

# Ecocriticism of Poaching in Doraemon: Nobita no Kyouryuu Anime Movie

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**Abstract.** This study will examine the forms of environmental criticism in the Japanese animated movie Doraemon: Nobita no Kyouryuu by using an ecocriticism approach. This study was conducted because several parts of the story in the animated movie show the practice of poaching and cruel behavior towards animals. The research method used is the sociology of literature which using the literature study method to collect the data, and the results of data analysis will be presented with a qualitative descriptive method. The results of this study indicate that there are three forms of violations of the wildlife protection policy by the Japanese Ministry of Environment in related to the practice of hunting wild animals which are being criticized. These violations include violations of the a.) prohibition against the use of harmful tools, equipment and methods; b.) prohibition of mass slaughter and capturing; and c.) hunting licenses and hunting registrations. In addition, there are another forms of animal abuse that follow the activities of poaching in this movie.

## 1 Introduction

In general, literary works are divided into three types, namely prose, poetry, and drama. But along with technological advances, these types of literary works are then transformed into more modern forms. For example, the form of drama stagings, which are transformed into movies, along with the discovery of cameras and other technologies that support the cinematography industry. In addition, movies also develop along with the times. Initially, movies were only played by humans, but along with advances in the field of design and computers, humans are now able to create animated movies whose characters are in the form of images.

Doraemon is one of the animations that are very popular in Japan and around the world, and is present in the form of series and movies. The first animated movie from the Doraemon franchise was released in 1980 under the title "*Doraemon to Nobita no Kyouryuu* (Doraemon and Nobita's Dinosaur)." Thanks to its success, the movie was later reproduced in 2006 with the title "*Eiga Doraemon: Nobita no Kyouryuu* (Nobita's Dinosaur)." This animated movie tells the story of Nobita's struggle to find a dinosaur egg, which is then hatched using a magical tool belonging to Doraemon, a robot cat from the 22nd century. Then Nobita, Doraemon, and their friends try to return the dinosaur to its natural habitat in the past by using a time machine. In the midst of their quest, they are hindered by a group of hunters who travel through time to capture dinosaurs and sell them in the future. The hunter

group carried out illegal dinosaur hunting activities using bad methods so that it had a negative impact on the object of prey and the balance of the ecosystem.

Apart from carrying the theme of friendship, this movie brings up environmental issues, especially the protection of animals and their habitats. In addition, this movie is able to play with the audience's emotions by showing the characters' concern for animals and the environment through dramatic and heroic scenes. The message in this movie is also packaged in a simple way so that it can inspire audiences of all ages. For this reason, the author is interested in researching this animated movie using the perspective of ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is a form of understanding that arises in society, caused by the emergence of criticism of nature and the environment. More fully, Greg Garrard explains that ecocriticism is part of the exploration of how humans imagine and describe their relationship with the environment and all aspects of their lives [1]. Since its beginnings in the 20th century, ecocriticism has become one of the most rapidly developing areas of research and teaching in literary and cultural studies since its foundations [2].

According to Garrard, the concepts of ecocriticism include (1) pollution, (2) wilderness, (3) apocalypse, (4) dwelling, (5) animals, and (6) the earth [3]. These concepts relate to human power over the earth, which makes these things objects for achieving prosperity. On the basis of this power, humans often destroy nature in order to fulfill their needs. This thought is the trigger for the emergence of environmental criticism.

The study of the relationship between animals and humans as one of the six concepts of environmental criticism stems from the idea of Revolutionary Animal Liberation, proposed by Peter Singer in 1975. His concept was inspired by Jeremy Bentham's argument, a Utilitarian philosopher who stated that cruelty to animals is analogous to slavery. In addition, animals are also entitled to moral considerations for the pain they suffer, regardless of their intellectual abilities [4].

The above idea is in line with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which was first drafted in 1963. CITES is an international agreement between governments that aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species [5]. This objective is stated in the text of the convention, which consists of 12 articles that regulate the trade in wild animals. The manuscript was then agreed upon by representatives from 80 countries in Washington, D.C., USA in 1973. This regulation is the basis of every animal protection regulation in the world.

In Japan, the wildlife protection and hunting laws have existed since 1918, which was issued by the Ministry of the Environment through Law No. 32 in 1918. This policy was made as the implementation of wildlife protection projects and hunting controls. This regulation includes: a) species restrictions; only game species may be legally hunted; b) hunting area restrictions, including permanent or temporary wildlife protection areas, public roads, and parks; c) hunting period and number of captures restrictions, including prohibitions on mass slaughter and capture; and d) hunting method restrictions. In addition, this regulation also regulates hunting licenses and hunter registration [6].

