

NO MORE PEACEFUL SPRING: AN ECOCRITICAL READING OF D. H. LAWRENCE *CRAVING FOR SPRING*

Ridho Pratama Satria^{1*}, Resty Maudina Septiani²

^{1*}English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas
Mulawarman, Samarinda, Indonesia

²English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas
Andalas, Padang, Indonesia

* Pos-el: ridhopratamasatria@fib.unmul.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research examines the representation of spring in D. H. Lawrence's poetry entitled *Craving for Spring*. This representation of spring is examined through the lens of ecocriticism theory and the theory of ecological consciousness found by Bannan-Watts. This research is evaluated by applying qualitative method to examine the data. The main data of the research are in the form of sentences related to ecological consciousness portrayed in the poem. This finding reveals there are three kinds of ecological consciousness in the poem: (1) Comprehending the fundamental nature of the environment, (2) Recognizing the interconnectedness of human and nature. (3) Concerning for the condition of the nature. The result of this research indicates a shift in the meaning of spring. In the past, spring was depicted as natural harmony due to the rebirth of new plants after winter. Today, the meaning of spring has shifted. Spring does not represent the natural beauty. Spring becomes a season that brings fear to the people due to the natural disasters that emerge during spring.

Keywords: D.H. Lawrence, Ecocritical-reading, Ecological-consciousness, Spring

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas tentang penggambaran tentang musim semi di dalam puisi karya D. H. Lawrence berjudul *Craving for Spring*. Penggambaran ini dibahas lewat teori ekokritik dan teori kesadaran-ekologis yang ditemukan oleh Bannan-Watts. Penelitian ini dievaluasi menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk pembahasan datanya. Data utama dari penelitian ini berbentuk kalimat-kalimat yang berhubungan dengan kesadaran ekologis yang tergambarkan di dalam puisi. Penelitian ini menemukan ada tiga bentuk kesadaran ekologis di dalam puisi. (1) Pengertian tentang dasar dari alam, (2) Pengakuan tentang hubungan antara manusia dan alam, (3) Kekhawatiran tentang kondisi alam. Hasil penelitian ini mengindikasikan ada perubahan makna dari musim semi. Pada masa lalu, musim

Ridho Pratama Satria, Resty Maudina Septiani

No More Peaceful Spring: An Ecocritical Reading of D. H. Lawrence *Craving
For Spring*

semi digambarkan sebagai harmoni yang tercipta secara natural karena tumbuhnya tumbuhan-tumbuhan baru setelah melewati musim dingin. Sekarang, makna dari musim semi ini bergeser. Musim semi tidak menggambarkan keindahan alam. Musim semi merupakan musim yang membawa rasa takut bagi orang-orang karena bencana-bencana alam yang terjadi di musim semi.

Kata kunci: D. H. Lawrence, Pembacaan-ekokritikal, Kesadaran ekologis, Musim Semi

A. INTRODUCTION

Spring is the season when life reappears on earth after winter. Various plants return to life after the cold snow covers the earth for about two or three months. At the same time, spring will allow nature to create its beautiful harmony again (Brault-Dreux, 2021). Rain often falls in spring, allowing it to water the seeds of newly sprouted plants, whether they are planted by farmers or those that grow naturally in the wild, such as in forests.

However, with the current circumstances, the beautiful harmony of spring has begun to change. Spring has instead brought terrible things. During spring, rain often falls. However, this rain brings severe flooding. In addition to flooding, there are also natural disasters such as landslides. These two disasters actually make spring seem like a terrifying season, because this season is characterized by natural disasters with a destructive impact toward society.

One poet who discusses the beauty of nature in his poetry is D. H. Lawrence. He was an English poet who lived in the 20th century. He was born in 1885 and died in 1930 of tuberculosis at a relatively young age. Lawrence developed his interest in literature through his mother, who was a teacher. After he began studying at University College Nottingham, he began writing some of his literary works at a relatively young age.

