

ECOCRITICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF DISASTER IN DENNY JA'S ESSAY POEM, *THE NAME OF DISASTER*

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Abstract

This study investigates the representation of the human–nature relationship in the essay poems of *Atas Nama Bencana* by Denny JA through the lens of Lawrence Buell's ecocritical theory. While previous studies on Denny JA's essay poetry have predominantly examined social, political, and humanitarian concerns, ecological dimensions and environmental representations remain insufficiently explored. Moreover, the application of Buell's ecocritical framework to contemporary Indonesian essay poetry has received limited scholarly attention. Addressing this gap, the study explores how ecological values and environmental criticism are articulated within the poems. Employing a descriptive qualitative design with a content analysis approach, the research examines words, phrases, lines, and stanzas related to ecological issues across ten essay poems in the collection. Data were gathered through close reading, note-taking, and classification techniques and analyzed using Buell's four ecocritical principles. The findings reveal that ecological disasters are portrayed not merely as natural occurrences but as consequences of anthropocentric exploitation and environmental negligence. Two dominant patterns emerge: nature is represented as an active agent capable of responding to human actions, and environmental degradation is depicted as both a moral and social crisis. Through the interconnected imagery of forests, rivers, rain, floods, and landslides, the poems challenge anthropocentric perspectives and promote ecological awareness. The study demonstrates the relevance of Buell's ecocritical framework in uncovering environmental ethics embedded in contemporary Indonesian literature, positioning *Atas Nama Bencana* as both an aesthetic work and a vehicle for ecological critique.

Keywords: *anthropocentrism; contemporary Indonesian literature; ecocriticism; environmental ethics; essay poetry; Lawrence Buell*

1. Introduction

Environmental crises such as floods, landslides, and deforestation have become increasingly prominent issues in contemporary society and are frequently represented in literary works. In Indonesia, ecological disasters extend beyond environmental phenomena and reflect the complex relationship between humans and nature. Literary texts often

articulate environmental concerns by portraying the consequences of ecological degradation and questioning anthropocentric perspectives that legitimize environmental exploitation. One contemporary literary work that foregrounds these issues is the essay poetry collection *Atas Nama Bencana* by Denny JA, particularly the poems themed *Bencana Sumatra*, which portray ecological disasters and their social impacts through poetic narratives.

Essay poetry combines poetic expression and reflective discourse, enabling authors to explore social realities through both aesthetic and critical perspectives. According to Ali (2012), cited in Mutiara et al. (2024), essay poetry integrates aesthetic and cognitive dimensions, allowing readers to appreciate literary artistry while engaging with the issues addressed in the text. Within contemporary Indonesian literature, ecological disaster narratives have emerged as an important theme, reflecting growing public concern regarding environmental degradation and its consequences for human life.

The floods and landslides that occurred in Sumatra at the end of 2025 provide a significant context for understanding the ecological issues represented in Denny JA's poems. Previous studies have indicated that deforestation and forest degradation reduce the environment's capacity to absorb water, thereby increasing the risk of natural disasters (Heo et al., 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2023). These environmental conditions are reflected in the poems through depictions of damaged forests, overflowing rivers, extreme rainfall, and the suffering experienced by affected communities. The poems construct ecological disasters as consequences of disrupted human–nature relationships and foreground the interconnectedness between environmental destruction and social vulnerability.

The relationship between literature and the environment is commonly examined through ecocriticism, an approach that investigates how literary texts represent nature and environmental issues (Larasati & Manut, 2022). Among the prominent ecocritical scholars, Lawrence Buell proposed four dimensions that are widely applied in ecological literary analysis: the presence of non-human nature, the limitation of human legitimacy over nature, human responsibility toward the environment, and nature as a dynamic entity. These dimensions provide an analytical framework for examining how ecological meanings are constructed within literary texts and how environmental ethics are articulated through narrative and poetic representation.

Previous studies have explored ecocritical representations in Indonesian poetry. Jannah and Efendi (2024) examined human–nature relationships in the anthology *Negeri di Atas Kertas*, while Munjiah et al. (2024) identified critiques of environmental exploitation in *Jelajah Sungai Menyapa Alam Barito*. Similarly, Sianturi et al. (2024) investigated environmental awareness through natural imagery in *Selendang Berenda Jingga*. Although these studies contribute to the development of ecocritical literary scholarship, most focus on conventional poetry anthologies and general environmental themes. Limited attention has been given to essay poetry that addresses ecological disasters through Lawrence Buell's four-dimensional ecocritical framework. Furthermore, previous studies have rarely examined how ecological disasters are constructed as manifestations of disrupted human–nature relationships in contemporary Indonesian essay poetry. This gap provides the basis for the present research.

