



The Portrayal of Urban Environmental Issues in *Love, Lies and Indomee* by Nuril Basri

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2024-07-22 Revised: 2024-08-19 Published: 2024-09-04 Keywords: <i>Urbanization;</i> <i>Urban Environmental</i> <i>Issues;</i> <i>Love;</i> <i>Lies and Indomee.</i>	Humans are dependent on nature, where humans need nature for their residence and for their daily needs. Humans should have a sense of care for nature as a form of reward. However, that statement is an illusion, because they are actually destroying nature. As a big city, Jakarta is a destination for migrants to improve their social or economic life. Uncontrolled population growth is one of the impacts of massive urbanization. As a result, social and ecological disparities become urban environmental issues that need to be considered by various parties. By using descriptive qualitative method, the researcher identified the phenomenon of urban environmental issues that occur in Jakarta, as the physical setting in <i>Love, Lies and Indomee</i> by Nuril Basri. Through this study, it is hoped that the readers will know the various kinds of urban environmental issues that occur in urban areas so that they will enthusiastically participate in the actions in protecting the environment.
Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2024-07-22 Direvisi: 2024-08-19 Dipublikasi: 2024-09-04 Kata kunci: <i>Urbanisasi;</i> <i>Isu Lingkungan Kota;</i> <i>Love;</i> <i>Lies and Indomee.</i>	Manusia memiliki sifat bergantung pada alam, dimana manusia membutuhkan alam untuk tempat tinggal, dan untuk kebutuhan nya sehari hari. Sudah seharusnya manusia memiliki rasa peduli terhadap alam sebagai bentuk dari balas budi. Namun, saat ini pernyataan tersebut hanya sebuah ilusi, karena mereka sebenarnya merusak alam. Sebagai kota besar, Jakarta menjadi tujuan para pendatang untuk memperbaiki kehidupan sosial ataupun ekonomi mereka. Pertumbuhan penduduk yang tidak terkendali merupakan salah satu dampak dari urbanisasi besar-besaran. Akibatnya, kesenjangan sosial dan ekologi menjadi isu lingkungan perkotaan yang perlu diperhatikan oleh berbagai pihak. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif, peneliti mengidentifikasi fenomena isu lingkungan perkotaan yang terjadi di Jakarta yang menjadi latar novel <i>Love, Lies and Indomee</i> karya Nuril Basri. Melalui penelitian ini, diharapkan para pembaca dapat mengetahui berbagai macam isu lingkungan perkotaan yang terjadi di perkotaan sehingga mereka antusias berpartisipasi dalam gerakan menjaga lingkungan.

I. INTRODUCTION

Every human and his environment should have a mutual relationship. It means that both humans and the environment can benefit from each other. Humans have a responsibility to protect the surrounding environment from damage. But in fact, humans consciously damage the environment even though they have already known the impact. Environmental destruction is carried out for the benefit of certain individuals or groups. These activities focus on the uncontrolled economic development sector. Massive economic development occurs in big cities that serve as the center of government or social life (Sahara & Maulana, 2023). The city is a large, dense and permanent space that has a heterogeneous society from its social aspects or commonly referred to as urban society, (Pardede *et al.*, 2022). According to Tenritatta, (2022). urban society is something related to cities, where there is interaction between the

community and the city so that they modify each other. In other words, urban communities are a group of people that live in the urban area, in which many of them may come from villages to occupy the area due to the influence of the city's modernity. The many city lights offered by this urban city trigger many individuals to migrate there because they feel that the city is more welcome to them. In urban areas, it is easier for people in cities to find work than in villages because there are so many jobs available. They are individualistic so they prioritize personal interests to gain social status, (Yahya & Yahya, 2020). Without being aware of this phenomenon, the balance of nature is disturbed due to the increase in population in the area. Environmental problems such as pollution and damage to ecosystems become a matter of concern. Considering the facts, the relationships between humans and environment turns out to

disadvantage the natural environment. So it is not a mutual one.

From Rosenau & Wildsmith (2013) Jakarta is a big city with the complexities about the influence of globalization and diversities on the city environment. Jakarta is one of the environmentally problematic urban cities in Southeast Asia. Various problems arise in Jakarta as the physical setting of Love, Lies and Indomee by Nuril Basri, including urban complexity, social and spatial division, cultural and ethnic dynamic, and environmental concerns that have an impact on the city environment. As the capital city of Indonesia and the economic center of the country, Jakarta has a very dense population. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) the population density of Jakarta as of 2022 reached 10.67 million people. Based on the data obtained, it can be seen that the population density in Jakarta can give birth to various new problems in the DKI Jakarta. Urbanization is the main factor of social issues in urban area, such as high crime, increasing poverty and unemployment, slums and illegal settlements popping up, social inequality, limited supply of labor, and low quality of life of the population. In James theory, urban environmental issues that have an impact on social aspects are urban complexity and social and spatial division. While urban environmental issues that have an impact on nature aspects are cultural and ethnic dynamic, and environmental concern.