Lawrence is known as a poet skilled in writing about nature. In his poetry, we can see Lawrence's mastery of nature poetry. Chung-feng (2023) states Lawrence is able to convey vivid images of natural harmony through extraordinary emotional delivery within his writing, especially in his poetry (p. 62).

Some of Lawrence's nature-related poems include "Snake" and "Humming-Bird". In short, these poems provide concise yet profound depictions of nature. Ahmed (2021) argues that some imagery, such as snake and hummingbird, is not merely for aesthetic purposes (p. 145). They are the critical reflection of humankind's tendency to create problems, and they offer a potential solution to the problems they cause.

One of Lawrence's poems about nature is titled *Craving For Spring*. This poem describes how spring is a highly anticipated season, as it is the season that initiates the growth processes of plants.

Ridho Pratama Satria, Resty Maudina Septiani

No More Peaceful Spring: An Ecocritical Reading of D. H. Lawrence *Craving For Spring*

Craving For Spring is highly narrative, particularly in its detailed and captivating description of the scents of spring. Brault-Dreux (2021) states Lawrence describes people eagerly anticipating spring, so much so that they can smell its aroma from afar (p.19). This scent is the scent of flowers growing or blooming, such as roses and green plants, even though none of these plants have yet appeared. Uniquely, in the poem *Craving For Spring*, the authors feel a profound shift in the meaning of spring. Initially, spring seems idyllic, filled with hope and peace upon its arrival. Then, as the poem's narrative progresses, spring becomes the exact opposite.

Several academics have conducted research related to ecocriticism in poetry. Md. Zohorul Islam (2021) conducted research on ecocritical readings of several poems by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In his research, Islam argues that Rossetti perfectly depicts the relationship between humans and nature in his poetry. This relationship is presented in type of a complex meaning related to humans' ecological consciousness. If this relationship between nature and humans is good, nature will bring harmony and peace to humans.

Next, several studies have focused on spring as their primary focus. Research on spring was conducted by Kahkasha Moin Quadri, Haseeb Ahmed, and Mohammed Osman Abdul Wahab (2021). This study analysed the emotional aspects of Gerald Manley Hopkins' poem entitled "Spring and Fall." This research demonstrates that both of these seasons, spring and autumn, hold profound and deep emotional connections to humans. Hopkins uses literary devices to enhance the imagery in his poem, enabling it to achieve powerful imagery, exploring the emotional aspects of readers.

Another research was conducted by Emad A. Abuhammam, Ismail S. Almazaidah, and Atalla R. Al-Hajaya (2024). This research discusses the depiction of rain and spring in the poetry written by Ibn-Zaydoon and the poetry written by William Wordsworth. This research shows that Zaydoon and Wordsworth describe that spring and rain are two important factors for human' life, because they will have the chance to see the beauty of nature. When spring and rain come, spring and rain provide the meanings of peace and the balance of eternal tranquillity toward human' life.

The last research that discusses spring as its main focus was written by Emad A. Abuhammam, Zaid M. Al-dabbagh, Abdullah M. Ibrahim, and Ismail S. Almazaidah (2024). This research compares the depiction of spring in poetry from Arabic Literature and English Literature. By using the New Criticism approach to analyse the meaning of spring. This research shows that poetry from Arabic Literature and English Literature has a similar spring's meaning. Spring is described as a place for humans to feel full of joy, because this spring will provide an opportunity for humans to encounter and to find the beauties of nature that only appear in spring, such as rain and the growth of plants after the winter that kills all plants.

Ridho Pratama Satria, Resty Maudina Septiani

No More Peaceful Spring: An Ecocritical Reading of D. H. Lawrence *Craving For Spring*

Based on these four previous studies, it can be concluded that existing research only addressed the literal meaning of spring. These studies do not address the shift in the meaning of spring. That's why the authors conducted this research, so that we can see there are several literary works that describe the shift of spring's meaning. One of the literary works that describes the shift in the meaning of spring is a poetry entitled *Craving for Spring* written by D. H. Lawrence.

B. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

For this research, the authors use an ecocriticism approach and the ecological consciousness theory developed by Bannan-Watts. Ecocriticism is a study that focuses on the connection between environment and literature. Ecocriticism also discusses the reflection of the environment and humans in literature. This reflection can be seen in how human carries out their daily activities related to the environment, such as cleaning, protecting, and destroying the environment.

The keyword from ecocriticism is the word connection. In this study, the connection between humans and the environment must be seen as one complete unit and one inseparable unit. This is why some human activities have a direct impact on the environment. The impact can have positive and negative for the environment (Glottfelty & Fromm, 1996).

Ecocriticism also focuses on the depiction of the environment in literary texts. The depiction can be related to the depiction of the jungle, mountain, lake, river, and also the season. However, this depiction does not only focus on the depiction of the beauty of nature. The depiction also focuses on the destruction of nature caused by nature itself or by humans.

In order to strengthen the theoretical framework, the authors also use the ecological consciousness found by Bannan-Watts. This theory suggests that ecological consciousness is the fundamental knowledge for humans to understand the importance of doing positive activities toward the environment (Bannan-Watts, 2009). Later on, the impact of our own activities will impact our lives. If we do bad things toward the environment, such as throwing rubbish in the river and cutting down trees in the forest illegally, sooner or later, the law of karma will come to us. The destruction of nature will result in a flood that will harm humans itself.

This is the reason why humans need to have ecological consciousness. Human need to understand that every part of nature is important for all living beings on earth, so we can have a system that supports our life on this earth.

Bannan (2009) also states that ecological consciousness is the sense of understanding about the connection between all living beings on earth. By having this sense, human will give their appreciation toward environment, which is an ecosystem that supports all the lives of living beings.

C. METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

Ridho Pratama Satria, Resty Maudina Septiani

No More Peaceful Spring: An Ecocritical Reading of D. H. Lawrence *Craving For Spring*

This research used the Library Research method to collect the data. The authors had to deeply read the primary source and secondary source of this research (Pradopo et al., 2003). The primary source of this research is the poem *Craving For Spring* by D. H. Lawrence. Whilst the secondary sources are several journal articles and books related to ecocriticism.

This research used the theory of ecocriticism and the theory of ecological consciousness developed by Bannan-Watts in order to analyse the data. In this phase, the authors began by searching for data related to the ecocritical topic. Next, the authors began searching for data related to ecological consciousness. After the data were found, the authors put the data into the following ecological consciousness categories.

As the final step, the authors presented the results and findings of the research using qualitative methods. This method was used because the authors collected data in the form of sentences from the poem (Umay & Harjito, 2017). Therefore, the presentation of the results of this research is mostly in the form of sentences within a narrative structure.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research clearly found the shift in the meaning of spring. The flow of this shift can be seen clearly in the forms of three ecological consciousness categories below.

1. Comprehending the Fundamentals of Nature

In the beginning of the poetry, spring is depicted as something beautiful found in nature. This image can be seen in the passage from the poem below.

*Come, bubbling, surging tide of sap!
Come, rush of creation!
Come, life! surge through this mass of mortification!
Come, sweep away these exquisite, ghastly first-flowers,
which are rather last-flowers!*
(Lawrence, 2002, line 2-5)

From the passage above, we briefly see what happens when spring comes. We see how the seeds of life emerge from the frozen nature after winter passes. Later, spring will remove the hideous or deathly-looking flowers (because they are the remains of dead flowers that could not grow during the winter). These hideous flowers are called the last flowers because they will be replaced by new ones that will grow. This shows that the arrival of spring brings new life, which is clearly visible in nature. The depiction of the last flower explains that the remains of these dead flowers will soon be replaced by new flowers that are ready to grow. However, in this context, not only will flowers grow, but other plants will grow as well.