Accordingly, the study addresses three research questions: (1) How is nature represented in Denny JA's essay poems themed *Bencana Sumatra*? (2) How are Lawrence Buell's four ecocritical dimensions manifested in the poems? and (3) What ecological meanings emerge from these representations? Drawing upon Lawrence Buell's ecocritical

framework, the present research examines ten essay poems from Atas Nama Bencana that are considered most relevant to ecological disaster issues. By analyzing the representation of nature, environmental responsibility, ecological agency, and human–nature relationships, the study contributes to the development of literary ecology and expands discussions of environmental ethics in contemporary Indonesian literature.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Literary Ecology and Ecocriticism

The growing environmental crisis has encouraged literary scholars to examine how literary texts represent and respond to ecological issues. Literary ecology emerged from the recognition that literature does not merely reflect social realities but also shapes environmental consciousness. Early ecocritical scholarship, particularly that of Cheryll Glotfelty (1996), positioned ecocriticism as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. This perspective challenged anthropocentric literary traditions by emphasizing the significance of non-human nature in textual interpretation.

Subsequent scholars expanded this framework. Garrard (2012) argues that ecocriticism should move beyond the representation of nature toward examining environmental discourses such as pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, and ecological responsibility. Similarly, Heise (2008) highlights the importance of understanding environmental issues within global and transnational contexts, arguing that ecological problems cannot be separated from cultural and social dimensions. Meanwhile, Morton (2007) critiques conventional notions of “nature” as a stable and harmonious entity, proposing that ecological thinking should acknowledge complexity, uncertainty, and interconnectedness.

Within Indonesian literary studies, literary ecology has been widely applied to investigate environmental awareness and ecological criticism in literary texts (Angelita et al., 2023; Widayati, 2021). However, many studies continue to focus on identifying environmental themes rather than examining how literary texts construct ecological meanings and challenge anthropocentric perspectives. Consequently, literary ecology provides an important framework for analyzing how environmental values, ecological crises, and human–nature relationships are articulated in contemporary literary works.

2.2 Lawrence Buell’s Ecocritical Perspective

Among the leading figures in ecocritical studies, Lawrence Buell offers a framework that is particularly relevant for examining representations of nature in literary texts. Buell (2005) argues that environmental representation should not be treated as a peripheral aspect of literature but as a central component in the construction of meaning. His perspective shifts attention from human-centered interpretations toward the interaction between human and non-human entities.

Buell’s framework consists of four interrelated dimensions. First, the presence of non-human nature recognizes nature as a significant textual presence rather than a passive background. Second, the limitation of human legitimacy challenges anthropocentric assumptions by acknowledging the intrinsic value of nature. Third, environmental responsibility emphasizes ethical obligations toward ecological sustainability. Fourth, nature

as a dynamic process positions the environment as an active and changing entity capable of influencing human life.

These dimensions provide a comprehensive analytical framework for examining ecological representations because they enable researchers to investigate not only how nature is depicted but also how environmental ethics and human–nature relationships are constructed within literary texts. Accordingly, Buell's framework serves as the primary theoretical foundation for analyzing ecological disaster narratives in Denny JA's essay poems.

2.3 Essay Poetry as Ecological Narrative

Essay poetry occupies a distinctive position within contemporary Indonesian literature because it combines poetic expression with reflective and argumentative discourse. Denny JA (2012) argues that essay poetry integrates aesthetic imagination and factual realities, allowing literary texts to engage directly with social issues. Unlike conventional poetry, essay poetry provides broader narrative space for discussing complex problems, including environmental crises, social injustice, and humanitarian concerns.

Previous studies have generally examined essay poetry as a medium of social criticism and public reflection (Rahmadi, 2021). However, limited attention has been given to its potential as an ecological narrative that articulates environmental ethics and critiques ecological destruction. The combination of poetic language and factual references enables essay poetry to construct environmental disasters not only as natural events but also as consequences of human actions. This characteristic makes essay poetry particularly suitable for ecocritical analysis.

In the context of Bencana Sumatra, ecological disasters are constructed through representations of floods, landslides, deforestation, and human suffering. These representations foreground the interconnectedness of environmental degradation and social vulnerability while simultaneously questioning anthropocentric practices that contribute to ecological crises. Therefore, essay poetry functions not only as an aesthetic form but also as a medium through which ecological awareness and environmental criticism are articulated.

3. Research Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design with a content analysis approach to examine ecological representations in Denny JA's essay poems. The qualitative approach was selected because the research focuses on interpreting meanings, ecological values, and human–nature relationships embedded in literary texts rather than measuring variables quantitatively. Content analysis enabled a systematic examination of textual units, including words, phrases, lines, and stanzas, to identify ecological themes and representations based on Lawrence Buell's ecocritical framework.