The act of poaching is often followed by the illegal sale of animals or animal body parts. This is usually accompanied by violent behavior towards animals in the process. Animal abuse is the deliberate harm, neglect, or misuse of animals by humans, resulting in the animal's suffering physically and/or emotionally [7]. The forms of cruelty to animals are divided into two, namely physical and psychological abuse. Physical abuse can be in the form of: 1) intentionally hitting or hurting the animal's body; 2) letting the animals starve and thirst; 3) never taking care of animals until disease occurs; 4) tying up animals; 5) leaving the animal outside without shelter. Meanwhile, psychological abuse of animals includes, for example, 1) not giving affection so that animals become aggressive; 2) ignoring the needs and health of animals; and 3) confining and tying up animals so that they are isolated [8].

In this study, the elements in the movie *Doraemon: Nobita no Kyouryuu* will be dissected using the point of view of ecocriticism to find out the cruel actions of humans against animals that are criticized.

The critique will then be drawn on its relevance to events that occur in the real world, so that it can be concluded how the messages related to the environment are actually conveyed in this movie.

## 2 Methods

This study uses a sociology of literature research method that links the phenomena contained in a literary work with phenomena that occur in the real world. This method is an interdisciplinary science that employs sociology as an auxiliary science in order to comprehend literary works and analyze them [9]. According to Ratna, there are three types of the model of sociology of literature, as follows:

1. Analyzing social problems which available in the literary works and relate them to reality; also called extrinsic aspects of literary works.
2. Analyzing social problems which available in the literary works by finding the relations between their structures; dialectical.
3. Analyzing literature to obtain certain information [10].

Based on the explanation above, the environmental criticism of poaching in the movie *Doraemon: Nobita no Kyouryuu* is included in the first analysis model. Data in this study collected through literature study techniques. A literature study is used to make an analysis of the problem being studied. Besides that, several books at the same time also constitute secondary data. The presentation of the results of data analysis is carried out using a descriptive method.

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Forms of Criticism of Wildlife Hunting

#### 3.1.1 Use of Harmful Tools, Equipment and Methods

In this movie, the antagonist uses a hunting tool in the form of a rubber rifle that can produce painful wounds but does not immediately kill the prey animal, thus making the animal suffer more. In some scenes, disfigured dinosaurs are shown, such as having missing limbs or having scars on parts of their bodies. Then the hunting equipment is used in the form of helicopters and ships, which have very bad emission exhaust systems, causing environmental pollution. These emissions pollute the water and soil, so that the surrounding rivers become dirty and the surrounding land also becomes barren. This caused no dinosaurs to survive in the area.

In the real world, hunters often encounter hunting equipment or dangerous ones. For example, there has been a case where elephant hunters carried out their actions by placing bait in the form of fruits and vegetables that had been given poison. The group of elephants that eat the bait then die, so the hunter can take the tusk. Hunting like this is, of course, very dangerous. Apart from violating animal protection regulations, it also kills a herd of elephants. Even though the purpose of the hunt is only to take tusks from adult male elephants, all members of the herd are also victims.

Another example of this case is the use of bombs to catch fish. This method is very dangerous because it has the potential to damage coral reefs and pollute the waters. In addition, the method not only injures or kills the type of fish you want to catch but also kills small fish and other aquatic animals. This, of course, has a negative impact on aquatic ecosystems.



**Fig. 1.** Rifles used for hunting dinosaurs and hunting vehicles



**Fig. 2.** Areas that have become arid due to pollution, and the carcasses of dead dinosaurs.

### *3.1.2 Mass Arrests and Massacres*

In this movie, the antagonist is shown in the form of a group of dinosaur hunters. Through dialogue and visualizations in the movie, it is revealed that the group has hunted and slaughtered hundreds of dinosaurs to be traded illegally. Adult dinosaurs are captured and separated from their young to be killed and their body parts sold as collectibles. This left the young dinosaurs without protection, so they were threatened with death due to their inability to find food on their own or due to predators.

In the real world, phenomena like this are often encountered, namely hunters who catch their prey excessively. This, in addition to violating existing regulations, can also cause imbalances in the ecosystem and food chain as a result of the reduced number of certain species. This is the criticism that the movie's creator wants to convey.



