



Environmental Damage in the Novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* by Tere Liye: Sociology Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the forms of environmental degradation depicted in the novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* by Tere Liye based on Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective. The research was conducted during 2025–2026, with the novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar*, published by Sabak Grip Nusantara in 2024, serving as the object of study. The population consisted of all narrative elements within the novel, while the sample comprised excerpts representing environmental degradation. The primary research instrument was the researcher, supported by data cards for recording and organizing the findings. Data were collected through reading and note-taking techniques. The data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative method, involving data collection, data classification, data categorization, data interpretation, and conclusion drawing based on Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory. The results reveal that environmental degradation in the novel is represented through four major forms: environmental pollution, deforestation and land degradation caused by mining activities, wildlife habitat destruction, and ecological disasters, including clean water crises, floods, and landslides. These findings indicate that *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* contains ecological criticism of the exploitation of natural resources carried out without regard for environmental sustainability and ecosystem balance.

Keywords: environmental damage, novel, sociological study

Kerusakan Alam dalam Novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* Karya Tere Liye: Studi Sosiologi Sastra

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bentuk-bentuk kerusakan alam dalam novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* karya Tere Liye berdasarkan perspektif ekokritik Greg Garrard. Penelitian dilaksanakan pada tahun 2025–2026 dengan objek kajian berupa novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* karya Tere Liye yang diterbitkan oleh Sabak Grip Nusantara pada tahun 2024. Populasi penelitian meliputi seluruh unsur naratif dalam novel, sedangkan sampel penelitian berupa kutipan-kutipan yang merepresentasikan kerusakan alam. Instrumen penelitian adalah peneliti sendiri yang didukung oleh kartu data sebagai alat pencatatan data. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui teknik simak dan catat. Analisis data menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan tahapan pengumpulan data, pengelompokan data, pengkategorian data, interpretasi data, dan penarikan simpulan berdasarkan teori ekokritik Greg Garrard. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kerusakan alam dalam novel direpresentasikan melalui empat bentuk utama, yaitu pencemaran lingkungan, kerusakan hutan dan degradasi lahan akibat aktivitas pertambangan, kerusakan habitat satwa, serta bencana ekologis berupa krisis air bersih, banjir, dan longsor. Temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* mengandung kritik ekologis terhadap eksploitasi sumber daya alam yang dilakukan tanpa memperhatikan keberlanjutan lingkungan dan keseimbangan ekosistem.

Kata kunci: kerusakan alam, novel, sosiologi sastra

Submitted
04/06/2026

Accepted
02/07/2026

Published
27/07/2026

Citation	Hiola, I. A., Masie, S. R., & Irawati, A. O. (2026). Environmental Damage in the Novel <i>Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar</i> by Tere Liye. <i>Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra</i> , Volume 5, Nomor 4, Juli 2026, 3291-3300. DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i4.1583
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Publisher
Raja Zulkarnain Education Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Environmental damage is a global issue that is becoming increasingly concerning in the modern era. Various human activities oriented towards excessive exploitation of natural resources have led to a decline in environmental quality and disruption of ecosystem balance. This damage can take the form of environmental pollution, deforestation, natural resource exploitation, loss of biodiversity, and even the emergence of various ecological disasters. According to Soemarwoto (1997:32–35), environmental damage occurs when human activities exceed the environment's carrying capacity, resulting in an area's ecological functions no longer functioning optimally. This condition indicates an imbalance in the relationship between humans and nature, potentially threatening the sustainability of life.

One form of environmental damage that frequently occurs in Indonesia is damage caused by mining activities. Mining activities often have significant economic impacts, but at the same time, they also give rise to various ecological problems. Fahsya and Basrowi (2021:95–97) explain that mining activities that do not consider sustainability can cause land degradation, water pollution, vegetation damage, and disrupt the lives of communities surrounding mining areas. These impacts are not only felt in the short term but also have the potential to cause long-term ecological damage. Environmental damage caused by the exploitation of natural resources also impacts the sustainability of ecosystems. According to Pratiwi and Pravitasari (2024:200), deforestation for development and extractive industries results in the loss of natural habitats for various flora and fauna. Consequently, the ecosystem balance is disrupted and the risk of ecological disasters increases. Furthermore, Rizal (2017:233) states that forest destruction contributes to increased carbon emissions, which accelerate climate change and worsen environmental quality.

