

The Environmental Roles in Song Lyrics of Michael Jackson's "EARTH SONG" and Lil Dicky's "EARTH": An Eco Critical Analysis

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Abstract : The purpose of this research is to describe the role of the natural environment in the lyrics of Michael Jackson's "EARTH SONG" (1995) and Lil Dicky's "EARTH" (2019). The data is taken from the two song lyrics. This research uses qualitative methods and eco critical theory from Cheryl Goltfelty. The primary source is the song lyrics of Michael Jackson's "EARTH SONG" (1995) and Lil Dicky's "EARTH" (2019). Secondary sources are articles, websites, and journals discussing the natural environment related to this research. The results of this research are that the first is the role of the natural environment reflected in the lyrics of the songs, namely the role of habitat, which is very important for living things in the form of forests, grasslands, and the sea. And the role of Population regulation, the environment plays a role in regulating the number of individuals in the population of a species. Nutrients and energy, the environment provides the energy and material resources necessary for organisms to perform their life functions.; second is the impact of natural destruction reflected in the song lyrics, namely that natural destruction causes human suffering, including climate change and loss of biodiversity, as well as hunger, poverty, and social conflict; and third is the comparison of environmental representations of the two song lyrics, namely both songs emphasize the importance of protecting the earth and have strong messages about the adverse effects of human activities on the environment.

Keywords : *Song lyrics, environment and eco criticism*

INTRODUCTION

Lyrics are an expression of soul experience emotive experience in the form of a string of words accompanied by a sound called singing. Song lyrics are part of literary works (poetry) that included in the genre of imaginative literature. Jan Van Luxemburg (1989), says that the definition of lyrics or song verses can be considered as poetry and the other way around.

Michael Jackson wrote the lyrics to the song "EARTH" (1995) with environmental issues. In the lyrics of this song, Michael Jackson expresses his concern and anxiety about various environmental issues and the destruction of nature. "EARTH SONG" shows how the unharmonious relationship between humans and the environment has led to the destruction of the world. Besides Michael Jackson, in 2019 Lil Dicky released a song with the theme of environmental awareness and concern for the protection of planet Earth. The song talks about the importance of caring for the environment, paying attention to environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, and other problems that threaten the sustainability of the Earth and all the creatures that live in it. The situation described in the song lyrics can be analyzed with the theory of environmental criticism to get complete findings. To analyze the lyrics, the author uses the theory of ecocriticism.

Relationship between nature and literature has given rise to the concept of ecological issues in literature among literary critics. The term ecocriticism is used as a term regarding the concept of literary criticism related to nature and the environment. The term ecocriticism was first used by William Rueckert in his essay entitled "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" which refers to "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature." Environmental wisdom is closely related to environmental issues. (Keraf, 2010) reveals that environmental problems are moral problems, problems of human behavior, so that efforts to save or preserve an environment, for example, are always directly related to human behavior. The understanding of people's ethical behavior towards nature, which is an expression of their knowledge about nature, can play an important role in environmental conservation. (Purwanto, 2009).

The relationship between the songs "EARTH SONG" by Michael Jackson and "EARTH" by Lil dicky, and literary ecology involves an in-depth analysis of the works and the messages they contain. In the context of literary ecology, these songs can be seen as a work of art that not only entertains but also conveys an environmental message. Therefore, this research is important to study because it discusses the environmental problems we live in today. Ecocriticism in literature examines the ways in which literary works reflect humanity's relationship with nature as well as the impact of human actions on the environment. The messages in the songs "EARTH SONG" by Michael Jackson and "EARTH" by Lil dicky voice the pain of human-caused environmental destruction and emphasize the importance of acting to protect the planet.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The method that the researcher uses is a qualitative research method because the data collected is the role of the environment, the relationship between humans and nature, or the impact of human activities on the environment, as reflected in the lyrics of the songs "EARTH SONG" by Michael Jackson (1995) and "EARTH" by Lil Dicky (2019).

According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975), in their book *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Guidebook and Resource*, qualitative research methods are research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable data behavior.

