



## Representation of Human and Environmental Relations in the Novel “*Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal*” by Tayyib Salih: An Ecocritical Study by Greg Garrard

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### Article Info

#### Article History

Submitted January 25, 2025

Accepted March 23, 2025

Publish March 30, 2025

#### Keyword

human, environment, ecocriticism,  
novel, Greg Garrard

### Abstract

Ecocritical studies in literature have increasingly developed alongside growing awareness of the relationship between humans and the environment. The novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* by Tayyib Salih, set in Sudan, presents a narrative about human interaction with nature in a postcolonial context. This study aims to analyze the representation of human-environment relationships in the novel using Greg Garrard's ecocritical approach. The focus of this study includes six key concepts of Greg Garrard's ecocriticism: pastoral, pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, and animals. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with an ecocritical approach. Data collection techniques include reading, marking, and noting relevant texts. Data analysis follows Miles and Huberman's framework: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal two main types of human-environment relationships in the novel. The conflictual relationship is reflected in (1) pollution, symbolizing modernization and its detrimental effects on the environment; (2) wilderness, portraying human struggles and powerlessness against nature's forces; and (3) apocalypse, depicted through natural disasters like catastrophic floods that disrupt society. Meanwhile, the harmonious relationship is illustrated in (1) pastoral, representing nostalgia for rural life and criticism of modernization; (2) dwelling, highlighting the emotional attachment between humans and their living spaces; and (3) animals, showing their role in daily life as part of the social and ecological system. These findings indicate that *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* not only critiques environmental exploitation and modernization's impact but also emphasizes human attachment to nature. This study is expected to expand the understanding of ecocriticism in postcolonial literature and uncover the complexity of human-environment interactions.

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## INTRODUCTION

Literature has long been a medium for depicting the beauty and power of nature. However, in recent decades, writers have become increasingly concerned with ecological issues, particularly the negative impacts of environmental exploitation on human life. This awareness has led to the birth of a new branch of literary theory known as ecocriticism. Ecocriticism analyzes the relationship between humans and the environment as in scholarly works. The term is derived from the word "eco," rooted in the Greek *oikos*, meaning "house." It is in line with the concept of "economy" as the management of the house (*nomos* = law) and "ecology" as the study of the house. Ecocriticism is, therefore, a critique of the "house," the environment as represented in literature (Fenn, 2015).

William Rueckert first introduced the concept of ecocriticism in his writing *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism* in 1978. (Barry, 2017), However (Sartini & Endahati, 2023), (Mishra, 2016).the term did not immediately gain widespread attention in literary criticism. It was not until the 1989 Western Literature Association (WLA) conference in Coeur d'Alene, USA, that Cheryl Glotfelty revived ecocriticism and pushed for its use as a more systematic approach. As it developed, ecocriticism became an increasingly broad approach in literary studies. It began to be known by various other terms, such as environmental criticism, literary-environmental studies, literary ecology, literary environmentalism, and green cultural studies (Buell, 2011).In the late 1990s, in England, this approach was developed with the term *green studies*, focusing more on the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Islamiah & Saryono, 2023).(Nirmala & Surur, 2023), (Sartini & Endahati, 2023), (Yuriananta, 2018).

As part of this development, Greg Garrard emerged as one of the modern ecocritics who developed and introduced new concepts in ecocriticism. Greg Garrard introduced ecocriticism as a study that explores the relationship between humans and the environment and how this relationship is manifested in cultural production. According to Garrard (2012), "Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term 'human' itself" (Ayu Indriani et al., 2023),(Garrard, 2010a), (Sutisna, 2021), (Kurniawan & Yuwana, 2019a). Garrard identifies several key concepts of concern in ecocriticism, such as pastoral, pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, and earth (Alfiah et al., 2020).

In the context of ecocritical studies, Tayyib Salih's novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* offers an interesting analytical opportunity regarding the relationship between humans and the environment in the postcolonial cultural landscape. The novel is set in Sudan, a country with tropical grasslands between the Sahara Desert in the north and the rainforest in the south. Sudan can be broadly classified into two main zones: savanna (including the Guinean highlands, the upper Niger-Senegal valley, and the upper Nile) and semi-arid grasslands (including the Tuareg and Libyan grasslands). (Renner, 1926).In this novel, the story of the journey of the main character, Mustafa Sa'eed, in search of his identity takes place amid the typical Sudanese landscape. Mustafa, who was educated in Egypt and England since childhood, finally returned to Sudan and chose to live in a small village on the bend of the Nile River. (Idriss, 2012).