The primary data source of this study was the digital poetry collection *Atas Nama Bencana* by Denny JA. Although the collection contains twelve essay poems, only ten poems were selected through purposive sampling. The selection was based on specific inclusion criteria: (1) the poems explicitly address ecological disasters, environmental degradation, or human–nature relationships; (2) the poems contain ecological representations relevant to Lawrence Buell's four ecocritical dimensions; and (3) the poems provide sufficient textual evidence for ecocritical interpretation. The exclusion criteria included poems that primarily

focused on social, political, or humanitarian issues without substantial ecological content. This sampling strategy ensured that the selected texts were directly aligned with the objectives of the study and provided adequate data for ecocritical analysis.

Data collection was conducted through intensive reading, note-taking, and data organization procedures. The selected poems were read repeatedly to develop a comprehensive understanding of their ecological themes, narrative contexts, and environmental representations. Relevant textual segments containing ecological references and human–nature interactions were subsequently recorded and organized for analysis. The data consisted of words, phrases, lines, and stanzas reflecting ecological concerns, including floods, landslides, deforestation, environmental degradation, ecological responsibility, and the impacts of human intervention on nature.

The data analysis process was conducted through four interconnected stages. The first stage, familiarization, involved repeated reading of the selected poems to gain an in-depth understanding of the textual context and ecological issues represented in the works. The second stage, coding, focused on identifying and labeling textual segments containing ecological markers such as forests, rivers, rain, floods, landslides, environmental exploitation, ecological responsibility, and other representations of human–nature relationships. Each relevant textual unit was assigned preliminary codes based on its ecological significance. The third stage, categorization, involved grouping the coded data according to Lawrence Buell’s four ecocritical dimensions: the presence of non-human nature, the limitation of human legitimacy over nature, human responsibility toward the environment, and nature as a dynamic entity. The final stage, interpretation, consisted of thematic analysis aimed at revealing ecological meanings, environmental ethics, and representations of ecological disasters constructed within the poems. This procedure enabled a systematic and theoretically grounded interpretation of the data.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies were employed. An audit trail was maintained throughout the research process by documenting data selection, coding decisions, categorization procedures, and analytical interpretations. Peer debriefing was conducted through discussions with colleagues familiar with literary ecology and qualitative research to evaluate the consistency and credibility of the analysis. In addition, intercoder checking was carried out by comparing coding results with those of an independent reviewer to enhance coding reliability and reduce subjective bias. Theoretical triangulation was applied by comparing the findings with relevant ecocritical theories and previous studies in literary ecology. Furthermore, persistent observation was undertaken through repeated reading and verification of the textual data to strengthen analytical accuracy, consistency, and credibility. These procedures ensured that the findings were methodologically rigorous and aligned with the objectives of the study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

This study examines ten essay poems in the book *Atas Nama Bencana* by Denny JA using Lawrence Buell’s ecocritical perspective. The analysis was conducted on poetic excerpts that represent the relationship between humans and nature, environmental destruction, ecological disasters, and society’s ecological awareness. Based on the findings, the essay poems do not merely portray disasters as natural events, but also as criticism of

human actions that damage the environment. Nature is represented as a living entity that possesses a close relationship with human life; therefore, environmental destruction directly affects the sustainability of human existence.

The findings indicate that the four aspects of Lawrence Buell's ecocriticism are present in the analyzed essay poems, namely: (1) the presence of non-human nature as an active element in the text; (2) the limitations of human legitimacy over nature; (3) human responsibility toward the environment; and (4) nature as a dynamic entity. However, the distribution of these aspects does not appear evenly throughout every poem. The aspects of the presence of non-human nature and the dynamics of nature are the most dominant because almost all of the poems present floods, landslides, mud, rivers, rain, and forests as primary elements that construct conflict and create the atmosphere of disaster.

The dominance of these aspects demonstrates that Denny JA attempts to position nature as the central focus of the poetic texts. Nature does not merely function as the background of events but appears as an active force that influences human life. Furthermore, the poems also contain criticism of environmental exploitation through depictions of deforestation, hill destruction, and the loss of ecological balance, which subsequently lead to ecological disasters. Therefore, the essay poems in *Atas Nama Bencana* illustrate the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature within the context of environmental crises.

The overall findings of the study can be seen in the following table.

Ecocritical Dimension	Frequency	Interpretation
Presence of non-human nature	20	Nature functions as an active textual presence shaping conflict and meaning.
Limitation of human legitimacy over nature	14	The poems criticize anthropocentric exploitation and environmental domination.
Human responsibility toward the environment	12	Ecological awareness and environmental ethics are emphasized.
Nature as a dynamic entity	18	Nature is represented as transformative and responsive.

The findings indicate that floods, rivers, forests, hills, rain, mud, and landslides recur throughout the poems as dominant ecological motifs. These elements function not merely as environmental settings but also as significant components in constructing atmosphere, conflict, and ecological meaning.