Ridho Pratama Satria, Resty Maudina Septiani

No More Peaceful Spring: An Ecocritical Reading of D. H. Lawrence *Craving For Spring*

*I wish that spring
 would start the thundering traffic of feet
 new feet on the earth, beating with impatience.*
 (Lawrence, 2002, line 33 - 35)

In this passage, spring is depicted as the season that brings the rain. When the rain comes, it will become the starting point for the rebirth of plants that died during winter. This sentence also shows that rain has new feet, which can be interpreted as new life. These new feet are interpreted as roots emerging from the new plants that grow. These roots will support the stems of the plants until the stems grow new leaves, flowers, and fruit. So, through this sentence, we can see that the harmony of nature during spring is a harmony for achieving new life.

The depiction of spring overcoming impatience can be interpreted as people's impatience to escape winter. During winter, people are confined to their homes. They are unable to see the beauty of nature because winter prevents any plants from growing. Therefore, the arrival of spring will make people lose their impatience because they will soon see new life in nature.

*Come quickly, and vindicate us
 against too much death.
 Come quickly, and stir the rotten globe of the world from within,
 burst it with germination, with world anew.*
 (Lawrence, 2002, 69-72)

Furthermore, from this passage, we can see how the arrival of spring will save humanity from death. This death refers to dead plants that cannot grow because the soil, the medium, or place where they grow, is covered in cold, thick snow. Therefore, when spring comes, it will warm the entire earth's land. The frozen snow that covers the earth's surface will melt and disappear.

Once all this snow melts, spring will expel all decaying things. Warm soils accompanied by rain are ready to grow new plants. Once these plants have grown, they will become animal feed and can be consumed directly by humans. This is the basic analysis of why spring will save humanity from death.

So, it can be concluded that spring has the fundamental values of nature. Spring comes to mark the beginning of new life. When spring arrives, the cold season will disappear. All the snow covering the earth's plains will be replaced by warm soil, ready to become a place for new plants to grow.

2. Understanding The Interdependence Between Human and Nature

After explaining the fundamentals of nature, this poem also shows the interdependence between humans and nature. In this part, we can see there is tight

Ridho Pratama Satria, Resty Maudina Septiani

No More Peaceful Spring: An Ecocritical Reading of D. H. Lawrence *Craving
 For Spring*

and close connection between human and nature. This connection is the very reason human can continue their lives in the world.

*I want the fine, kindling wine-sap of spring,
gold, and of inconceivably fine, quintessential brightness,
rare almost as beams, yet overwhelmingly potent,
strong like the greatest force of world-balancing.*
(Lawrence, 2002, line 16-20)

In this passage, spring is depicted as the season that has bright light. In spring, the sunlight is depicted as golden, and this light is even considered to have the greatest power to balance the life on earth. This illustrates that spring sunlight is the sunlight most awaited by nature. The reason is that the color of sunlight is depicted as golden. When we talk about gold, it is a very precious color. Therefore, it can be concluded that spring sunlight is a very precious light.

*This is the same that picks up the harvest of wheat
and rocks it, tons of grain, on the ripening wind;*
(Lawrence, 2002, line 21-22)

In the following passage, spring is depicted as the time when humans harvest wheat. However, the meaning is that spring prepares the time for plants to grow. Once the plants grow, they will produce fruit that can be eaten or consumed by humans. This demonstrates that spring provides a much-needed natural harmony for humans, as it is the first time plants grow that will be useful for human needs.

*Come quickly, and vindicate us
against too much death.
Come quickly, and stir the rotten globe of the world from within,
burst it with germination, with world anew.*
(Lawrence, 2002, 69-72)

In this poem, Lawrence begs for spring to come soon and save humanity from the many deaths that spring brings. The arrival of spring can also remove decaying matter (especially decaying plants), as it ushers in the emergence of a new world. This passage clearly demonstrates that spring is a season that brings new life. This is evident in the poem's passage, which states that spring can remove decaying matter with the growth of new plants. These new plants will be beneficial to all living things on Earth. These plants can provide food for various creatures, so that the food chain will cycle again when winter is over.