1. Urban Complexity

In James and Diane's theory, it is revealed that Jakarta is formed from several factors within it, including social, economic, and political factors that interact with each other which also often cause tensions. These tensions include the emergence of clashes between Jakarta's increasingly modern building developments and traditional buildings or slums inhabited by marginalized communities. The complexity that occurs in Jakarta is the impact of uncontrolled urbanization factors that bring people to come to Jakarta with the aim of improving social status in society.

2. Social and Spatial Division

Jakarta is a city that is influenced by globalization. James Rosenau argued that the inequality and social disparities that exist in Jakarta occur because of the influence of globalization. Globalization creates an increasingly modern city development but many do not get development evenly.

Urbanization has narrowed the job opportunities in Jakarta. As a result, social and economic inequality is experienced by the community, where the poor become poorer, and the wealthy become wealthier.

3. Cultural and Ethnic Dynamic

The large population living in Jakarta has the potential for more differences to emerge in society. Through James' theory, he reveals that globalization and urbanization have transformed the cultural into a new urban environmental issue. The products of globalization that are in demand by many people are gadgets. The use of gadgets supported by the internet, such as social media, can cause environmental issues that will have long-term impacts. Carbon footprints released by the internet will cause greenhouse gas effects that can damage the environment.

4. Environmental Concern

Environmental sustainability is something that needs to be considered by the community. James argues that the environmental problems that occur in Jakarta are the influence of globalization and society. Looking at the complexity of Jakarta, he is also highlighting the role of society in influencing and being influenced. Environmental issues that have become the face of Jakarta are air pollution caused by motorized and industrial activities, flooding, and global warming. Through this approach, it is hoped that the community will have the initiative and concern in changing urban environmental conditions for the better.

Social life has impacts on an ecological life. The increase in population due to uncontrolled urbanization causes damage on environmental conditions. Ecological impacts that occur in cities or urban ecology due to the rate of urbanization affect abiotic elements. One of the issues that has become the crucial issue of big cities is traffic jams. This data refers to the Tomtom Traffic Index. From this traffic jam, air pollution arises from vehicle fumes. The impact of exhaust emissions released by vehicles contains chemical elements that cause global warming. In addition to ecological impacts that affect abiotic elements, according to Adam (2010) urbanization can trigger problems in various social and economic aspects. A social problem caused by overpopulation in big cities is slums. Slums that are entrenched in peripheral areas affect the

ecology of the cities. The accumulation of domestic waste along rivers in slums due to the lack of adequate management by the government and people's awareness in throwing away trash and garbage to the right places are the social issues that need attention (Saputra et al., 2023).

Urban environmental issues are often the object of research, including in the research of Claudia et al., (2023) with the title *Analisis Fungsi Kawasan Perkotaan Serta Pemasalahannya Dalam Novel Janji Karya Tere Liye*. This research discusses where the capital city of Jakarta is the destination for everyone to improve the quality of life and the function of urban areas as housing and places to find work. In the novel *Janji* by Tere Liye, researchers found problems faced by the characters in the story which are urban environmental issues. The difference in this research is that the object studied is the novel *Janji* by Tere Liye. The similarity in this study is the setting used as research material, namely Jakarta with its urban environmental issues caused by population growth. The second research was conducted by Setyami (2021) with the research title *Potret Sosial Masyarakat Urban di Kota Metropolitan Dalam Novel Jala Karya Titis Basino: Kajian Ekologi Sastra: Kajian Ekologi Sastra*. This research discusses the portrait of urban communities in the city of Jakarta who face social and economic problems in the novel *Jala*. Social issues include social inequality experienced by the people and oppression by the ruling class. The difference between these two studies is the object of the novel studied and the issue studied discusses specifically the portrait of the community. While the issue that I will examine discusses the portrait of urban environmental issues. While the similarity is in the setting used, namely Jakarta as the city that is the destination of the community to improve the quality of life.