Latar geografis dalam novel ini bukan sekadar menjadi elemen deskriptif, tetapi turut membentuk dinamika kehidupan tokoh-tokohnya. Perhatikan misalnya bagaimana Salih menarasikan hubungan emotional manusia and lingkungan dalam novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal*

صوت أعرفه، له في بلدنا وشوشة مرحة،  
صوت الزيح وهي تمر بالنخل غيره، وهي تمر  
ونظرت يحقول القمح. وسمعت هديل القمري،  
خلال النافذة إلى النخلة القائمة في فناء دارنا،  
فعلمت أن الحياة لا تزال بخير،  
*The sound of its rustle as it passes through  
rows of coconut trees and fields of wheat.  
Hearing the rustling of palm trees and seeing  
through the window the coconut trees that  
stood in our yard made me sure that life was  
still good* (Salih, 1997: 6).

In this narrative, the natural environment is not only the story's setting but is also a symbol of harmony and sustainability that is integrated with people's lives.

The novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* by Tayyib Salih has been widely studied by researchers. In researching the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal*, at least four categories of previous research were found, namely from the cultural aspect, psychoanalysis, postcolonial identity and culture, and gender dynamics. First, research on the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* by Tayyib Salih from the cultural aspect highlights its complex relationship with colonialism, identity, and hybridity (mixing) of Eastern and Western cultures. (Geesey, 1997a). Second, research from the psychoanalytic aspect shows the psychological impact experienced by the character Mustafa Said due to colonialism (Al-Halool, 2008). Third,

research from the aspect of postcolonial identity and culture explains the impact of British colonialism on Sudan, especially the loss of indigenous culture and identity. This study also proposes bioregionalism as a postcolonial resistance strategy. (Alkhalwaldeh, 2024). Fourth, research on gender dynamics explains the influence of social norms in village communities on women. This study also explores the psychological complexity of the character Mustafa Said through Jungian concepts, highlighting his troubled relationship with women and his search for maternal affection. (Siddiq, 1978).

In addition, researchers have also found several previous studies on ecocritical studies. Among them are ecocritical studies in the film *Do not look up* (Jamilah & Ayiz, 2024), in the film script *Avatar: The Way Of Water 2022* (Rumra et al., 2024), in the film *Entitled The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (Alfiah & Gultom, 2020), in the novel *The Legacy Of Heorot* by Larry Niven, (Manullang et al., 2021), in the novel *Kekal* by Jalu Kencana (Ahmad & Supriyadi, 2020), in the novel *Animal's People* by Indra Sinha (Erviana & Triyani, 2025), in the novel *Ladu* by Tosca Santoso (Kurniawan & Yuwana, 2019), in the novel *Baitun Nakhil* by Tarek Eltayeb (Nirmala & Basid, 2024), in the novel in the novel *Aroma Karsa* by Dewi Lestari (Islamiah & Saryono, 2023), in the short story *A Convalescence* by Aamer Hussein (Zulfiqar, 2024), in the short story *Pengelana Laut* (Juanda & Azis, 2023) and the short story *Kayu Naga* by Korrie Layun Rampan (Yuliyani, 2023).

Based on previous research, this research has similarities and differences. The research conducted by (Geeseey, 1997), (Al-Halool, 2008), (Alkhalwaldeh, 2024), and (Siddiq, 1978) using the same object, namely the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal*, but the research has a different focus on the study theme. Other research, such as that conducted by (Jamilah & Ayiz, 2024), (Rumra et al., 2024), (Manullang et al., 2021), (Ahmad & Supriyadi, 2020), (Erviana & Triyani, 2025), (Kurniawan & Yuwana, 2019), (Islamiah & Saryono, 2023), (Zulfiqar, 2024), (Juanda & Azis, 2023) and (Yuliyani, 2023) discuss the same study theme, namely Greg Garrard's ecocriticism, but using different objects.