The issue of environmental degradation is not only a concern in environmental science but is also

an important theme in literary works. Literature has the ability to represent various social and environmental realities that occur in human life. Through literary works, authors can critique various forms of natural exploitation while simultaneously building readers' ecological awareness. Endraswara (2016:124) explains that literature can be a medium for ecological reflection, demonstrating the relationship between humans and nature and the impacts that arise from this imbalance.

The study of the relationship between literature and the environment is known as ecocriticism. Garrard (2012) explains that ecocriticism is an approach that examines environmental representations in literary works and the various ecological issues that arise from human interaction with nature. This approach views nature not only as a setting for the story but also as a vital component with ideological, social, and ecological significance. Within his theoretical framework, Garrard developed several key concepts, such as pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, and earth, which can be used to identify environmental issues in literary works.

One contemporary Indonesian novel that addresses environmental issues is Tere Liye's "Keep Being Stupid, Don't Be Smart." This novel depicts various ecological issues arising from mining activities and the exploitation of natural resources. By depicting the conflict between economic interests and environmental sustainability, the novel critiques development practices that ignore ecological balance. Nature in the novel serves not only as a setting for the story but also as an entity damaged by human actions.

The selection of the novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* (Keep Being Stupid, Don't Be Smart) as the research object is based on its strong depiction of environmental damage presented in the story. Various forms of environmental damage, such as water pollution, land degradation, forest destruction, wildlife habitat loss, and ecological



disasters, are clearly depicted throughout the novel's narrative. This representation makes the novel relevant for study using an ecocritical approach, specifically Greg Garrard's theory, which focuses on environmental issues in literary works.

Based on this description, the research problem is formulated as follows: What are the forms of environmental damage in Tere Liye's novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar*, based on Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective?

In line with this problem formulation, this study aims to describe the forms of environmental damage in Tere Liye's novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar*, based on Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective.

This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the study of literary ecocriticism, particularly regarding the representation of environmental damage in contemporary Indonesian literature. Practically, this research is expected to serve as a reference for students, researchers, and readers in understanding ecological issues represented through literary works. Furthermore, this research is expected to raise public awareness of the importance of preserving the environment.

From an ecocritical perspective, literary works are seen as a medium capable of reflecting the relationship between humans and nature. Garrard (2012) states that environmental representations in literature often reflect human attitudes toward nature, both in the form of exploitation and conservation efforts. The concept of pollution is used to identify various forms of environmental contamination caused by human activity. The concept of wilderness relates to the existence of natural spaces that are disturbed by human intervention. Meanwhile, the concept of apocalypse is used to describe ecological threats or disasters that arise as a consequence of environmental damage.

Several researchers have conducted research relevant to this study. First, Dewi (2015), in her article "Humans and the Natural Environment in Contemporary Indonesian Short Stories: An Ecocritical Analysis of Selected Short Stories from Kompas," found that literary works can serve as a medium for criticizing environmental damage caused by human activity. Second, Purwanti (2018), in her study "The Reciprocal Relationship between Humans and Nature: A Literary Ecological Review of Tosca Santoso's Novel *Sarongge*," demonstrated the interplay between humans and the environment, reflected in literary texts. Third, Islamiah (2023), in her study "An Ecocritical Study of Dewi Lestari's Novel *Aroma Karsa*," found that the representation of nature in the novel serves not only as a setting but also as an entity with a reciprocal relationship with humans. The differences between this study and previous research lie in the object of study and the focus of the analysis. Dewi's (2015) study focused on contemporary Indonesian short stories, Purwanti (2018) examined the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature in the novel *Sarongge*, while Islamiah (2023) examined the representation of nature in the novel *Aroma Karsa*. This research focuses on the forms of environmental damage represented in Tere Liye's novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* (Keep Being Stupid, Don't Be Smart) from Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective. Therefore, this research is expected to provide new contributions to the development of ecocritical studies of Indonesian literature, particularly regarding the representation of environmental damage in contemporary literary works.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Afifuddin & Saebani (2002), Razak (2017), Yuliani (2018) states that qualitative methods are commonly used in various social research fields, including language and literary studies.

The qualitative approach was used because this study aims to describe and interpret the forms of environmental damage contained in Tere Liye's novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* (Keep Being Stupid, Don't Be Smart) from Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective. Strauss and Corbin in Makbul (2021:3) explain that qualitative research produces findings that cannot be obtained through statistical procedures or other quantitative methods. Therefore, this approach is considered appropriate for uncovering the meaning and representation of environmental damage in literary works.