4.1.1 Representation of Nature in the Essay Poems of Denny JA

According to Buell (1995), non-human elements in literary texts play a significant role in shaping narrative structures and ecological meanings. Nature is not merely depicted as a passive setting or background but functions as an active presence that influences human experiences and the development of events within the text. This perspective is further supported by Zulfa (2021), who argues that the relationship between humans and nature in literature is reciprocal, allowing nature to function as an active agent rather than a silent object. In Denny JA's essay poems, natural elements such as floods, rain, rivers, hills, mud, and forests are represented as dynamic forces that directly affect human existence and suffering. This representation can be observed in the following excerpt: "The floodwaters took over the task of the angel of death, carrying away anyone who did not have time to

escape.” The quotation presents the flood as a powerful entity endowed with agency and authority over human life. Through the personification expressed in the phrase “*took over the task of the angel of death,*” the flood is elevated beyond its physical existence and becomes a force capable of determining human fate. Rather than functioning merely as a natural occurrence, the flood assumes a symbolic role associated with judgment, destruction, and mortality. From Buell’s ecocritical perspective, this portrayal challenges anthropocentric assumptions that place humans at the center of power and control. Nature emerges as an active participant in the narrative, possessing the capacity to shape and alter human destinies.

Furthermore, the phrase “*carrying away anyone who did not have time to escape*” emphasizes human vulnerability in the face of ecological forces. The image of helpless individuals being swept away by floodwaters reflects the fragility of human existence when confronted with environmental catastrophe. Denny JA uses this imagery to demonstrate that ecological imbalance can diminish humanity’s perceived dominance over nature. The flood thus becomes a reminder that environmental destruction often produces consequences that ultimately return to affect human communities. In this sense, the poem implicitly criticizes exploitative human behavior that disrupts ecological equilibrium.

The representation of nature as a living and conscious entity is further reinforced in the following quotation: “I am a very old hill.” The use of the first-person pronoun “I” grants the hill a voice and a subjective presence, transforming it from a physical landscape into a speaking subject. Through this personification, nature is endowed with identity, memory, and experience. The hill becomes capable of narrating its own history and expressing the ecological suffering it has endured. According to Khoerunnisa et al. (2024), the personification of nature in literary works enhances ecological awareness by encouraging readers to perceive nature not as an inert object but as a living entity possessing intrinsic value. By allowing the hill to speak, Denny JA symbolically restores agency to the natural world, enabling nature to communicate the consequences of environmental degradation directly to readers.

Moreover, the phrase “*very old*” carries significant ecological implications. It suggests temporal continuity and emphasizes the long-standing existence of nature before human intervention. The hill is portrayed as a witness to historical and environmental transformations, including the destructive impacts of human exploitation. This representation underscores the contrast between nature’s enduring presence and humanity’s short-term, often destructive actions. Consequently, the hill functions not only as a geographical feature but also as a symbol of ecological memory and resilience.

The active presence of nature is also evident in the following quotation: “The sky was pulled loose from its nails, crashing onto hills and houses.” This image presents nature as unstable, violent, and capable of overwhelming human civilization. The hyperbolic expression “*pulled loose from its nails*” creates a powerful image of cosmic disorder, as though the natural order itself has been disrupted. The sky, traditionally associated with permanence and stability, is transformed into a destructive force that collapses upon the earth. Through this personification, nature is represented not as a passive environment but as an active force capable of reshaping social and physical realities.

From Buell’s ecocritical perspective, this depiction highlights the interconnectedness between ecological conditions and human life. The collapse of the sky symbolizes more than a physical disaster; it reflects a broader ecological crisis resulting from the breakdown of environmental balance. The destruction of “hills and houses” further illustrates that

environmental disasters affect both natural landscapes and human settlements, emphasizing the inseparability of human and non-human worlds. Nature therefore functions as a central narrative force that generates conflict, suffering, and ecological reflection.

Taken as a whole, the analysis demonstrates that nature occupies a dominant and active position in Denny JA's essay poems. Through extensive use of personification, hyperbole, and symbolic imagery, natural elements are portrayed as living entities capable of speaking, remembering, responding, and even punishing human actions. Rather than serving merely as a backdrop for human experiences, nature becomes a central actor that shapes the narrative and conveys ecological messages. These representations encourage readers to reconsider anthropocentric perspectives and to recognize the interconnected relationship between humans and the environment. The findings strongly support Buell's (1995) ecocritical argument that non-human elements are fundamental components of ecological literature, functioning not only as settings but also as agents that participate actively in the construction of meaning and environmental consciousness.