However, even with the same study theme, there are still differences in the study's objectives, such as the study conducted (Jamilah & Ayiz, 2024) discussing Greg Garrard's five main concepts without explaining two other concepts, namely earth and dwelling. The study (Manullang et al., 2021) only discussed two main concepts: wilderness and animals. The study (Ahmad & Supriyadi, 2020) focused on environmental

destruction. The study (Erviana & Triyani, 2025) discussed three main concepts of Greg Garrard: pastoral, wilderness, and dwelling. The study (Kurniawan & Yuwana, 2019) described environmental damage and human relations with the environment. The study (Islamiah & Saryono, 2023) discussed five main concepts of Greg Garrard without explaining two other concepts, namely earth and pastoral. The study (Zulfiqar, 2024) discussed six main concepts of Greg Garrard without explaining 1 concept, namely earth. The study (Juanda & Azis, 2023) discussed six main concepts of Greg Garrard without explaining one other concept, namely pastoral. The research (Yuliyani, 2023) focuses on the relationship between humans and the environment and the destruction of nature.

Based on the similarities and differences of previous studies above, the position of this study is to add to the study of the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* by Tayyib Salih. Research on the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* by Tayyib Salih through an ecocritical perspective has not been found. Therefore, this study aims to explain the representation of human relations with the environment based on Greg Garrard's perspective. This study will discuss six main concepts in Greg Garrard's ecocriticism: pastoral, pollution, wilderness, apocalyptic, dwelling, and animals.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. The researcher describes the phenomena related to human and environmental relations in the novel "*Mausim al-Hijrah Ila al-Syimal*" by Tayyib Salih using Greg Garrard's Ecocritic theory approach. The primary data source is the novel "*Mausim al-Hijrah Ila al-Syimal*" by Tayyib Salih. This novel was published by Dar al-Jil, 200 pages long, first printed in 1997 in Beirut. At the same time, secondary data sources come from books, essays, and various existing research journals.

The data collection techniques used are reading and taking notes. In the reading technique, there are at least three steps: 1) reading the entire novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* by Tayyib Salih, 2) re-reading the entire novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* by Tayyib Salih, by marking texts related to Greg Garrard's ecocritical study, 3) The researcher also read references related to Greg Garrard's ecocritical study through various sources, such as books, scientific articles, essays, and internet websites. In the note-taking technique, the researcher noted text quotations in Tayyib Salih's *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal novel* related to Greg Garrard's ecocritical study.

In data analysis techniques, researchers refer to the concept of Miles and Huberman. According to Miles and Huberman (1992), analysis is divided into three activities simultaneously. The three streams are (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) concluding. (Hardani et al., 2020). In the data reduction stage, the author selects, summarizes, and groups data in the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* based on specific categories according to Greg Garrad's ecocriticism concept. The reduced data is presented as narrative text from the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal*. After that, the data is then concluded by the researcher supported by valid references.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In line with Greg Garrard's ecocriticism concept, researchers found at least 9 data, which were then classified into two sub-discussions related to conflictual relations between humans and harmonious relations between humans and the environment. As follows;

**Table 1.** Representation of the relationship between humans and the environment in the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah Ila al-Syimal*

<b>Conflictual Relations (Tension between Humans and the Environment)</b>			
No	Classification	Form	Page
1	Pollution	Air pollution	Page 78
2	Wild nature	Sahara Desert	Page 129
3	Apocalyptic	Big flood	Page 58
<b>Harmonious Relationship (Harmony between Humans and the Environment)</b>			
4	Pastoral	Longing for hometown	Page 5
		Escape from urban life.	Page 100
5	Residence	Constructing the meaning of existence through cultural interaction	Page 60
		He has a deep connection with the place where he lives	Page 139
6	Animal	Animals as a means of transportation	Page 89 & 32

**Conflictual Relations (Tension between Humans and the Environment)  
Pollution**

Pollution comes from the Latin *polluere*, meaning "to defile." Initially, in English, the word had a more moral connotation, referring to an act or condition that was considered to pollute a person's morality (for example, masturbation). However, over time, between the 17th and 19th centuries, the meaning shifted from something internal (moral) to something external (material). Today, we know "pollution" in an environmental context, such as air pollution (Garrad, 2004).

Air pollution is a decrease in air quality due to the entry of hazardous elements into the air or the earth's atmosphere. Air pollution is usually caused by fuel combustion, factory smoke, etc. (Larasati & Manut, 2022). Here is the data.

**Data 1**

وسط النيل حين تمر بهم البخرة كقلعة عائمة يرفعون قاماتهم ويلتفتون إليها برهة ثم يعودون ما كانوا فيه إلى .