The third research by Busairi et al., (2021) with the title *Representasi Krisis Ekologi Dalam Novel Luka Perempuan Asap Karya Nafi'ah Al-Ma'rab: Kajian Ekokritik*, with the issue raised about the ecological crisis that occurred in Riau due to environmental damage which has an impact on climate change. The difference in this study lies in the setting used in the novel, namely Riau province, where at that time there was environmental damage due to land fires. The similarity of this research is to analyse the environmental issues that the novel discusses which requires a sense of public concern for the environment. Further research by Sudarmoko

(2016) was entitled *Sastra, Kota, dan Sumatera Barat: Perubahan Masyarakat Perkotaan dalam Karya Sastra*. This research focuses on changes in West Sumatran society when living in urban areas. Changes in society are seen in its social aspects, namely related to education, lifestyle, poverty, and relationships between individuals. The difference in research can be seen from the object of literary works used in Sudarmoko's research related to the literature of West Sumatran society. The similarity with this research is the interaction between humans and the urban environment that affects each other. One of the interaction phenomena is urbanization, where people move to the city and inhabit the area for a certain period of time. Research of Essex (2016) discusses the phenomenon of urbanization. The research was entitled *International Development Institutions and the Challenges of Urbanization: the Case of Jakarta*. The case studied in this research is the challenges faced by international development institutions in development programs, namely the complexity of the city, where urban governance between slums and elite neighbourhoods is unbalanced. This development requires contributions from all parties to overcome development interventions in urban areas. The difference from this research is the analysis of urban complexity as a challenge in international development in everyday life. Both studies have in common the influence of urbanization and urban complexity on life in the city.

From the brief explanation above and some previous research, I conducted this research to analyze the influence of urban society on the urban environmental issues that are portrayed in *Love, Lies and Indomee* by Nuril Basri. To examine this phenomenon, I used urbanism theory of James and Diane Wildsmith and social ecology to analyze the relationship between the environment and living organisms, and the role of society towards environmental problems for sustainable urban development. It was because the narrator shows the urban environmental issues and ecological impacts faced by the characters as a result of uncontrolled urbanization and some social discrepancy in Jakarta.

II. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive research method. According to Creswell in (Miller, 2019) and (Firmansyah & Masrun, 2021), qualitative method is a data collection

technique in the form of words, sentences, or phrases related to social phenomena and the issues on urban environment caused by urbanization. The data collection techniques used in this research were documentation and literature study. The use of documentation techniques in this study was to collect the necessary data in the object of research, namely the novel *Love, Lies and Indomee* by Nuril Basri. Then it was supported by literature review, namely by using reading sources relevant to research such as articles, journals, books, and other written sources related to the topic of social ecology and urban environmental issues. To find the results of the research, it is necessary to carry out stages to arrive at conclusions. The process of data collection include close reading, identifying, and classify the data.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

Urban environments refer to large spaces that contain heterogeneous communities and modern public infrastructure to support the survival of the people within them to achieve prosperity. However, behind the visible luxury of the city, various environmental issues arise with the influence of society in it. According to Rosenau & Wildsmith, (2013). environmental issues that occur in urban areas include urban complexity, social and spatial division, cultural and ethnic dynamics, and environmental concerns. These environmental issues often occur in big cities and even mega-cities, such as Jakarta which is the setting of *Love, Lies and Indomee* by Nuril Basri.

B. Discussion

1. Urban Complexity

As a mega-city and once the capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta is the main destination for urbanization because it is the center of the Indonesian economy. Various modern infrastructures alongside informal settlements are one of the reasons for urbanization. This phenomenon further results in the increasing population growth. According to Afrianto et al., (2023), urban complexity is an urban pattern where the physical and social structures of the city develop and interact. In *Love, Lies and Indomee*, Ratu as the main character works as a legal secretary in the Embassy of Republic of

Korea. The building of the embassy stands in the government area and as one of the government buildings highlighted in the story:

Boss stares at me goggle-eyed. He knows I am lying. Boss is a Korean expolice officer and working for him isn't easy. Especially in my position.

I am a legal secretary at the embassy. (Basri, 2019. p. 1)

As one of the official buildings highlighted more in the novel, the Korean Embassy stands in an elite neighborhood. But behind this embassy building, there is a simple residence inhabited by Ratu:

The lift takes me to the thirtieth floor. I must be in such a state. The boss was looking for something at my desk. (Basri, 2019. p. 54)

On my way home, I listen to "Parasit" by my favourite pop star Gita Gutawa and sway to the music—all the way to my rental place, behind the office. (Basri, 2019. p. 5)

The quotations above illustrate how urban complexity becomes urban environmental issues in Jakarta. The magnificent buildings that stand in Jakarta are a symbol of Jakarta's growth as a big city. A lot of people's modest houses stand behind government buildings. This gap illustrates that behind the splendor of Jakarta, there are still many areas that do not get proper and distributed development. The residents in the houses have limited access to and even do not have decent facilities.