So, it can be concluded that the interdependence between humans and nature can be seen in the explanation, where spring is depicted as being able to save

Ridho Pratama Satria, Resty Maudina Septiani

No More Peaceful Spring: An Ecocritical Reading of D. H. Lawrence *Craving
For Spring*

humanity from death. When spring comes, it brings precious sunlight to humanity. This sunlight will provide the light that will grow plants that cannot survive during the winter. Then, that light will grow food sources for humans, allowing them to continue their lives.

3. Showing The Concern about Nature.

After explaining the interdependence between humans and nature, this poem its readers about shows the concern about nature, which relate to the nature. Later on, this part is the perfect explanation about the shift in the meaning of spring.

*Enough of the virgins and lilies, of passionate,
 suffocating perfume of corruption,
 no more narcissus perfume, lily harlots, the blades of sensation
 piercing the flesh to blossom of death.
 Have done, have done with this shuddering, delicious business
 of thrilling ruin in the flesh, of pungent passion, of rare, death-edged ecstasy.*
 (Lawrence, 2002, line 76 - 80)

In this passage, there is something quite interesting. Before spring comes to bring its destruction, the remains of winter are depicted in a terrible way. Flowers such as lilies are considered to be rotten flowers because they cannot grow in winter. Lilies is depicted with foul and severe smell; this smell makes people suffocate if they inhale the lilies' smell. In fact, lilies are also described as flowers with a sensation that can pierce flesh, so that the puncture will cause or cause death.

This depiction was created so that spring would have a good reason to wreak havoc by eliminating the lilies that have been depicted so horribly above. So this is the interesting part. Lilies, just like other plants and flowers, cannot grow properly because of winter. However, these lilies are depicted as a sacrifice ready to be destroyed when spring comes. The sense of sacrifice in this passage could lead to an explanation: anyone who cannot survive the winter will be made a sacrifice for the arrival of winter.

*Come, spring, make havoc of them!
 I trample on the snowdrops, it gives me pleasure to tread down the jonquils,
 to destroy the chill Lent lilies;
 for I am sick of them, their faint-bloodedness,
 slow-blooded, icy-fleshed, portentous.*
 (Lawrence, 2002, line 12-15)

In this passage, Lawrence creates a stark contradiction. In the beginning of this poem, spring is depicted as a balanced, harmonious season of nature. Spring

Ridho Pratama Satria, Resty Maudina Septiani

No More Peaceful Spring: An Ecocritical Reading of D. H. Lawrence *Craving
 For Spring*

comes to initiate growth or the beginning of new life. However, Lawrence transforms this depiction of spring into a season of destruction.

As explained above, spring will destroy the frozen flowers left over from winter. In fact, Lawrence states that he is disgusted by the visual appearance of the frozen flowers left over from winter. They are presented as something ugly and must be destroyed. This passage in the poem marks the beginning of the shift in the meaning of spring. Initially, spring came to initiate growth. But now, spring has become an inspiration for destruction.

*Oh, yes, the gush of spring is strong enough
 to toss the globe of earth like a ball on a water-jet
 dancing sportfully;*
 (Lawrence, 2002, line 44-46)

Through this passage, we can see how the destruction of spring comes. This spring arrives accompanied by gusts of wind so powerful that the earth is depicted as being tossed around like a ball tied to a water jet in the water. The metaphor of "dancing sportfully" suggests that the destruction brought by spring is powerful and truly destructive. It's as if the earth can be swayed with ease.