The research procedure was carried out through several stages. The first stage was an intensive reading of the novel to gain a comprehensive understanding of the story's content. The second stage was identifying data related to environmental damage. The third stage is recording and categorizing the data according to the research focus. The fourth stage is analyzing the data using Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory. The final stage is drawing conclusions based on the interpretation of the analyzed data.

The research design used is a qualitative descriptive design based on text analysis. This design focuses on the study of data in the form of narrative excerpts, dialogue, and descriptions representing environmental damage in the novel. The data obtained was analyzed in depth to gain an understanding of the forms of environmental damage represented by the author.

Data collection was conducted from November 2025 to February 2026. The data source was the novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* by Tere Liye, published by Sabak Grip Nusantara in 2024. According to Makbul (2021:3), data is the result of the researcher's records, which can be in the form of words or numbers. In this study, the data consisted of narrative excerpts, dialogue, and descriptions depicting environmental damage in the novel.

The main instrument in this study was the researcher (human instrument), assisted by data cards as supporting instruments. Data collection techniques used listening and note-taking techniques. Listening involves repeatedly reading and comprehending the novel's content to identify data relevant to the research focus. Next, note-taking techniques were used to record each quotation containing representations of environmental damage to facilitate the data classification and analysis process.

The data analysis technique refers to the stages of qualitative data analysis proposed by Saleh (2017): data collection, data organization, data grouping, coding or labeling, data categorization, and interpretation and drawing conclusions. During the data collection stage, the researcher collected all quotations related to environmental damage in the novel. The next stage was data organization by systematically arranging them based on page, category, and story context. Furthermore, the data were grouped based on similar themes, such as environmental pollution, forest destruction, animal habitat destruction, and ecological disaster. Each piece of data was then coded according to its category to facilitate the analysis process. The data were then categorized and interpreted using Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective, specifically the concepts of pollution, wilderness, and apocalypse. The final stage, drawing conclusions, is based on the patterns of findings obtained from the analysis. To maintain data validity, this study employed persistent observation techniques, namely reading and reviewing the data repeatedly to gain a deep understanding of the context of the data being analyzed. Furthermore, data interpretation was conducted consistently, referring to Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, ensuring that the research results have theoretical validity that can be academically justified.

RESULTS

1. Environmental Destruction in the Novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* by Tere Liye

The results of the study indicate that environmental degradation in Tere Liye's novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* is represented through four main forms: environmental pollution, forest and land destruction, animal habitat destruction, and ecological disaster.

1.1 Environmental Pollution

Pencemaran lingkungan menjadi bentuk kerusakan alam yang paling dominan ditemukan dalam novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* karya Tere Liye.

a. Abandoned mine pits

This finding is illustrated by the following quote.

"The mine was abandoned about a year ago. After it was depleted, the miners moved to another district. Since its abandonment, rainwater has started to fill it." (Liye, 2024:20)

This quote describes the existence of abandoned mine pits left open after mining activities concluded. These pits then filled with rainwater and formed large puddles.

Other data demonstrating a similar condition is found in the following quote.

"Giant holes gaped everywhere. No one filled them." (Liye, 2024:21)

This quote demonstrates that former mining activities still damage the landscape and that no efforts have been made to restore the affected environment.

b. Disposal of mining waste into rivers

This finding is illustrated by the following quote.

"But it's clearly not completely gone; that part has turned into mine waste, called tailings. Where is it disposed of? Through the river that flows near

the village, towards the open sea. Millions of tons are dumped there." (Liye, 2024:109)

This quote indicates the dumping of mining waste into the river near the residential area.

The following data also demonstrates the same pollution conditions.

"The river, which was once clear, has become murky and brownish." (Liye, 2024:110)

This quote describes changes in river water quality due to the influx of waste from mining activities.

c. Clean water crisis

This finding is illustrated by the following quote.

"The clean water crisis began. The island's water cycle was completely destroyed." (Liye, 2024:112)

This quote indicates a disruption in the availability of clean water for the community.

Other data supporting this finding is found in the following quote.

"In the dry season, the wells dry up. In the rainy season, floodwaters rush towards the village along with thick mud." (Liye, 2024:112)

This quote demonstrates changes in environmental conditions that have impacted the disruption of the community's water sources.

1.2 Forest and Land Destruction

Forest and land destruction is a form of natural destruction found in Tere Liye's novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* (Keep Being Stupid, Don't Be Smart). This finding is demonstrated through various data depicting changes in environmental conditions due to mining activities.

a. Deforestation

This finding is demonstrated in the following quote.

