current condition of *sendhang* are described. From the *geguritan* quote above, the "*sendhang*" is depicted as living creatures and talking to humans about the situation of the "*sendhang*." The grasshoppers that used to be plentiful have disappeared because humans have damaged their habitats. Humans are asked to think and feel whether they do this without thinking about the other creatures living in that place. It shows as a critic from the author of *geguritan*.

Humans often prioritize other interests, such as economic and political interests, instead of nature conservation. Floods in cities are also the result of human activities that cannot protect nature adequately. Dumping rubbish in the river is one of the causes of the flood. However, as creatures that live in nature, humans should take good care of them. Humans have been given all the abundance and beauty of nature for free. However, with all their interests, humans choose to destroy the natural habitat of the creatures in it and constructing buildings that do not pay attention to nature conservation. Human interests must not sacrifice nature, which includes various living creatures. Humans must not be selfish by prioritizing their own interests without thinking about the impact of activities that can damage the environment.

*Nanging geneya?  
 Kori kula kasumpet aspal  
 Beton, ngantos nduwa margi kula  
 Kados pundi punika Gusti?  
 Nyingkur kawula, Gusti ...*

But why?  
 My door is blocked with asphalt  
 Concrete, until the road is destroyed  
 How is this, Lord?  
 I step aside, Lord...

The *geguritan* quote above illustrates how disappointed "*sendhang*" due to the damage caused by human. It is no longer as it used to be. The roads around the "*sendhang*" are no longer natural and are filled with asphalt and concrete. "*Sendhang*" feels disappointed with human actions. The depiction of *geguritan* is a reality that occurs in the real world. Even now, many "*sendhang*" in villages are no longer as natural as they used to be. The surrounding area is cemented and asphalted, causing damage to the habitat of the creatures that live around *sendhang*. For example, in what happened to the Ngembel *sendhang*, several buildings were deliberately built around the *sendhang*, even though the area should have been used optimally to preserve the *sendhang* (Ardhiansyah, 2022). Development around *sendhang* is not a wise choice. The impact of this development could be in the form of disruption of the existing *sendhang* ecosystem so that its living creatures could experience extinction. Damage to the *sendhang* ecosystem can also impact springs, which can be polluted and not as clean as before, even though the springs in *sendhang* are beneficial for everyday human life.

Despite the surrounding condition, communities should be able to create sustainable water spring sources by having an appropriate water spring management and a regular monitoring of water spring sources (Pitayati, 2023). *Sendhang* management must be considered. The development carried out must not disturb the *sendhang* ecosystem. The springs in *sendhang* must be well maintained and cared for to be clean and sustainable.

*Sendhang* used to be a place for children to go fishing, play in the water, and do other fun activities. The natural air around *sendhang* is also very fresh, especially in the morning. However, when the *sendhang* environment is polluted, the fresh air around it is reduced. Changes around *sendhang* represents the modern developments in natural places. Even in cities, trees are rare; they are cut down, and the land is cemented to

make way for buildings. It results in a lack of groundwater absorption, resulting in flooding. Trees and plants can also produce oxygen and reduce environmental heat. Cutting down trees also affects the heat of the surrounding air. Thus, modern developments significantly impact the habitat of natural living creatures.

*Sok sintena ingkang mireng pisambat  
kawula  
Keparenga paring marga  
Satemah boten namung kabuncang  
muspra  
Kepara damel kasangsan dhumateng  
manungsa  
Kula kapang dados sendhang tirta  
panggesangan*

Anyone who hears my complaints  
Please make way  
So it is not just wasted  
In fact, it causes misery to humans  
I long to be the *sendhang* of the water  
of life

From the *geguritan* quote above, "*sendhang*" seems to be saying that he does not want to experience any modern condition because it does not want to go to waste. The "*sendhang*" feels that he longs to be the source of life as before. "*Sendhang*" considers modern development as destructive and it needs to be resolved immediately to avoid further damage of the ecosystem or existing water sources pollution.

The author wants to illustrate that if *sendhang* could talk, he would scream due to human actions that destroy *sendhang's* environment. *Sendhang* hopes it can return to being a beautiful and valuable *sendhang* for human life. The author wants to convey that anyone has the authority to limit construction that can damage nature. This action must be taken immediately to prevent further environmental damage. Every human being has a role in jointly preserving the existing nature, and this must always be done so that there is no regret for the destruction of nature due to their actions. Habits of protecting the natural environment can start from small things. They can be done every day, starting from throwing rubbish in the right place, managing rubbish properly and correctly, planting trees, recycling goods, and much

more. Humans should be more sensitive and care about the nature around them to create a beautiful collaboration between humans and nature.

## CONCLUSION

Ecocriticism is a very urgent tool used by writers to provide criticism of existing environmental damage. It exists as an expression of criticism of environmental damage caused by human activities. In the "*Sendhang Tirta Panggesangan*" *geguritan*, the focus is an environmental issue, especially in the case *sendhang's* destruction. The destruction disable people to utilize the *sendhang* for their daily needs. *Sendhang* has enormous benefits for the local community. However, due to the modern development, damage to the *sendhang* ecosystem occurs. The impacts resulting from this modern development are not only felt by the communities around but also the animals and plants around the *sendhang*. Through the literary works, the author invites all people who to care about this phenomenon and work together to overcome such destruction. It intrigues the importance of protecting the environment. Literary ecocriticism gives rise to literary representations of ecological awareness, which increases public awareness of environmental conservation by criticizing a culture that disrupts the natural order (Asenath & Santhalaksmi, 2021). As we navigate an era of environmental disruption, environmental criticism provides something that can foster ecological awareness and inspire changes in human attitudes toward nature (Hebbar P. & Ambika G., 2024).

Future researchers should build on this study by conducting comparative analyses of literary works from different regions or cultures to understand how ecocriticism varies and contributes to environmental awareness. Integrating interdisciplinary approaches with insights from environmental science, sociology, and anthropology can offer a comprehensive understanding and practical solutions for conservation. Longitudinal studies can measure the impact of ecocritical literature on public attitudes and behaviors over time. Investigating the influence of digital media and online platforms, as well as the role of social media and digital storytelling in

spreading ecological awareness, is essential. Studying the cultural and social impact of ecocritical literature on specific communities can assess its influence on local conservation efforts and policy changes. Exploring effective literary techniques and strategies for

conveying ecological messages, incorporating ecocritical literature into educational curricula, and documenting case studies of successful environmental interventions are also crucial areas for future research.

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