4.1.2 The Limited Legitimacy of Human Interests toward Nature

Buell (1995) argues that human beings do not occupy an absolute position within the ecological order. Consequently, human interests cannot be regarded as inherently superior to the interests of non-human nature. This perspective challenges anthropocentric ideologies that legitimize the exploitation of natural resources solely for human benefit. Within ecocritical discourse, nature possesses intrinsic value independent of its economic usefulness to humanity. As Missleini (2023) emphasizes, excessive exploitation of the environment disrupts ecological balance and contributes to various environmental disasters. Denny JA's essay poems strongly reflect this ecocritical perspective by exposing the destructive consequences of human greed and environmental domination.

This criticism is particularly evident in the following quotation: "Those companies climbed onto my back, becoming a hungry army, stripping away my green hair." In this passage, the hill is personified as a living being whose body is subjected to systematic exploitation. The phrase "*hungry army*" symbolizes the insatiable greed of corporations driven by economic interests and resource extraction. By comparing companies to an invading army, the poem frames environmental exploitation as a form of aggression rather than a legitimate economic activity. The metaphor suggests a relationship characterized by domination, conquest, and violence, highlighting the unequal power dynamics between humans and nature.

Similarly, the phrase "*stripping away my green hair*" functions as a powerful metaphor for deforestation. The hill's "green hair" symbolizes the forests that cover and protect the landscape. The act of stripping away this vegetation evokes images of injury and humiliation, transforming deforestation into an act of ecological violence inflicted upon a living entity. Through this bodily imagery, Denny JA encourages readers to perceive environmental destruction not as a neutral economic process but as an ethical issue involving harm to the natural world. From Buell's ecocritical perspective, such a representation challenges the legitimacy of human interests when they result in ecological degradation and the destruction of non-human life.

Criticism of exploitative economic systems is further reinforced in the following quotation: "Every fallen tree became a number in a profit report." This quotation reveals the reduction of nature to a mere economic commodity. Trees are no longer valued for their ecological functions, biodiversity, or contribution to environmental stability; instead, they

are transformed into statistical figures that signify financial gain. The phrase “*a number in a profit report*” illustrates how capitalist systems often abstract nature from its ecological reality and reinterpret it solely through the lens of economic productivity. Hall (2024) argues that critiques of capitalism often focus on its tendency to commodify ever more aspects of life, including nature, by subjecting them to market logics and economic valuation. Such critiques emphasize that reducing environmental value to monetary terms may obscure the broader ecological and ethical significance of the natural world.

Through this representation, Denny JA exposes the consequences of an anthropocentric and profit-oriented worldview. The transformation of trees into economic data symbolizes the loss of ecological consciousness in modern society. Forests are no longer perceived as interconnected ecosystems that sustain life but as resources to be quantified, exploited, and consumed. Consequently, the poem critiques a development paradigm that prioritizes short-term economic benefits while neglecting long-term environmental sustainability.

The limitations of human legitimacy toward nature are also reflected in the following quotation: “because of the trees that were cut down long before the rain arrived.” This statement establishes a clear causal relationship between human actions and environmental disasters. The quotation suggests that floods, landslides, and other ecological crises are not purely natural phenomena but are closely linked to prior human interventions in the environment. The destruction of forests weakens ecological resilience and increases vulnerability to natural hazards. Through this depiction, Denny JA rejects the notion that environmental disasters occur independently of human responsibility.

Moreover, the phrase “*long before the rain arrived*” emphasizes the temporal dimension of ecological damage. Environmental crises emerge through gradual processes rather than sudden events. The consequences of deforestation may remain invisible for years before eventually manifesting in catastrophic forms. This representation reflects Buell’s ecological perspective that human and natural systems are deeply interconnected, and that actions directed toward nature inevitably generate consequences that return to affect human societies. The poem therefore highlights ecological reciprocity, demonstrating that environmental exploitation ultimately undermines human well-being itself.

Overall, Denny JA’s essay poems present a profound critique of anthropocentric attitudes and exploitative environmental practices. Nature is not portrayed as a passive object available for unlimited human use but as an essential and vulnerable entity whose existence possesses intrinsic value. Through personification, metaphor, and causal ecological imagery, the poems expose the destructive consequences of greed, capitalism, and environmental negligence. These representations encourage readers to reconsider humanity’s relationship with nature and recognize the ethical responsibility required to maintain ecological balance. Consistent with Buell’s (1995) ecocritical framework, the poems demonstrate that the legitimacy of human interests is limited by the need to respect and preserve the integrity of the natural world.

4.1.3 Forms of Human Responsibility toward Nature

From Buell’s perspective (2005), the relationship between humans and nature extends beyond practical or functional concerns and encompasses an ethical dimension. Ecocriticism emphasizes that humans bear moral responsibilities toward the environment because they are inseparable from the ecological systems that sustain life. Environmental degradation, therefore, is not merely an ecological issue but also an ethical failure resulting

from humanity's neglect of its obligations toward the natural world. Ecological awareness emerges through reflection, criticism, and a commitment to maintaining environmental sustainability. In Denny JA's essay poems, forms of human responsibility toward nature are represented through emotional identification with the environment, ecological awareness, and aspirations for environmental restoration.