*The gush of spring is strong enough
 to play with the globe of earth like a ball on a fountain;
 The power of the rising, golden, all-creative sap could take the earth
 and heave it off among the stars, into the invisible;*
 (Lawrence, 2002, line 49 - 52)

This passage clearly depicts the ultimate form of destruction brought by spring. This destruction makes the earth resemble a ball bobbing in a fountain. Next, the earth will be thrown upward until it floats among the stars, amidst the invisible, the nothingness. This suggests that this destruction could destroy the Earth until it disappears completely. In fact, the essence of this passage could hint at the coming of the apocalypse.

Based on the explanation above, we can conclude that there have been some changes in the image of spring. As the poem draws to the end, spring will come with destruction. In fact, this destruction of spring possesses such tremendous power that it offers a hint of the apocalypse.

E. CONCLUSION

As the conclusion to this research, we can clearly see that Lawrence's *Craving For Spring* shows the shift in the meaning of spring. In other words, Lawrence's poem suggests that the meaning of spring has evolved. In the beginning of the poem, spring is depicted as the fundamental value of nature because spring

Ridho Pratama Satria, Resty Maudina Septiani

No More Peaceful Spring: An Ecocritical Reading of D. H. Lawrence *Craving For Spring*

brings natural harmony for humans and nature itself. This harmony also showed the important connection between humans and nature. Spring comes with many benefits for humans, especially in human life. However, as the poem starts to reach the end of the story, spring is depicted as the season that comes with destruction.

REFERENCES

- Abuhammam, E. A., Al-Dabbagh, Z. M., Ibrahim, A. M., & Almazaidah, I. S. (2024). The portrayal of spring in English and Arabic poetry: A comparative stylistic study of selected poems. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 15(2), 355–363. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1502.04>
- Abuhammam, E. A., Almazaidah, I. S., & Al-Hajaya, A. R. (2024). The Images of Rain and Spring in Ibn-Zaydoon's and Wordsworth's Poetry: A comparative stylistic study of selected poems. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 14(1), 44–50. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1401.05>
- Ahmed, M. I. (2021). Stylistic analysis "The Snake" by D. H. Lawrence. *Journal for Human and Social Sciences*, 60(1), 143–156.
- Bannan-Watts, M. E. (2009). *Spiritual ecological consciousness towards ecological conversion*. Australian Catholic University.
- Brault-Dreux, E. (2021). Smells and scents in Lawrence's poems: strange connections to the environment. *Etudes Lawrenciennes*, 664(53), 1–30.
- Chung-feng, L. (2023). The interpretation of Lawrence's poetry from the perspective of Ecocriticism theory. *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, 13(2), 61–67. <https://doi.org/10.17265/2159-5836/2023.02.001>
- Glotfelty, C., & Fromm, H. (Eds.). (1996). *The ecocriticism reader: Landmark in literary ecology*. The University of Georgia Press.
- Islam, M. Z. (2021). "And earth, sea, man, are all in each": An ecocritical study of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's selected poems. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 5(3), 105.
- Lawrence, D. H. (2002). *The cambridge edition of the letters and works of D. H. Lawrence* (J. T. Boulton, Ed.; 8th ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Moin Quadri, K., Ahmed, H., Osman Abdul Wahab, M., & Author, C. (2021). Emotional analysis of g. M. Hopkins' spring and fall. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Translation*, 4(9), 50–55. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt>
- Pradopo, R. D., Soeratno, S. C., Sayuti, S. A., Wuradji, Supadjar, D., Tripoli, H. F., Abdullah, I. T., Suwondo, T., Indriani, R., Tryono, A., Iswanto, Jabrohim, Ratih, R., & Widati, S. (2003). *Metodologi penelitian sastra* (Jabrohim, Ed.). Hanindita Graha Widia.
- Umaya, N. M., & Harjito. (2017). *Penelitian pembelajaran sastra*. Universitas PGRI Semarang Press.

Ridho Pratama Satria, Resty Maudina Septiani

No More Peaceful Spring: An Ecocritical Reading of D. H. Lawrence *Craving For Spring*