This may also be the case with other people who want to know what is happening next to each other, and then the men can use it to save money. Kapal itu melewati tempat ini pada waktu dhuha (Salih, 1997: 78).

Although in the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah Ila al-Syimal*, Salih does not provide an explicit description of how pollution affects the environment, the symbolism of the steamboat depicted in data 1, such as "a floating fortress in the middle of the Nile" can be said to be a representation of modernity that brings with it its impacts, including the potential for air pollution due to smoke from burning fuel. Smoke and emissions from steamboats have the potential to pollute the air along the Nile, which is an important part of the lives of local people. Thus, this description not only shows people's admiration for modernity but also suggests environmental changes that will be slowly experienced by society. In line with research conducted by (Nirmala and Basid, 2024) (Gultom 2020) and (Jamilah Ayiz, 2024), data 1 reveals the occurrence of environmental problems due to irresponsible human behavior. Human activities, such as modernization, are major contributors to global pollution. (Zulfiqar, 2024). This happens because economic gain is prioritized without regard to ecological and cultural sustainability (Rumra et al., 2024).

## Wilderness

The word "wilderness" comes from the Anglo-Saxon *wilddeoren*, where *deoren* means animals living outside cultivated land's boundaries. The word "wild" was so helpful for indicating the area where wild animals (driven) lived that its spelling and simple meaning remained unchanged for more than a millennium and a half. However, the word acquired new connotations with the shrinking of forests and the colonization of wild areas. (Garrad, 2004).

The idea of *wilderness* was then developed by Garrad, becoming a symbol/concept where natural conditions are considered pure and unpolluted by civilization. This concept is mobilized to protect specific habitats and species and is seen as a place to refresh the souls of those tired of the moral and material pollution of urban life. (Güneş, 2017). Although *wilderness* narratives share motifs with pastoral narratives, namely escape and return, the constructions of nature they propose and affirm are fundamentally different. Suppose pastoral is a typically Old World construction of nature appropriate to long-inhabited and domesticated landscapes. In that case, *wilderness* is more suited to the experience of settlers in the New World (which had not been touched by (Garrad, 2004). The following data shows *the wilderness* in the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah Ila al-Syimal*.

### Data 4

وقامت السيارة في أول الصباح، وسارت شرقاً  
هذء النيل نحو ساعتين، ثم اتجهت جنوباً في  
زاوية مستقيمة وضربت في الصحراء. لا يوجد  
مأوى من الشمس التي تصعد في السماء  
بخطوات بطيئة وتصب أشعتها على الأرض كأن  
بينها وبين أهل الأرض ثأراً قديماً.

The mobile phone has different pads, which are often used when the phone is closed, but it is connected to the mobile phone to connect to the mobile phone. This is when the time is at hand, and the other is different from one another, and the one in the middle of nowhere is the one who An Old Feud Between just like that and the other one (Salih, 1997, p. 129).

In data 4, the journey taken by the car through the desert and the unobstructed sunlight creates a challenging atmosphere when the power of wild nature seems to demand human endurance. The vast desert, without protection, highlights the helplessness of humans in the face of nature that knows no mercy. The sun that rises slowly seems to be a symbol of the power of nature that illuminates but also tortures, reminding humans of their

fragility under the domination of nature. The isolation and forced struggle against these harsh conditions emphasize the aspect of *wildness*, where nature does not provide comfort or protection, only tests for those who dare to fight it. This situation creates a tension between humans and nature that cannot be changed or influenced, emphasizing the uncertainty and danger in the untouched wild world.

Data 4 is in line with several previous studies. In the context of human separation from nature, the depiction of a harsh and untouched desert in this novel shows how humans are alienated from nature and face great danger due to their inability to adapt, in line with findings (Jamilah & Ayiz, 2024) that highlight environmental threats due to neglect of nature. Furthermore, the desert in the novel is not only a symbol of alienation but also shows how humans must live in the wild, relying on skills and knowledge to survive, as explained by (Rumra et al., 2024)—those who emphasize the importance of the wild in ecological balance and human well-being. In addition, the meaning of *wilderness* in this novel is in line with the concept of old-world wilderness put forward by (Zulfiqar, 2024) and (Erviana & Triyani, 2025), where the wilderness is depicted as a place that is savage, full of mystery, and at the same time sacred, as depicted in the journey through the desert which symbolizes human helplessness in the face of the power of nature.

