

## DECONSTRUCTION OF CHINA'S ANTHROPOCENTRIC VIEWS IN JIANG RONG'S *WOLF TOTEM* NOVEL

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### Abstract

The Industrial Revolution in the mid-nineteenth century had transformed the relationship between man and nature into one that was confused: man and nature were either balanced or mutually antagonistic. In China itself, since the “Great Leap Forward Movement,” “Cultural Revolution,” “Deng Xiaoping’s Open Politics” to date, has caused severe damage to nature. These have caused various kinds of public reactions, both from the public, academia, society, and writers. Deconstruction *Wolf Totem* anthropocentric view from an ecological perspective can show China’s culture, environmental conditions, government policies, the relation of human and natural, ecofeminism, eco-spiritualism, and anti-ecological thought. The method used in this study is descriptive interpretive in ecocritical studies. Ecocritical perspective on literary works is essential means to speaking out against anthropocentric domination and environmental damage. The analysis results show that the ecological damage narrative in *Wolf Totem* is used as a reinforcing motive to deconstruct the anthropocentric view of the people of China and Chinese government policy. Through the deconstruction of an anthropocentric perspective, efforts to repair environmental damage carried out. By changing the anthropocentric culture to become ecocentric, will achieve a green China, especially in the Xi Jinping era whose policies oriented towards Ecological Civilization (生态文明).

**Keywords:** ecocritic, Chinese ecological literature, ecofeminism, eco-spiritualism, anti-ecology

## DEKONSTRUKSI PANDANGAN ANTROPOSENTERIK CHINA DALAM NOVEL *WOLF TOTEM* KARYA JIANG RONGS

### Abstrak

Revolusi Industri pada pertengahan abad sembilanbelas telah merubah hubungan manusia dengan alam menjadi sebuah hubungan yang membingungkan: manusia dan alam menjadi baik dan seimbang atau saling bermusuhan. Di Tiongkok sendiri, sejak “Gerakan Lompatan Jauh ke Depan”, “Revolusi Kebudayaan”, “Politik Terbuka Deng Xiaoping” hingga saat ini, telah menyebabkan kerusakan alam yang parah. Hal ini menimbulkan berbagai macam reaksi publik, baik dari kalangan masyarakat, akademisi, hingga sastrawan. Mendekonstruksi pandangan antroposentris novel *Wolf Totem* dari perspektif ekologi dapat memperlihatkan budaya masyarakat, keadaan lingkungan, kebijakan pemerintah, hubungan manusia dan alam, serta pandangan

ekofeminisme, ekospiritualisme dan pemikiran anti-ekologi di Tiongkok. Metode yang digunakan dalam studi ini adalah deskriptif interpretatif dalam perspektif studi ekokritik. Berdasarkan perspektif ekokritik, karya sastra menjadi sarana penting untuk bersuara terhadap dominasi antroposentris dan kerusakan lingkungan. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa narasi kerusakan lingkungan dalam *Wolf Totem* digunakan sebagai motif penegas untuk mendekonstruksi kembali pandangan antroposentris budaya masyarakat Tiongkok dan kebijakan pemerintah Tiongkok. Melalui dekonstruksi pandangan antroposentris, upaya perbaikan kerusakan lingkungan dilakukan. Dengan merubah budaya antroposentris menjadi ekosentris, maka akan tercapai Tiongkok yang hijau apalagi di era Xi Jinping yang kebijakannya berorientasi pada Peradaban Ekologi (生态文明).

**Kata Kunci:** ekokritik, sastra ekologi China, ekofeminisme, eko-spiritualisme, anti-ekologi

## INTRODUCTION

Economic growth, urbanization, and industrialization for two decades also increased the high level of water and air pollution in China (Gusman, 2014: 2). China's rapid progress has come at a price with significantly increasing environmental damage and disease, also experiencing economic losses. According to Navarro (Petter Navarro, economist.com, 2004), more than the US \$ 1 trillion is linked to rising health bills, job losses due to disease, damage to fish, crops, and money spent on relief victims of natural disasters. Therefore Xi Jinping in his speech on May 24, 2013, on the sixth collective study intensified the promotion of the development of ecological civilization (Xinhua, cpc.people.com.cn, 2013), said on his government's goal is about urgency and resilience in repairing environmental damage. In fact, this problem has been raised long before, especially for writers, such as the emergence of ecological literary works by 徐刚 (Xu Gang), a Chinese pioneer in ecological literature writing, and

environmentally friendly practitioners (Qinghan, 2012: 2). Also, with the appearance of Jiang Rong (姜戎), who wrote *Wolf Totem* on 2004.

*Wolf Totem* is a contemporary Chinese novel, published in 2004. This novel tells about the relationship between humans, wolves, and nature in Mongolia during the Cultural Revolution. After its publication, *Wolf Totem* received many awards, was translated into 30 foreign languages, was made into a film, and was researched by hundreds of articles. *Wolf Totem* in the *China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House* until October, 2020 totaled 645 articles. These articles discuss the *Wolf Totem* and ecocritics, the translation of the *Wolf Totem*, the acceptance of the *Wolf Totem* outside of China, culture and other themes. As for journals outside China, there are three crucial articles published in the Harvard journal written by Meng (2011) entitled "Grassland Ecology: An Analysis of *Wolf Totem* from an Ecological Perspective," Varsava (2011) "Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem*: Toward a Narrative Ecology of the Grassland of

Contemporary Inner Mongolia “and He (2014)” The Wolf Myth and Chinese Environmental Sentimentalism in ‘*Wolf Totem*.’ “

Damage to nature, what happened in China and all over the world is a form of human selfishness that considers humans to be the center of the universe. Humans also misinterpret the relationship between humans, nature, and ecosystems. Humans believe themselves to view life, ethics, morals, and values, while nature is only a tool for fulfilling human needs. This view is referred to as a shallow environmental ethic (Anthropocentrism). Anthropocentrism ethics is a Western perspective, starting from Aristotle to modern philosophers. There are three fundamental mistakes from this point of view: Humans are understood only as social beings, whose existence and their social community determines identity, ethics only applies to the human social community, the misperception of anthropocentrism is reinforced by the Cartesian perspective or paradigm of modern science and technology with mechanistic-reductionism’s main characteristics (Keraf. 2010).