Data Collection

The data collected is in the form of song lyrics, so it is assumed to be a primary source. Secondary sources are articles, websites, and journals that discuss the natural environment related to this research. The main data sources in this research are the lyrics of Michael Jackson's "EARTH SONG" (1995) and Lil Dicky's "EARTH" (2019).

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher uses the eco-critical approach developed by Cheryl Goltfelty in the book by Ann B. Dobie (2011), *Theory Into Practice: An Introduction To Literary Criticism*. The stages of research using ecocritical theory, according to Cheryl Goltfelty, involve several steps. These include: *Analyzing the structure and narrative of the data with an ecocritical lens, Data presentation, and conclusions and recommendations*.

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Goltfelty, 1996). Ecocriticism, according to Goltfelty, began with an interest in "representations," an examination of how nature is depicted in literature, thereby raising public awareness of attitudes toward the natural world. However, the researcher analyzes the parts of the song, such as lyrics that describe how the role of the environment is represented in songs with environmental themes, namely "EARTH SONG" (1995) and "EARTH" (2019) from Michael Jackson and Lil Dicky, using ecocritical theory.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The roles of environment as reflected in Michael Jackson's "EARTH SONG" (1995)

Habitats

According to Eugene Odum, habitat is 'the environment in which an organism lives and interacts with the surrounding biotic and abiotic elements.' Habitat includes all the conditions an organism needs, including food, water, and shelter. He emphasized that habitats are places where organisms find the resources needed for their survival. The following is an ecological analysis of some of the "Habitats" found in the lyrics of "EARTH SONG" by Michael Jackson (1995).

Lyrics stanza 13 :

What forest trails ? (fifth line)

Burnt despite our pleas ? (sixth line)

Forests are one of the most complex and diverse ecosystems on earth, encompassing a wide variety of trees, shrubs, vines, flowers and mosses that create a dense green canopy. Forests provide shelter and food sources for a large number of animal species, including mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and microorganisms. The paths within the forest, referred to in the lyrics, are natural corridors that run through the trees, allowing humans and animals to explore and interact with their environment. The forest depicted in Michael Jackson's "Earth Song" is a place of life, beauty and vitality. Forest pathways represent the connectivity and sustainability of ecosystems that must be respected and maintained for the well-being of all living things.

Lyrics stanza 6 :

What about flowering fields ? (first line)

Is there a time ? (second line)

Grasslands are one of the most extensive and diverse terrestrial ecosystems. They are characterized by a predominance of grasses and herbaceous plants, with little or no trees. In the lyrics of "flowering fields", grasslands are described as vast fields filled with blooming flowers, creating an enchanting and colorful scene.

Grassland habitats are home to a variety of animal species, ranging from large mammals such as bison, deer and zebra, to small mammals such as rabbits, mice and porcupines. Birds such as eagles, sparrows and sparrows can often be seen flying over the grasslands, searching for food or making nests among the plants. Insects such as grasshoppers, crickets and butterflies.

Lyrics stanza 10 :

What about the seas ? (third line)

(What about us ?) (fourth line)

The heavens falling down (fifth line)

In ecology, the ocean is one of the largest habitats on Earth, covering 70% of the planet's sea surface. The ocean is home to a diverse range of species, from plankton and fish to large sea mammals such as whales.

Population regulation

David Pimentel is one of the scientists who focus on the complex interactions between populations and their ecosystems. He emphasizes that population regulation is influenced not only by interactions between species (such as competition or predation) but also by the ability of ecosystems to support those populations. He emphasized the concept of "feedback loops", where changes in a population can affect the environment (for example, through resource consumption), which can affect the population itself. Factors such as environmental degradation and energy balance become important elements in population regulation.

The following is an ecological analysis of some of the "population regulations" found in the lyrics of "EARTH SONG" by Michael Jackson (1995).