Overall, the wilderness image in Data 4 emphasizes how the wilderness functions as a physical setting and a symbolic entity that challenges human domination (Garrad, 2004). In this context, the wilderness is not only a place but also an existential experience that tests human courage, endurance, and ability to survive amidst the unpredictable power of nature. This strengthens the wilderness' position as a symbol of pure nature untouched by civilization, which, on the one hand, is frightening, but on the other hand, raises a deep awareness of human position in the larger ecosystem.

### Apocalyptic (Apocalypse)

Apocalyptic is a literary genre that emerges from situations of great crisis, derived from the Greek term *apo-captain*, meaning "to uncover" or "to reveal." The genre often depicts revelations about the end of the world. In apocalyptic works, readers are presented with dramatic images of violence, destruction, and the unsettlingly strange, often combined with a view of a world that has changed fundamentally (Garrad, 2001). This genre's narratives reveal the imminent threat and offer profound reflections on the human condition,

nature, and environmental sustainability. The apocalyptic genre is particularly relevant in various crisis contexts, including environmental ones. (Garrad, 2004).

In the modern context, the apocalyptic approach is often used to discuss environmental issues, known as environmental apocalypticism. This view states that the world is approaching catastrophic destruction due to an uncontrolled ecosystem. (Garrad, 2004).

#### Data 5

كانت ليلة قاتظة من ليالي شهر يوليو، وكان فاض ذلك العام أحد فيضاناته تلك، النيل قد عشرين أو ثلاثين سنة، التي تحدث مرة كل أبناءهم. وغمر وتصبح أساطير يحدث بها الآباء وطرف الماء أغلب الأرض الممتدة بين الشاطئ الصحراء حيث تقوم البيوت، وبقيت الحقول وسط الماء. كجزيرة

It was one of the hot nights of July, and the Nile had overflowed that year in one of those great floods that occur once every twenty or thirty years and are the legends that parents tell their children. The water covered most of the land that stretched between the river bank and the edge of the desert where the houses stood, and the fields stood like islands in the water. (Salih, 1997: 58).

Data 5 creates a powerful image of the destruction that comes from the power of nature. The great flood that hit the region, which occurs once every few decades, not only shows a natural event but also profoundly impacts human life, turning ordinary land into a sea of water. A land filled with houses and fields is submerged, leaving "islands" in the middle of the water, like the remains of a world that sank in disaster. In data 5, the flood becomes a legend passed down from generation to generation, signifying an apocalyptic event that not only destroys the physical but also leaves a deep impression on the collective memory of the community.

Data 5 is in line with the research conducted (Jamilah & Ayiz, 2024), which highlights how apocalyptic narratives symbolize the coming environmental crisis and reflect a human failure to prevent ecological destruction. As expressed by (Zulfiqar, 2024), the topic of the apocalypse often represents fear of the end of the world and environmental destruction, as depicted in the great flood that is legendary in this novel. In addition, this study is also supported by the findings of (Nirmala & Basid, 2024), which explain that natural disasters are the result of changes in nature, which in the

context of this novel is shown through the overflow of the Nile River, which changes the landscape of life. Furthermore, the apocalyptic narrative in this novel illustrates how modern humans survive amid disasters, which is in line with research (Nirmala & Basid, 2024) that highlights human resilience in the face of ecological destruction.

#### Harmonious Relations (Harmony between Humans and the Environment) Pastoral

In his book *Ecocriticism*, Greg Garrard, referring to Gifford's opinion, divides pastoralism into three main significances—first, the literary tradition in the form of self-exile from the city to the countryside. Second, pastoral includes all forms of literature that present rural life with implicit or explicit comparisons to urban life. Third, in a pejorative sense, pastoralism is often associated with the romantic idealization of rural life but ignores the reality of hard work and hardship. (Garrad, 2004).

Pastoral is also often understood as an escape from the busy city life to the quiet countryside or a way for humans to project their emotions onto nature (pathetic fallacy) (Gutzwiller et al., 1998). In the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah Ila al-Syimal*, Salih creates a powerful description of longing for his hometown and quiet rural life. Here is the data.