2. Social and Spatial Division

Social and spatial division, a division of the social and economic sector area. Uneven division of the area and supported by increasing growth creates an imbalance in the area in the city or social and economic inequality. In *Love, Lies and Indomee*, the modern life of Jakarta requires Ratu to adapt to a new environment. Office buildings, government buildings, and shopping centres that stand majestically and spread over a very large

area. This is clearly illustrated in the initial setting of Ratu's meeting with Hans:

I am waiting in front of Plaza Indonesia's south entrance. Waiting for Hans. Like most other weekend evenings, Plaza Indonesia is busy, full of people. The scent of expensive perfume fills the air. Pretty young things with beautiful skin saunter through the mall's main doors. I feel like an awkward teenager. (Basri, 2019. p. 2)

This activity has become Ratu's routine as one of urban society who lives in an elite area. Several shopping areas are often visited by Ratu to meet Hans, or just to fulfill self-reward after she works. Another modern building visited by Ratu was her boss's apartment. It is not spared from the routine carried out by Ratu in the elite apartment area:

When the taxi stops in front of The Sultan Apartments in Semanggi,

I've been to Boss' apartment several times. Sometimes I have to accompany his wife around, as she goes shopping and so on. She has only been in Indonesia for a few months. (Basri, 2019. p.6)

The magnificence of the buildings in Jakarta is matched by the poverty that scattered everywhere. The novel depicts the Tanah Abang area, which is famous for its densely populated residential areas and slums where Hans lives because he does not have a job:

I visit the cybercafé Hans brought me to the other day. I am not hoping to meet him. But there he is, shaggy, grimy, like he hasn't showered for days.

While I load Facebook, I say: "You look terrible. Go home."

"I don't have a home," he says, like it is nothing. "I live here." (Basri, 2019. p.33)

One of the impacts of uncontrolled urbanization is competition for jobs and increasingly narrow residential land. According to Prayojana et al., (2020), urbanization and the mobility of people entering urban areas affect the availability

of residential land. It can be seen that Hans lost his job and chose to stay at the Cyber café every day. In this issue, there is a gap in income between the rich and the poor. Wealthy people very easily enjoy facilities and have a comfortable lifestyle. Meanwhile, the problem suffered by the poor, who are mostly migrants, is the limitation in accessing adequate facilities, which has an impact on social life so that new problems such as poverty and crime arise.

3. Cultural and Ethnic Dynamic

In a big city, the people who live in it or urban society are heterogeneous. They gather in one neighborhood with different social, economic and cultural backgrounds. This diversity forms a new culture that characterizes urban society. As a big city, Jakarta has a lot of diversities in it and even a lot of residents come from various regions and countries. Like Ratu who works at the Korean Embassy, as a secretary she often interacts with her Korean boss. She has to adapt to the environment where she works and the different character of her boss:

I represent my boss at a lot of meetings because he cannot speak Bahasa Indonesia. And I don't speak Korean. The only word I recognise is "jinjaaroo!" although I'm not quite sure what it means. We communicate only in English. (Basri, 2019. p.5)

Language is a diversity that becomes a person's identity when introducing themselves to the general public. Because language is a very important communication tool, it is a part of culture which is a unifying tool for society in life. (Devianty, 2017).

As a staff of Korean Embassy, Ratu deals a lot with Koreans who are in Indonesia. She uses KPop to interact with these citizens:

Yesterday I had only a single assignment: helping a Korean woman apply for her driving licence. We chat a little. She asks me about Indonesian street signs and symbols—so confusing, she says. I ask her about K-pop. I am pretty sure I bore her. (Basri, 2019. p.33)

Ratu's attitude is very important to do when in a public place. Adapting to differences is necessary to respect culture to create a strong bond between one another. The more immigrants there are in an area, the more varied the cultures that are spread. In this era of globalization, culture is easily spread, so people have the potential to be influenced by globalization. One of the foreign cultures that is rampant in big cities is casual dating or online dating, as practiced by Ratu and her friend:

His name is Hans, a boy I got to know through Facebook. I am setting up a date with him while dealing with the case of a Korean man who had lost his passport in Bali when my boss, Mr Hong, suddenly appears at the door. (Basri, 2019. p.1)