Lyrics stanza 1:

What about sunrise ? (first line)

What about rain ? (second line)

What about all the thing (third line)

That you said we were to gain ? (fourth line)

The lyrics show the relationship between humans and nature, asking what happened to environmental promises. From an ecological perspective, population regulation means ensuring that human population growth does not exceed nature's ability to provide resources such as water and land. In this case, humans need to maintain a balance between resource exploitation and nature conservation.

Questions about the sun and rain lead to an understanding that nature provides vital resources that support human life. Population regulation here emphasizes the need to ensure human populations make sustainable use of natural resources such as energy and water.

Lyrics stanza 6 :

What about flowering fields (first line)

Is there a time ? (second line)

What about all the dreams (third line)

That you said was yours and mine ? (fourth line)

Lyrics stanza 12 :

What about the animals (first line)

The questions of “flowering fields” and “what about the animals” refer to biodiversity and healthy ecosystems, and remind us that balanced ecosystems are made up of many species, and maintaining diverse populations is essential. In the context of population regulation, this can mean maintaining habitats that allow flora and fauna to thrive. This demonstrates the importance of conserving populations of species within an ecosystem to maintain ecological balance.

Lyrics stanza 5 :

What about all the peace (third line)

That you pledge your only son ? (fourth line)

The concept of peace in these lyrics can be interpreted as an invitation to live in harmony, not only with fellow humans but also with nature. From an ecological perspective, population regulation can mean maintaining a human lifestyle that is not excessive and focuses on balance with the environment. Human populations that are in harmony with nature tend to be stable and do not risk causing major damage to the ecosystem.

Nutrition and energy

According to Eugene Odum, nutrients and energy are very important and interrelated components in the environment. “Energy” drives the entire ecosystem, while ‘nutrients’ provide the basic materials needed for the growth and biological functions of organisms.

The following is an ecological analysis of some of the “nutrients and energy” found in the lyrics of “EARTH SONG” by Michael Jackson (1995).

Lyrics stanza 1:

What about sunrise ? (first line)

What about rain ? (second line)

What about all the thing (third line)

That you said we were to gain ? (fourth line)

Sun and rain are two important components of the energy and nutrient cycle. Sun provides the energy that allows plants to photosynthesize, and rain provides the water organisms need to live.

Lyrics stanza 2:

What about killing fields ? (first line)

Is there a time ? (second line)

What about all the thing (third line)

That you said was yours and mine ? (fourth line)

The phrase "killing fields" can refer to destroying lands and habitats that impact living things. These lands that previously provided nutrients and energy for a variety of organisms have been damaged, reducing the ability of ecosystems to sustain life.

Lyrics stanza 12 :

What about animals ? (first line)

(What about us ?) (second line)

We've turned kingdom to dust (third line)

(What about us ?) (fourth line)

What about elephants ? (fifth line)

(What about us ?) (sixth line)

Have we lost their trust (seventh line)

Elephants and other animals play an important role in ecosystems. The loss of elephant trust in this context could be interpreted as the loss of symbiotic relationships and species interactions that are important for energy flow and nutrient cycling.

The roles of environment as reflected in Lil Dicky's "EARTH" (2019)

Habitats

The lyrics of the song "EARTH" by Lil Dicky (2019) depict various habitats and natural environments around the world, told through the eyes of the various animal species that occupy the planet from forests, grasslands and seas.

Lyrics stanza 3 :

Hi, I'm a baboon (first line)

I'm like a man, just less advanced and my anus is huge (second line)

Baboons are primates that generally live in terrestrial habitats such as savannas, open forests, and mountains in Africa. Their habitats vary widely, but they are more often found in areas that have easy access to water sources, trees, and open. vegetation.

Lyrics stanza 5 :

I'm an elephant, I got junk in my trunk (seventh line)

Elephants live in a variety of habitats such as forests, grasslands and savannas in Africa and Asia. In Africa, savanna elephants dominate savannas and grasslands, while forest elephants inhabit tropical rainforests. In Asia, Asian elephants are found in forests, grasslands and mountainous areas. Their habitats usually have access to water, as elephants require significant amounts of water for drinking and bathing.