**Fig. 3.** Some of the dinosaurs that have been caught are separated from their mothers

In addition, another form of criticism conveyed is the mindset of the hunters who catch their prey in excessive numbers. In the movie, the group of hunters feel that it is okay to catch a few hundred dinosaurs because there are still many in the wild. It would be very dangerous if this mindset were shared by everyone. This can cause the extinction of living species.

### *3.1.3 Violation of Hunting License and Hunting Registration*

Regulations regarding hunting licenses and hunting registrations are in place to prevent hunters from carrying out their hunting activities illegally. Hunting activities illegally allow someone to hunt anywhere, anytime, with any type of game with an unlimited number of tags. This activity is certainly against the law as well as dangerous for the ecosystem of living things.

The hunter group in this film is told to come from the future and use a time machine to carry out illegal dinosaur hunting activities that violate international regulations. For a time, hunters were prohibited from capturing or killing ancient animals, for fear of breaking the chain of evolution. The heaviest consequence of this is the extinction of primate ancestors, so that humans may never have been born in the world. However, this group continues to carry out their hunting activities even without a permit and in clear violation of international regulations. This activity also received criticism from film creators.

If we look at the real world, the number of illegal hunters who do not have a license is extraordinary. Through the explanations in this film, we can understand the importance of hunting licenses and hunting registrations, as well as the importance of carrying out hunting activities in accordance with the provisions set by the government. This is because hunting activities carried out illegally can cause other problems. For example, illegal animal trade and overfishing can lead to the extinction of animal species.



**Fig. 4.** The group of hunters has been caught, there is a label that says "dinosaur hunters are criminals."

### 3.2 Forms of Criticism of Animal Abuse Along with Hunting Practices

In addition to the forms of criticism related to animal hunting, there is also criticism of animal abuse in general, which is shown in this film. The form of criticism of animal abuse that is shown in the film is the act of physically hurting. The hunter characters in the film often snatch the dinosaurs they prey on with a whip, or shock them with teasers every time the dinosaur wants to rebel. This made the dinosaurs scream in pain, and some of them fell to the ground.

The next criticism is the form of a lack of care that causes animals to suffer from a disease. The dinosaurs that are hunted in this film are locked in a narrow cage while waiting for a sale offer. Many of them look emaciated and poorly groomed, indicating an act of neglect by the hunters. In addition, dinosaurs that are described as thin and weak could also be indicated as a result of a lack of feeding.

The problem of neglect is reinforced by the depiction of dinosaurs as becoming more aggressive. This was concluded from the differences in the behavior of the dinosaurs that Nobita saved, wild dinosaurs, and dinosaurs captured by hunters. Nobita's dinosaurs are very tame because of the loving treatment of their owners. Meanwhile, dinosaurs encountered in the wild did not act aggressively as long as they were not disturbed. Meanwhile, dinosaurs that have been captured and treated cruelly look much more aggressive.

From the acts of cruelty to dinosaurs committed by this group of hunters, the creator of this film actually wants to express his criticism of people who catch, sell, or raise animals. There are so many human behaviors that hurt animals, both pets and livestock. It obvious hurts the animals and violates their right to feel free and/or prosperous.



**Fig. 5.** The hunter tortures one of the caught dinosaurs using a whip

## 4 Conclusion

Ecocriticism is one approach used to analyze a literary work in which there is a depiction of criticism of the environment. The film *Doraemon: Nobita no Kyouryuu* not only serves as a means of entertainment for the audience, but also contains messages about the importance of caring for and protecting animals as part of the ecosystem. The message is reflected in the forms of criticism of poaching and the acts of animal abuse that accompany it.

The form of criticism of illegal hunting is reflected through violations of the wildlife protection and hunting laws, which include the use of dangerous tools, equipment, and methods; the prohibition of mass arrests and slaughter; and the violation of hunting licenses and hunting registration. Violation of these rules has the potential to damage the balance of the ecosystem as a result of the environmental damage caused as well as the reduction of certain animal species that affect the food chain.

In addition, other forms of criticism expressed in this film include acts of animal abuse, such as intentionally physically harming animals; acts of neglect and lack of care; and restrictions on the movement of animals by being tied up or locked in small cages. These actions are often carried out on sighted animals or animals that are used to help human life to cause the animal to suffer, such as stress, illness, or death.

The forms of cruelty that are criticized in this film are representations of violations in the real world. Even though the dinosaurs that are the objects of animal cruelty are extinct, dinosaurs can be considered as models for the director to present his criticism of animal cruelty behavior that occurs in the real world. Through this film, audiences, especially children, are made aware of the importance of loving the environment in general and animals in particular, so it is hoped that this cruel behavior will not continue in the future.

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