In the modern era, everything is easy to do. Ratu, who is a hard worker, does not have time to look for a boyfriend in real life, because she is hampered by cases that must be resolved, so she chooses to go online dating. Not much different from Ratu, Lala; her friend in the boarding house who also does casual dating:

"You keep changing boyfriends. Is that healthy?" I say. I crunch on another biscuit. (Basri, 2019. p.17)

...
"Sorry, my boys are not boyfriends-for-hire, okay? Go look for somebody you can buy." She gets up and leaves me there alone. (Basri, 2019. p.18)

What is done by Ratu and Lala is one of the impacts of globalization. The use of digital technologies such as social media is a culture that is favored by the public to explore information easily. But in addition to the benefits, it turns out that social media is also detrimental to the environment. Through the social media, the environment is damaged due to carbon footprints. According to Batmunkh, (2022). Social media and digital media produce carbon footprints that can have an impact on environmental damage. Carbon footprints that contain CO₂ are generated from online activities which

have an impact on greenhouse gases which can cause climate change.

4. Environmental Concern

Environmental concern is a trait that everyone should have. Urban areas have serious environmental issues that are difficult to deal with if there is no sense of sensitivity. Some of the environmental issues that Jakarta faces are air pollution, traffic jam, and global warming. For this reason, the community needs to contribute in protecting the environment for sustainable urban development. One of the impacts of urbanization that has an impact on environmental issues faced by Ratu as a migrant in Jakarta is when she commutes from place to place. She will use public transportation to take her to the place she is going to. According to her, by using public transportation, everything will be efficient, both in terms of energy and costs that she will spend:

"Just wanted to know whether angkot taxis come through here...

Or private taxis?" Can't sound poor in front of Inu.

...

"No angkots. Taxis, sometimes, but they're rare."

"How about ojek?" I ask, trying to sound posh.

"Where do you need to go?"

"Bus terminal." (Basri, 2019. p.80)

Ratu is aware of the density of the people in Jakarta and its surroundings. This density often makes traffic jams everywhere and there are many parties who are disadvantaged due to congestion. The impact of this congestion is air pollution and extreme changes in air temperature which result in changes in the structure of the earth, (Amato & Akdis, 2020). So she used the bus to return to Jakarta as a form of her concern for the environment:

At Ciputat market, I board a bus to Jakarta. It quickly gets stuck in traffic.

The road is jammed the entire way. I'm so stressed out. It is nearly 9am when I get to the office. I'm all sweaty and my hair is a mess. (Basri, 2019. p.81)

Some of Ratu's concerns are also shown when traveling short distances, she walks to save costs because he is a migrant who lives in Jakarta which requires a lot of expenses:

On my way home, I listen to "Parasit" by my favourite pop star Gita Gutawa and sway to the music—all the way to my rental place, behind the office. (Basri, 2019. p. 5)

...

It is Saturday. Bored at home, I decide to go for a walk. I visit the cybercafé Hans brought me to the other day. (Basri, 2019. p.33)

...

He takes me for a walk around Tanah Abang, in the direction of my rental. It isn't far, though I took a bike-taxi to get here. (Basri, 2019. p.34)

The quotations above are proofs that humans play an important role in environmental sustainability. For this reason, awareness in protecting the environment is the responsibility of everyone for the survival of life, both social and economic life.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Urban environmental issues are the main problems that occur in urban areas. The glitter of city lights triggers the high population density that comes from the migration of people to urban areas. Various inequalities starting from the aspects of infrastructure, social, and economic life are proof that cities are complex and discrepancy is hidden behind the luxury of the city. The influx of culture due to globalization, as well as the intervention of migrants from various regions or countries, allows the birth of new cultures. Advances in technology and transportation as a result of globalization in urban areas have the potential to cause urban environmental issues to arise. Therefore, the more complex the urban area and migrants there are in it, the more complex problems will arise.

B. Suggestion

Urban environmental issues that occur in big cities cannot be separated from human activities. Various human activities have

impacts on the natural environment, from consumption to the waste disposed by these activities. In other words, humans have an important role in preserving the environment. Without realizing that globalization brings a lot of bad effects on the environment, people must always be vigilant and increase awareness of the natural environment to minimize natural damage. This research has limitations, namely only describing the kinds of urban environmental issues that exist in *Love, Lies and Indomee* by Nuril Basri. For that reason, it is expected that other researches will further analyze the impact of environmental damage on the sustainability of social life.

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