This ethical relationship is evident in the following quotation: "that a tree is not merely wood, it is your own brother." The quotation challenges the anthropocentric tendency to view nature solely in terms of its economic utility. Rather than presenting the tree as a resource or commodity, the poem portrays it as "*your own brother*," establishing a relationship based on kinship, empathy, and mutual existence. The use of the word "*brother*" creates a powerful emotional connection between humans and nature, suggesting that both belong to the same ecological community. Through this familial metaphor, Denny JA encourages readers to reconsider their perception of nature, not as an object for exploitation but as a living entity deserving respect and protection.

From an ecocritical perspective, this representation reflects the recognition that humans and nature are profoundly interconnected. The destruction of forests is therefore not merely an act of environmental damage but a form of harm inflicted upon a member of one's own ecological family. The metaphor reinforces the idea that environmental preservation is fundamentally an ethical responsibility rather than simply a practical necessity. As Abror (2025) argues, emotional relationships between humans and nature in literary works play an important role in cultivating ecological awareness among readers. By framing trees as "*brothers*," Denny JA transforms environmental conservation into a moral imperative grounded in empathy and care.

Human responsibility toward nature is further emphasized in the following quotation: "If humanity does not learn, the map of the world will slowly change color: green into a register of grief." This quotation functions as a powerful ecological warning about the consequences of continued environmental destruction. The color *green*, traditionally associated with life, fertility, and ecological balance, is transformed into a "*register of grief*," symbolizing environmental loss and collective suffering. Through this color metaphor, Denny JA depicts ecological degradation as a gradual but devastating process that affects both nature and humanity.

The phrase "*If humanity does not learn*" carries particular significance because it highlights the possibility of change. The statement implies that environmental destruction is neither inevitable nor irreversible; rather, it is the result of human choices and actions. Consequently, humanity retains the capacity and responsibility to alter its behavior before ecological crises become irreversible. From Buell's perspective, this representation underscores the ethical obligation of humans to develop ecological consciousness and adopt more sustainable relationships with the environment. The quotation therefore serves not only as a warning but also as a call for collective environmental responsibility.

Hope for ecological restoration is expressed in the following quotation: "If one day the rain subsides and the earth regains its footing, Amir wishes to plant again." Unlike the previous quotations, which focus on environmental destruction and warning, this passage introduces the possibility of renewal and recovery. The phrase "*plant again*" symbolizes restoration, resilience, and commitment to repairing ecological damage. Planting functions as more than a physical activity; it represents an ethical act through which humans acknowledge their responsibility for environmental recovery.

The image of the earth “*regaining its footing*” further suggests that nature possesses the capacity to recover when given appropriate care and protection. However, such recovery requires active human participation. Through Amir’s desire to plant again, Denny JA emphasizes that ecological responsibility must be translated into concrete actions rather than remaining merely a matter of awareness or regret. Environmental stewardship becomes a practical expression of moral commitment toward the natural world.

In this context, Denny JA moves beyond ecological criticism and offers a constructive vision of environmental ethics. The poems encourage readers not only to recognize the consequences of environmental exploitation but also to participate in efforts aimed at restoration and sustainability. Ecological responsibility is portrayed as a continuous process involving awareness, reflection, and action.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that Denny JA’s essay poems construct a comprehensive vision of human responsibility toward nature. Through metaphors of kinship, warnings about ecological decline, and images of environmental restoration, the poems emphasize that the relationship between humans and nature is fundamentally ethical in nature. Environmental destruction is represented not merely as an ecological problem but as a moral and humanitarian crisis that demands accountability and corrective action. Consistent with Buell’s (2005) ecocritical framework, the poems advocate a form of environmental ethics grounded in empathy, responsibility, and ecological stewardship. Consequently, Denny JA’s essay poems function not only as literary expressions of environmental concern but also as powerful vehicles for ecological reflection and environmental awareness.

4.1.4 Nature as a Dynamic Entity

From Lawrence Buell’s ecocritical perspective (1995; 2005), nature is not a static backdrop against which human activities unfold. Rather, it is a dynamic and responsive entity that continuously changes through its interactions with human and non-human forces. Ecological systems are characterized by movement, transformation, and adaptation, meaning that environmental conditions are constantly shaped by reciprocal relationships between humans and the natural world. When ecological balance is disrupted, nature undergoes transformations that may generate consequences affecting all forms of life. This perspective challenges anthropocentric assumptions by recognizing nature as an active participant in ecological processes rather than a passive object of human control.