Lyrics stanza 5 :

What the f*** ? I'm a clam (eighth line)

Clams live in a variety of marine and coastal habitats around the world, including oceans, bays, estuaries and sandy beaches. They can be found in shallow to deeper waters, depending on the species.

Population Regulation

The following is an ecological analysis of some of the "population regulations" found in the lyrics of "EARTH" by Lil Dicky (2019).

Lyrics stanza 2 :

We love the earth, it is our planet (first line)

We love the earth, it is our home (second line)

The lyrics emphasize that the Earth is where we all live. From an ecological perspective, population regulation can mean maintaining a balance between the human population and the Earth's carrying capacity, which is the planet's ability to provide natural resources and absorb waste without damaging the ecosystem. This involves sustainable natural resource management policies so that the human

population can live in harmony with the environment without degrading the quality of the ecosystem.

Lyrics stanza 3 :

Hi, I'm a baboon (first line)
I'm like a man, just less advanced and my anus is huge (second line)
Hey, I'm a zebra (third line)
No one knows what I do, but I look pretty cool (fourth line)

The lyrics introduce non-human species, such as baboons and zebras, which have important roles in the ecosystem. From an ecological perspective, human population regulation must consider the existence and balance of other species on Earth. A healthy ecosystem requires a diverse population, where each species has a specific function in maintaining environmental stability.

Lyrics stanza 9 :

C'mon everybody, I know we're not all the same (first line)
But we're living on the same earth (second line) These lyrics remind us that although humans come from different backgrounds, we are all from the same planet. From an ecological perspective, population regulation is not only about managing population growth.

Nutrition and energy

The following is an ecological analysis of some of the "Nutrition and energy" found in the lyrics of "EARTH" by Lil Dicky (2019).

Lyrics stanza 2 :

We love the earth, it is our planet (first line)
We love the earth, it is our home (second line)

The expression of love for the Earth reflects the realization that humans and all living things are interconnected and dependent on the Earth as a source of nutrition and energy. The planet provides everything we need: soil to grow crops, water for hydration, and air to breathe.

Lyrics stanza 3 :

Hi, I'm a baboon (first line)

I'm like a man, just less advanced and my anus is huge (second line)

Baboons are an ecosystem species that play an important role in the food chain, especially in distributing nutrients through interactions with their environment. They eat different types of plants and seeds, and their feces help distribute nutrients back to the soil. This is part of the nutrient cycle in terrestrial ecosystems.

Lyrics stanza 5 :

What the f*** ? I'm a clam (eighth line)

Clams are organisms that live in water, which play an important role in water filtration and help keep ocean ecosystems healthy. They absorb nutrients from the surrounding water and are part of the ocean food chain. The flow of energy in the ocean ecosystem starts with plankton, which serve as food for larger creatures like fish.

The impacts of the natural destruction as reflected in Michael Jackson's "EARTH SONG" (1995)

The following is an analysis of the impact of the destruction of nature as reflected in the lyrics of the song "EARTH SONG" by Michael Jackson (1995).

Lyrics stanza 1:

What about sunrise ? (first line)

What about rain ? (second line)

What about all the thing (third line)

That you said we were to gain ? (fourth line)

These lyrics reflect the loss of natural beauty that was previously considered a human right. Sunrise and rain are symbols of a healthy and balanced natural cycle. This loss reminds us of the promises of gains from exploiting nature that turned out to be destructive.

Lyrics stanza 2:

What about killing fields ? (first line)

Is there a time ? (second line)

What about all the thing (third line)

That you said was yours and mine ? (fourth line)

"Killing fields" refers to fields destroyed by war and conflict, as well as fields that have lost their fertility due to destructive human activities. It reflects the negative impacts of war and deforestation that damage land and ecosystems.

Lyrics stanza 3:

Did you ever stop to notice ? (first line)

All the blood we've shed before ? (second line)

Did you ever stop to notice (third line)

This crying earth, these weeping shores ? (fourth line)

The lyrics invite listeners to reflect on the impact of human actions that damage the environment, causing suffering and damage to ecosystems. The images of "crying Earth" and "weeping shores" show the suffering of nature due to pollution, climate change and natural disasters.