"The once green hills are slowly turning into open land. Trees are being cut down to make way for heavy equipment." (Liye, 2024)

This quote illustrates the reduction in forest cover due to land clearing for mining. Areas previously covered with vegetation are being transformed into open land.

Other data demonstrating a similar condition is found in the following quote.

"They cut down the forest bit by bit until eventually the entire slope is bare." (Liye, 2024)

This quote indicates that logging activities are causing the loss of forest areas.

b. Changes in land use

This finding is demonstrated in the following quote.

"People's gardens have been turned into mining areas. There is nothing left to plant." (Liye, 2024)

This quote illustrates the change in land use from productive areas to mining areas.

Other data supporting this finding is found in the following quote.

"Land that once produced crops is now only rock, sand, and mud." (Liye, 2024)

This quote shows that mining activities have changed the condition of the land, making it unusable as before.

c. Land Degradation

This finding is demonstrated in the following quote:

"The soil around the mine has become hard and cracked. No plants can grow well anymore." (Liye, 2024)

This quote demonstrates the decline in soil quality due to environmental exploitation activities.

Other data related to land degradation is found in the following quote:

"After the mines leave, all that remains is a stretch of damaged land that is difficult to restore." (Liye, 2024)

This quote describes the condition of the land that has suffered damage after the mining process has ended.

1.3 Ecological Disaster

Ecological disaster is a form of environmental damage that arises as a consequence of various environmental exploitation activities depicted in the novel.

a. Floodwaters

This finding is illustrated by the following quote.

"During the rainy season, floodwaters surged towards the village along with thick mud." (Liye, 2024:112)

This quote describes a flood that carried mud into residential areas.

Other data demonstrating a similar situation is found in the following quote.

"The water overflowed so quickly that it submerged residents' yards." (Liye, 2024)

This quote demonstrates the impact of environmental damage that triggered the flood.

This finding is illustrated by the following quote.

"The land that lost its support collapsed along with the mudflows to lower areas." (Liye, 2024)

This quote illustrates the occurrence of landslides due to changes in environmental conditions.

Other data related to this finding is found in the following quote.

"Thick mud flowed along the river and entered residential areas." (Liye, 2024)

This quote demonstrates the presence of mudflows as part of an ecological disaster.



c. Damage to the Hydrological Cycle

This finding is demonstrated in the following quote.

"The clean water crisis began. The island's water cycle was completely destroyed." (Liye, 2024:112)

This quote indicates the disruption of the surrounding water system.

Other data supporting this finding is found in the following quote.

"In the dry season, the wells dry up." (Liye, 2024:112)

This quote illustrates the reduced water availability due to the disruption of the hydrological cycle.

DISCUSSION

Environmental Pollution as a Representation of Ecological Crisis

The results of this study indicate that environmental pollution is the most dominant form of environmental damage in Tere Liye's novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* (Keep Being Stupid, Don't Be Smart). This pollution is represented through the presence of abandoned mine pits, the dumping of mining waste into rivers, and the clean water crisis experienced by the community. These findings demonstrate that mining activities not only change the landscape but also impact the quality of the environment and the lives of the surrounding communities. From Greg Garrard's (2012) ecocritical perspective, this phenomenon falls under the concept of pollution, namely the introduction of polluting elements into the environment, disrupting the balance of the ecosystem. Garrard (2012) explains that pollution often symbolizes humans' exploitative relationship with nature. Nature is viewed as an object to be exploited for economic gain without considering the long-term impact on the environment.

Garrard's view aligns with Soemarwoto's (1997) opinion, which states that pollution occurs when environmental quality declines due to the

introduction of substances or materials that disrupt the ecological function of an area. In the novel, mining waste dumped into rivers illustrates the decline in environmental quality that leads to a clean water crisis. Thus, the damage is not only physical but also has social impacts as communities lose access to adequate water resources.

The findings of this study are similar to those of Dewi (2015), who found that literary works often represent environmental damage as a critique of exploitative human behavior. However, this study demonstrates a more specific focus, namely pollution from mining activities that directly impacts people's lives. Therefore, the novel "Keep Being Stupid, Don't Be Smart" can be seen as a critique of natural resource exploitation practices that ignore environmental sustainability.

Based on these findings, environmental management efforts are needed that are more oriented towards sustainability principles. Mining activities must not only consider economic profit but also consider environmental conservation aspects to minimize pollution impacts.