According to Arisandi (2025), the dynamic nature of the environment in literary texts is often represented through ecosystem transformations, environmental degradation, and ecological crises triggered by human intervention. Similarly, Insany et al. (2024) contend that literary representations of human–nature relationships reveal a reciprocal interaction in which human activities significantly influence environmental conditions, while environmental changes subsequently affect human life and social existence. From an ecocritical perspective, nature is not merely a passive backdrop for human actions but an active and responsive entity that reflects the ecological consequences of human behavior. Such portrayals underscore the interconnectedness between environmental sustainability and human conduct, emphasizing that ecological balance or destruction is largely determined by the ways individuals and societies engage with the natural world.

This dynamic quality of nature is illustrated in the quotation, “*The river transformed into a dark corridor.*” The statement conveys a profound ecological and symbolic transformation in the river’s function and meaning. Traditionally, rivers symbolize life,

fertility, continuity, and sustenance, serving as vital components of both natural ecosystems and human civilization. However, the metaphorical expression "*dark corridor*" reconfigures the river into a space associated with uncertainty, danger, confinement, and fear. The imagery suggests that ecological disruption has fundamentally altered the river's natural character, transforming a life-sustaining environment into a pathway of destruction and ecological decline. Furthermore, the verb "*transformed*" emphasizes the river's dynamic and evolving nature, highlighting that environmental conditions are neither static nor immutable but continually shaped by human actions and their consequences. Through this representation, the text portrays nature as an active entity undergoing significant change, while simultaneously warning of the detrimental effects of environmental exploitation and degradation on ecological systems.

From Buell's ecocritical perspective, this transformation signifies more than a physical environmental change; it reflects the disruption of ecological balance. The river becomes a symbol of a damaged ecosystem whose altered condition directly affects human life. The metaphor highlights the interconnectedness between environmental health and social well-being, suggesting that ecological degradation inevitably transforms the spaces upon which humans depend. Through this image, Denny JA demonstrates that environmental crises emerge when humans fail to maintain harmonious relationships with nature.

The dynamics of nature are further emphasized in the following quotation: "That night, the rain did not fall. It collapsed." This statement presents rain as an overwhelming force that exceeds the boundaries of ordinary natural processes. The verb "*collapsed*" conveys suddenness, violence, and destruction, creating the impression that nature itself has become unstable. Rather than gently nourishing the earth, the rain descends with catastrophic intensity, symbolizing ecological disruption.

The hyperbolic expression reinforces an atmosphere of environmental crisis while simultaneously illustrating the capacity of nature to transform under conditions of ecological imbalance. Within Buell's framework, such transformations are not random occurrences but manifestations of disrupted relationships between humans and the environment. The image of collapsing rain therefore functions as both a representation of disaster and a critique of environmental practices that contribute to ecological instability. Denny JA suggests that environmental destruction does not merely alter landscapes; it also transforms natural processes into sources of threat and suffering.

Nature's dynamic response to human behavior becomes even more explicit in the following quotation: "the land we fail to protect will cease to protect us." This quotation encapsulates one of the central ecological principles within Buell's theory: reciprocity. The relationship between humans and nature is portrayed as mutually dependent rather than hierarchical. Land is represented as a protective force that sustains human life through its ecological functions. However, when humans neglect or damage the environment, those protective functions gradually disappear.

The phrase "*cease to protect us*" implies the loss of ecological services essential for human survival, including soil stability, water regulation, biodiversity support, and protection from natural hazards. Consequently, environmental destruction is portrayed not merely as damage inflicted upon nature but as a process that ultimately undermines human existence. The quotation highlights the ethical and practical consequences of ecological neglect while emphasizing that environmental sustainability is inseparable from human well-being.

Beyond these specific examples, the dynamic nature of the environment is reflected throughout Denny JA's essay poems through recurring images of landslides, shifting mud, falling trees, and roads transformed into rivers. These representations create an atmosphere of ecological instability in which landscapes continuously change as a result of environmental degradation. Nature is not portrayed as harmonious and unchanging but as a living system experiencing stress, disruption, and transformation.

Importantly, these transformations are consistently linked to human actions. Deforestation, uncontrolled exploitation of hillsides, and environmental negligence are presented as factors that destabilize ecological systems. Floods, landslides, and other disasters therefore emerge not as isolated natural events but as consequences of environmental imbalance created by human activities. This portrayal reflects Buell's argument that ecological change must be understood within the context of reciprocal interactions between humans and the environment. Nature's transformations become expressions of ecological consequences that reveal the interconnectedness of all life forms.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the essay poems in *Atas Nama Bencana* represent the relationship between humans and nature through the four ecocritical dimensions proposed by Buell (1995; 2005): the presence of non-human elements as active agents, the limitations of human legitimacy toward nature, human ethical responsibility for environmental sustainability, and nature as a dynamic entity capable of responding to human actions. Collectively, these dimensions reveal that nature functions not merely as a setting within the poems but as an active force that shapes narratives, influences human experiences, and communicates ecological criticism.