Lyrics stanza 5:

What have we done to the world ? (first line)

Look what we've done ? (second line)

What about all the peace (third line)

That you pledge your only son ? (fourth line)

The lyrics question human actions that have led to global destruction. It reflects on the moral and ethical repercussions of environmental exploitation, as well as criticizing the lack of responsibility towards the promise to maintain peace and preserve nature.

Lyrics stanza 7:

Did you ever stop to notice (first line)

All the children dead from war ? (second line)

Did you ever stop to notice (third line)

This crying earth, these weeping shores ? (fourth line)

This lyric links the destruction of nature with human suffering, especially children who are victims of conflicts and wars that also destroy the environment. It shows that natural destruction is often accompanied by a humanitarian crisis.

According to (Lolowang, 2024) "So, the problem of man brings consequences on land, as the symbol of living or life itself, which in turn affects them forever as long as they live, as the desire to master and to be free from the land tempts them until they have to go back to dust."

The destruction of nature often leads to human suffering, encompassing climate change and biodiversity loss as well as hunger, poverty and social conflict. Competition for increasingly scarce resources can trigger wars and mass migrations.

The impacts of the natural destruction as reflected in Lil Dicky's "EARTH" (2019)

The following is an analysis of the impact of the destruction of nature as reflected in the lyrics of the song "EARTH" by Lil Dicky (2019).

Lyrics stanza 2 :

We love the Earth, it is our planet (first line)

We love the Earth, it is our home (second line)

This lyric emphasizes that the Earth is our home, and shows love and care for the planet. It underscores the importance of global awareness towards environmental conservation and the negative impact of our actions on nature.

Lyrics stanza 1 :

What up, world ? (first line)

It's your boy, just one of the guys down here (second line)

The lyrics show the simplicity that we are all inhabitants of this planet, regardless of status or power. It's a reminder that environmental damage affects everyone, no matter who they are.

Lyrics stanza 8 :

I'm a man (Hello?) (first line)

Can you hear me (second line)

Anyone out there? Hello?" (third line)

The lyrics depict a sense of loss and human indifference to the impact of environmental damage. It can be interpreted as a call to be more aware and act in preserving the Earth.

The song "EARTH" by Lil Dicky (2019) is a call for awareness and action towards the environmental damage we have caused. The lyrics, which cover various species and cultures, show that the destruction of nature is a global problem that affects all living beings on Earth. The impacts of natural destruction, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, resource crises, and social suffering, demand immediate attention and action for a better and sustainable future.

Comparison of Representation of the Environment

Similarities:

Both songs emphasize the importance of protecting the earth and have strong messages about the adverse effects of human activities on the environment. Both share similar ecological messages about human responsibility toward environmental protection and biodiversity preservation. Both emphasize that humans need to be aware of their negative impact on nature and take immediate action to restore the damage that has been done. They also illustrate how Earth's entire ecosystem is interconnected, with different species having important roles in maintaining ecological balance.

Differences:

'EARTH SONG' by Michael Jackson (1995) is more serious and profound in conveying the state of the environment, using heartfelt and emotional lyrics. It also focuses more on the damage and destruction of nature and the suffering it causes.

'EARTH' by Lil Dicky (2019) conveys a serious message through humor and highlights the importance of maintaining biodiversity. It also emphasizes the collaborative action that needs to be taken globally to stop further destruction.

CONCLUSION

Using Cheryl Glotfelty's ecocritical theory, the researcher concludes that these two songs 'EARTH SONG' by Michael Jackson (1995) and 'EARTH' by Lil Dicky have an important role in spreading environmental messages. Both song lyrics invite listeners to see the earth as a common home that must be preserved and protected for the benefit of all living things.

Both songs reflect the serious impact of human-caused destruction of nature such as pollution, climate change, and habitat destruction. Both song lyrics are a call to raise awareness and encourage concrete actions to protect and preserve the environment for future generations.

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