#### Data 2

عدت إلى أهلي يا سادتي بعد غيبة طويلة، على وجه التحديد، كنت خلالها سبعة أعوام الكثير، وغاب عني أتعلم في أوروبا. تعلمت أنني عدت الكثير، لكن تلك قصة أخرى. المهم وبي شوق عظيم إلى أهلي في تلك القرية عند منحنى النيل. سبعة أعوام وأنا أحن الصغيرة إليهم وأحلم بهم.

I returned to my family, sirs, after a long absence, seven years to be exact, during which I studied in Europe. I learned a lot, and I lost a lot, but that is another story. What is important is that I returned with great longing to my family in a small village on the banks of the Nile after seven years, and I miss them very much and dream about them. (Salih, 1997: 5).

Data 2 presents a pastoral atmosphere through the narrative of the character 'I,' who returns to his hometown after seven years of studying in Europe. His absence from rural life for years creates a sense of disconnection from the simplicity that used to be part of his life. Life in a small village on the banks of the Nile is not only a

physical place to return to but also a symbol of values, such as family ties and the peace of the natural environment. The longing felt by the character 'I' shows how modern life in Europe, although full of new knowledge, cannot replace the deep meaning obtained from a calm and harmonious pastoral environment.

In line with the quote above, data that showed a pastoral narrative was also found. Here is the data.

### Data 3

كنت في الخرطوم أعمل في التجارة. ثم لأسباب عديدة، قررت أن أتحول للزراعة. كنت طول حياتي أشتاق للاستقرار في هذا الجزء من القطر، لا أعلم السبب. وركبت الباخرة، وأنا لا أعلم وجهتي. ولما رست في هذا البلد، أعجبتني هيئتها. وهجس هاجس في قلبي: هذا هو المكان وهكذا كان، كما ترى. لم يخب ظني في البلد ولا أهله.

I was in Khartoum working in trade. Then, for various reasons, I decided to switch to agriculture. For some reason, I have longed to settle in this part of the country. I boarded a ship without knowing my destination, and when the ship docked in this country, I was impressed by its appearance. A feeling came to my heart: this is the place. And so it was, as you can see. I was not disappointed with this country or its people (Salih, 1997, p. 100).

Data 3 describes Mustafa Said's decision to move from a trading life in Khartoum (the capital of Sudan) to farming in the countryside. Although without a clear goal, the character feels a strong inner urge to settle somewhere in the country. This decision is driven by a longing for peace and stability, which he finds when the ship he is on docks in the village. The attraction to this new environment arises as if nature and the place have been chosen for him, even without an apparent rational reason.

Data 2 and 3 show that pastoralism in the text studied displays nostalgia for pure nature and criticizes social changes due to modernization. This is in line with research conducted by (Nirmala & Basid, 2024), which states that rural areas are identical to natural landscapes and have minimal influence on modern technology. Nirmala and Basid (2024) also emphasized that rural areas are often associated with peace, tranquility, and simplicity of abundant life with natural resources. In addition, research by (Nirmala and Surur, 2023) emphasizes the importance of maintaining a beautiful and simple rural life, which is also found in this analysis.

This finding is reinforced by (Zulfiqar, 2024), who explains that the pastoral trope reflects a longing for a natural environment still pure and untouched by industrial development. Thus, this study supports the view that pastoralism is not only a romantic depiction of the countryside but also a reflection of social changes that threaten environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the critical perspective on industrialization found in this study is also relevant to studies (Erviana & Triyani, 2025) that emphasize that pastoralism can be a form of criticism of modern society. They state that true harmony can only be achieved by understanding the interconnectedness of all life forms.

### Dwelling

Dwelling encompasses more than just a physical living space or dwelling; it includes memory, ancestral heritage, death, ritual, daily life, and work. It serves as a basis for personal growth and future planning and profoundly connects to human progress. (Garrad, 2004), (Sartini & Endahati, 2023).

In the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al Syimal*, several data points represent the form of dwelling. Here's the data.

### Data 6

صوت أعرفه، له في بلدنا وشوشة مرحة، صوت الزيج وهي تمر بالنخل غيره، وهي تمر بقول ونظرت خلال القمح. وسمعت هديل القمري، النافذة إلى النخلة القائمة في فناء دارنا، فعلمت أن الحياة لا تزال بخير، أنظر إلى جذعها القوي المعتدل، وإلى عروقها الضاربة في الأرض، وإلى الجريد الأخضر المنهدل فوق هامتها فأحس بالطمأنينة. أحس أنني لست ريشة في مهب الريح، ولكنني مثل تلك النخلة، مخلوق له أصل، له جذور له هدف.