The analysis indicates that ecological disasters in Denny JA's poems are consistently portrayed as consequences of environmental degradation rather than as purely natural occurrences. Floods, landslides, and ecosystem destruction are linked to deforestation, excessive resource exploitation, and development practices that disregard ecological balance. Such representations challenge anthropocentric ideologies that position humans as absolute rulers over nature. Instead, the poems portray nature as a living entity possessing intrinsic value and a legitimate claim to preservation and sustainability.

These findings support Dewi's (2016) argument that literary ecocriticism extends beyond representations of natural beauty to address environmental crises and ecological concerns within contemporary society. Likewise, the studies of Jannah and Efendi (2024), Khoerunnisa et al. (2024), Febrianti and Efendi (2025), Sofyaningrum and Sangdiyah (2024), Abror (2025), and Syahda and Abror (2025) demonstrate that literary works can effectively represent ecological relationships while fostering environmental awareness among readers. The present study confirms these perspectives by showing how Denny JA employs poetic language to transform environmental issues into emotionally compelling narratives.

Moreover, the findings reveal the unique capacity of essay poetry to communicate ecological concerns. Through personification, metaphor, symbolism, and natural imagery, environmental destruction is rendered emotionally accessible and ethically significant. Nature is depicted as capable of speaking, remembering, suffering, transforming, and responding to human actions. Such representations position nature as a subject rather than an object, thereby encouraging readers to reconsider their relationship with the environment.

From an ecocritical perspective, the poems ultimately convey a central ecological message: environmental destruction inevitably returns to affect human life. Human survival depends upon ecological balance, and any disruption of that balance generates consequences extending beyond the natural world to social, economic, and moral dimensions of existence. The reciprocal relationship between humans and nature depicted throughout the poems therefore serves as both ecological criticism and ethical reflection.

In conclusion, *Atas Nama Bencana* demonstrates that contemporary essay poetry can function as a powerful medium for environmental advocacy, social criticism, and ecological education. Through Buell's ecocritical framework, this study reveals that Denny JA's poems possess not only aesthetic significance but also profound ethical and environmental value. Furthermore, the dissemination of digital essay poetry through social media expands the reach of ecological discourse, enabling environmental concerns to be communicated to broader audiences in accessible and emotionally engaging forms. Consequently, this study contributes to the growing field of literary ecology in Indonesia and opens new possibilities for future research exploring the intersections of literature, environment, digital media, and ecological consciousness within contemporary Indonesian literary production.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the essay poems in *Atas Nama Bencana* by Denny JA construct the relationship between humans and nature through the four ecocritical dimensions proposed by Lawrence Buell, namely the presence of non-human nature, the limitation of human legitimacy over nature, human responsibility toward the environment, and nature as a dynamic entity. Among these dimensions, the presence of non-human nature and the representation of nature as a dynamic entity emerge as the most dominant. Nature is positioned not merely as a background setting but as an active presence that shapes conflict, influences human life, and articulates ecological meanings. Through recurring images of floods, rivers, mud, rain, hills, soil, and forests, the poems portray nature as capable of responding to human actions and reflecting ecological imbalance.

The findings also reveal strong ecological criticism of environmental exploitation, including deforestation, uncontrolled development, and the excessive utilization of natural resources for economic interests. Rather than presenting disasters solely as natural phenomena, the poems construct ecological disasters as representations of disrupted relationships between humans and nature. At the same time, ecological awareness is articulated through reflection, regret, and appeals for environmental restoration, emphasizing humanity's ethical responsibility toward ecological sustainability.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of literary ecology by demonstrating the applicability of Lawrence Buell's four-dimensional ecocritical framework to Indonesian essay poetry, a literary genre that has received limited attention within ecocritical scholarship. The study also expands discussions of ecological representation in contemporary Indonesian literature by highlighting how essay poetry integrates environmental criticism, ethical reflection, and disaster narratives.

Practically, the findings suggest that literary works can function as effective media for environmental education and ecological awareness. The ecological messages embedded in the poems may encourage readers, educators, and literary practitioners to engage more critically with environmental issues and the consequences of ecological degradation.

This study is limited to ten essay poems contained in Atas Nama Bencana and focuses exclusively on Lawrence Buell's ecocritical perspective. Consequently, the findings do not encompass other ecocritical approaches, literary genres, or broader comparative contexts.

Future research may explore ecological representations in other contemporary Indonesian literary works using different ecocritical frameworks, such as those proposed by Greg Garrard, Timothy Morton, or Ursula K. Heise. Comparative studies may also examine ecological discourse across Indonesian essay poetry, digital literary platforms, and other forms of contemporary literature to provide a broader understanding of environmental narratives in the digital era.

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