Forest and Land Destruction as an Impact of Natural Resource Exploitation

Research findings indicate that mining activities in the novel cause deforestation, changes in land use, and soil degradation. This destruction demonstrates how natural resource exploitation can transform areas that previously had ecological functions into areas experiencing environmental damage.

In Greg Garrard's theory (2012), this phenomenon is related to the concept of wilderness. This concept positions forests as natural spaces with important ecological value. Forests not only function as natural resources but also as habitats for various living creatures and as buffers for environmental balance. When forest areas are damaged, these ecological functions are disrupted.

This view is supported by Pratiwi and Pravitasari (2024), who stated that deforestation causes biodiversity loss, declining soil quality, and an increased risk of environmental disasters. In the

novel, the conversion of green areas to mining areas demonstrates a shift in land use that prioritizes economic interests over ecological sustainability.

This finding also relates to research by Islamiah (2023), which shows that the environment in literary works is often depicted as a victim of human actions. The difference is that Islamiah's research focuses on the relationship between humans and nature in general, while this study emphasizes environmental damage caused by mining activities.

Based on these results, it can be understood that the forest and land damage depicted in the novel critiques the exploitation of natural resources that ignores environmental balance. The author points out that the economic benefits gained from mining are often disproportionate to the ecological damage caused.

Ecological Disasters as a Consequence of Environmental Damage

The research shows that environmental damage in the novel leads to various ecological disasters, such as floods, landslides, and clean water crises. These disasters result from the disruption of the environment's ecological function due to ongoing mining activities. From Garrard's perspective (2012), this phenomenon is related to the concept of the apocalypse. This concept depicts the threat of environmental destruction arising as a consequence of human actions. Ecological disasters are not viewed as simply natural events, but rather as the result of environmental exploitation carried out without considering the ecosystem's carrying capacity.

This view is reinforced by Rizal (2017), who explains that forest destruction and land degradation contribute to the increased risk of flooding, landslides, and disruption of the hydrological cycle. In the novel, these conditions are evident through the reduced availability of

clean water during the dry season and the increased volume of water flowing into residential areas during the rainy season.

The findings of this study align with those of Dewi (2015), who showed that literary works often present environmental disasters as a warning against the impact of human activity. However, this study provides a more specific illustration of the link between mining activities and the emergence of ecological disasters.

Based on these arguments, it can be understood that the novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* constructs ecological disaster as a logical consequence of environmental damage. The author emphasizes that continued exploitation of nature will ultimately have a negative impact on human life.

This study has the advantage of in-depth data analysis. The research data were obtained directly from the entire novel, allowing for a more comprehensive identification of various forms of environmental damage. Furthermore, the use of Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory provides a systematic analytical framework for identifying representations of pollution, forest destruction, animal habitat destruction, and ecological disaster in literary texts.

On the other hand, this study has limitations because it only uses one object of study, namely the novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* by Tere Liye. This limitation means that the results cannot be used to describe the representation of environmental damage in Indonesian literature more broadly. Furthermore, this study focuses only on the aspect of environmental damage, thus failing to examine other dimensions of Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, such as dwelling, earth, and animals, in greater depth. Therefore, further research can expand the scope of study and research variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of environmental issues in Indonesian literature.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that Tere Liye's novel *Teruslah Bodoh Jangan Pintar* (Keep Being Stupid, Don't Be Smart) represents various forms of environmental damage resulting from natural resource exploitation, particularly mining. The forms of environmental damage found in the novel include environmental pollution, forest and land destruction, animal habitat destruction, and ecological disasters.

Environmental pollution is represented through the presence of abandoned mine pits, the dumping of mining waste into rivers, and the clean water crisis experienced by the community. Forest and land damage is demonstrated through deforestation, changes in land use, and soil degradation due to mining activities. Habitat destruction is depicted through the loss of wildlife habitat and the disruption of the survival of various species. Ecological disasters are represented through floods, landslides, and disruption of the hydrological cycle that arise as a result of environmental damage.

Based on Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective, these various forms of environmental damage demonstrate an unbalanced relationship between humans and the environment. The novel "Keep Being Stupid, Don't Be Smart" not only depicts environmental damage but also offers an ecological critique of natural resource exploitation practices that ignore environmental sustainability. Through this representation, Tere Liye invites readers to understand the importance of maintaining ecosystem balance and raises awareness of the long-term impacts of environmental damage on human life and other living things.

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