The sound of its rustle as it passes through the rows of coconut trees passes through the wheat fields. I hear the rustle of palm reeds and see the coconut tree in our yard through the window, ensuring that life is still good. I see its strong and sturdy trunk, its roots that circle in the ground, and the green leaves that hang on it, making me feel calm. I feel I am not a leaf carried by the wind, but I am like the coconut tree, created with origin, roots, and purpose (Salih, 1997: 6).

Data 6 represents a deep relationship between humans and their dwellings, providing a sense of security, identity, and meaning. Through the narrative of "the sound of the wind rustling between the trees and the view of the sturdy trunks

and roots that plunge into the earth," the character 'I' finds inner peace and confidence that life is still in good condition. The statement that he is not like a "leaf carried by the wind" but like a "coconut tree" that has an origin, roots, and purpose emphasizes that *dwelling* does not only mean physical existence in a place but also includes the spiritual and existential meaning of the place in forming the identity of the character 'I.'

#### Data 7

نحن هكذا وكل سيارة تمر بنا طالعة أو نازلة، تقف حتى اجتمعت قافلة عظيمة، أكثر من مائة رجل طعموا وشربوا وصلوا وسكروا. ثم تحلقنا حلقة كبيرة، ودخل بعض الفتیان وسط الحلقة ورقصوا كما ترقص البنات. وصفقنا وضرينا الأرض بأرجلنا وحممنا بلوقنا، وأقمنا في قلب الصحراء فرحاً للاشيء. وجاء أحد بمذياعه الترانزستور، وضعناه وسط الدائرة، وصفقنا ورقصنا على غنائه.

We were like that, and every car that passed us stopped, whether going up or down. Until a large caravan was gathered, more than a hundred people eating, drinking, praying, and getting drunk. Then, we formed a large circle; some young men entered the middle of the circle and danced like girls. We clapped our hands, stamped our feet on the ground, and shouted hoarsely, holding a party in the middle of the desert for something unclear. Someone brought a transistor radio, and we put it in the middle of the circle, clapped our hands, and danced to the song (Salih, 1997, p. 139).

Data 7 shows how humans construct meaning of existence through togetherness and social interaction, even in seemingly empty spaces such as deserts. The desert, which can be physically considered a place devoid of life, is transformed into a living and meaningful space through collective rituals such as eating, drinking, dancing, and singing. The circles formed, the dances, and the presence of transistor radios as entertainment centers illustrate efforts to create social bonds and celebrate shared existence. These activities go beyond the physical function of the place, making the desert an emotional and symbolic place to live, where identity and happiness are found. This illustrates that *dwelling* is not just about being in a place but also about how humans give meaning to that place through experience and connection.

Data 6 and 7 align with previous studies on the meaning of housing, which is more than just a physical space. Jamilah and Ayiz (2024) emphasize that a place of residence reflects the journey of life,

memories, and the foundation for human growth, as depicted in the emotional relationship of the character 'I' with the surrounding environment in data 6. In addition, research (Nirmala & Surur, 2023) with data 7 also highlights how the environment can shape human character, which is reflected in the resilience of the community in the desert, where the desert is not only a place to live but also a space that forms identity and togetherness. Furthermore, (Rumra et al., 2024) discuss the spiritual dimension in the place of residence, which is also seen in data 6 through the connection of the character with nature, such as in the metaphor of the coconut tree, which symbolizes the roots and purpose of life. The concept put forward (Zulfiqar, 2024) regarding the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature is also in line with how data 6 and 7, which depict a deep relationship between the character and his environment, criticizes the disconnection of modern humans from nature. Finally, Erviana & Triyani's study (2025) on the importance of a sustainable relationship with the land and its history can also be found in data 6 and 7, especially in how the character feels a deep attachment to his homeland.

#### Animals

In Greg Garrard's book *Ecocriticism*, the chapter on "Animal" examines the relationship between humans and animals from a philosophical, cultural, and ecological perspective. From an ecological perspective, "Animal" highlights the debate between *liberationists*, who advocate for individual animal rights, such as opposing hunting, and environmental ethicists, who view actions, such as animal population control, as part of preserving the ecosystem. The differences also extend to how wild and domestic animals (those adapted to live with humans) are represented. Through this analysis, Greg Garrard invites readers to consider how the representation and treatment of animals reflect the broader relationship between humans and nature and its impact on the ecological balance. (Garrard, 2004), (Juanda & Azis, 2023). Here is the data.

#### Data 8

وتلمح على الشاطئين حركة واضحة. بعض الناس على الحمير وبعضهم على الأقدام، وقوارب ومراكب شراعية تتحرك من الشاطئ المقابل للمحطة.

There are other things that you can do with what you want. Beberapa orang naik keledai, beberapa berjalan kaki, dan perahu-perahu layar bergerak dari tepi sungai yang beberapa dengan stasiun (Salih, 1997: 79).



Data 8 highlights daily activities on both river banks, where humans and animals, such as donkeys, play an important role in the lives of local people. Donkeys as domestic animals are used as traditional transportation, reflecting human dependence on animals to help with mobility and daily work. In this context, the relationship between humans and donkeys shows that animals are considered functional tools and part of the social and environmental ecosystem. Donkeys, which function as transportation, also reflect the connection between humans and nature and the important role of animals in maintaining ecological balance (using them as a means of transportation reduces carbon emissions from modern vehicles). The use of donkeys in this narrative underlines the importance of the role of animals in forming harmonious ecological interactions between humans and their physical environment. A similar phenomenon is also found in data 9. Here is the data.

#### Data 9

وفي الصباح قلعت الأوتاد وأسرجت بعيري،  
وواصلت رحلتي .

In the morning, I pulled out the stake, saddled my camel, and continued my journey (Salih, 1997, p. 78).

Data 9 highlights the close relationship between humans and camels as important transport animals in desert travel. Camels are known as animals that are resistant to the harsh conditions of the desert, able to carry heavy loads and travel long distances without much water. The presence of camels in this journey illustrates their vital role as loyal companions in exploring the barren wilderness. This depiction shows how humans and animals interact, with camels providing mobility and endurance, while humans use the strength and adaptability of camels to achieve their goals in challenging environments.

Data 8 and 9 align with previous studies that highlight the important role of animals in human life (Jamilah & Ayiz, 2024). Click or tap here to enter text. Moreover, how human-animal relationships reflect ecological dependency. (Zulfiqar, 2024). The use of donkeys as a means of transportation and camels as travel companions in the novel *Mawsim al-Hijrah ila al-Shimal* illustrates how humans utilize animals to survive, as seen in the Bedouin community who herd livestock and have in-depth navigation knowledge in the desert. (Nirmala & Surur, 2023). In addition, this novel's concept of human-animal interaction also supports the idea that animals are not just resources but important partners in the ecosystem that require

respect and protection (Rumra et al., 2024), (Kurniawan & Yuwana, 2019). The ecocritical perspective in this study also strengthens the argument that the balance between humans, animals, and the environment must be maintained, including by ensuring a safe habitat for animals as part of humans' moral responsibility towards nature (Islamiah & Saryono, 2023).

#### CONCLUSION

This study highlights the representation of the relationship between humans and the environment in Tayyib Salih's novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* through the perspective of Greg Garrard's ecocriticism. The author uses Garrard's six main concepts of ecocriticism (pastoral, pollution, wilderness, apocalyptic, dwelling, and animals). In this study, the relationship between humans and the environment is represented in two main categories: conflictual relationships and harmonious relationships.

The conflictual relationship between humans and the environment is depicted through air pollution, a symbol of modernization; the harshness of the wilderness, which reflects human helplessness towards the environment; and natural disasters, such as floods, which reflect the apocalyptic aspect. Meanwhile, a harmonious relationship is seen in the pastoral concept, which emphasizes longing for the hometown and criticism of modernization; the concept of housing, which describes the emotional attachment of humans to their environment and the role of animals as part of the ecosystem of human life.

Thus, the novel *Mausim al-Hijrah ila al-Syimal* explains the criticism of environmental exploitation and the impact of modernization and describes how humans still have a deep attachment to the environment. Therefore, this study is expected to enrich the understanding of ecocriticism in literature, especially in the postcolonial context, and show that the relationship between humans and the environment is complex and multidimensional.

#### Acknowledgments

We want to express our deepest gratitude to all parties contributing to compiling this article. We would also like to thank all colleagues and families who have provided moral and material support.

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