The imbalance of science, human and natural ethics (anthropocentric) whose narrated in literature, giving birth to an ecocritical view. Ecocritic is a reaction to environmental damage from an anthropocentric human perspective. The term literary ecology first appeared in Joseph W. Meeker’s writing “The Comedy of Survival: Literary Ecology and A Play Ethic” (Nuo, 2013: 1). This criticism puts forward the relationship between humans and other living things, also emphasizes and explores more. Literature and sincerely on

human habits influence the natural environment (Nuo, 2013: 1). In the same year, Karl Kroeber in “Home at Grasmere: Ecological Holiness,” quoted by Nuo (2013), put ecology and ecological into literature criticism. In 1978, Willian Rueckert’s “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism” first officially mentioned the term of ecocritic. Since this time, the merger between literature and ecology has clearly shown. He also emphasized that critics have started to have an ecological viewpoint. According to Glotfelty (1996), art theorists must build a framework for ecological poetic science.

Ecological literature is not realist literature but still makes nature and humans like themselves. Ecological literature makes the ecocentrism (ecoholism) thought as the main basis perspective, the main benefits for the whole ecosystem as the highest value, examining and explaining the relationship between humans and nature, looking for the origin of environmental damage due to community behavior, spreading ecological views, and providing unique ecological aesthetics in its delivery through literary works. Ecological literature has ecological responsibility, cultural criticism, early warning of ecology, and has ecological aesthetics, which are unique characteristics of ecological literature (Nuo, 2013: 220). Therefore, the main path of ecological literature research is the research of thought and cultural criticism. The second way is ecological, aesthetic research (Nuo, 2013: 230).

Ecological literature born from the social mirror of society and culture, assisted by ecocritics to explore

messages (criticism) from the writer regarding the environment and humans, which rests on the relationship between the text factor and the whole text, differences in literary imagination and cultural imagination, dissimilarity in text to thinking intellectual statement of philosophy, must immediately think about the meaning and experience of aesthetics, designation of artistic values, structural arrangement, narrative logic, novelty of imagination, aesthetic perception and language rhythm of literary texts and so on, which are related to the attractiveness of literary nature, also not just simply voicing meaning of thought and culture only. Therefore, from the meaning described here, doubts about ecocritics that still pay less attention to literary value have been answered with their function as a warning criticism (Nuo, 2013: 231).

China was born from different ethnicities, customs, and ways of life. Therefore, the effect of inappropriate public policies, apart from damaging the environment, also impacts the destruction of a culture. With the loss of a culture, also lost the wisdom for the environment. Therefore, with existing article sources, this paper will further detail the *Wolf Totem* novel to research, this study aims to: (1) Deconstruct Chinese society's ecological view through the *Wolf Totem* novel. (2) To deconstruct the anti-ecological idea of

the novel *Wolf Totem*, to see Chinese society's anti-ecological views. (3) To reveal the impact of anti-ecology and anthropocentrism in *Wolf Totem's* novel. (4) Showing the effects of *Wolf Totem* on society in China.

## METHOD

The research method used is descriptive interpretive, namely using the exploration that appears in the arrangement of words/phrases/clauses/sentences/paragraphs, with an interpretive approach to explore further the descriptions presented by the author. The data used in this study are words/phrases/clauses/sentences relevant to humans, animals, nature, and anti-ecological views, which are then analyzed using ecocritical theory.

The research steps carried out as follows. First, doing heuristic and hermeneutic readings. From this reading, obtained detailed reading. The second step is to record the required data and collect it on the data card. The third step is to make a classification based on the indicators. The fourth step is analyzing the data by the formulation of the problem to achieve the research objectives. The data using ecocritical theory as the basis of the research and then presented descriptively. The fifth step provides conclusions from the data that have been researched.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

**Table 1. Ecology view in *Wolf Totem***

No.	Characteristics	Ecological View
1	A true ecological figure	Bilgee figure symbolized as the Olonbulag Encyclopedia and community figure who connects his tribe and government.
2	A Hope figure	Chen Zhen character as the writer hope to change the anthropocentric culture of readers.
3	Nonpopular (nomadic) cultural civilizations	Thick with environmental protection outlook
4	<i>Wolf Totem</i>	Is a symbol of the tribe and a symbol of union with nature.
5	Animals	The role of animals in Mongolian culture apart from being an intermediary for God (Tengger), is also in shaping character and culture
6	The value of spiritualism	The spiritual value of the Mongolian tribe is thick with the God-Man-Nature relationship
7	Women	Women play a very important role in the education of balance values and protection of nature under the dominant patriarchal power.

**Table 2. Anti-ecological views in *Wolf Totem***

No.	Characteristics	An anti-ecological view
1	Anthropocentrism View	The Cultural Revolution policy that sent youth to the villages to teach ideology and total worship to party leaders was an anthropocentric view.
2	A symbol of modernity	Bao Shungui et al figures as government representatives who glorify technology blindness and modernity.
3	Consumerism	China's independence also gave birth to a culture of consumerism, so killing wolf cubs to take their fur for clothes, gave birth to hedonism and so on.
4	New style fascism	Fascism is thick with a new style of understanding other cultures as inferior and bad.
5	Anti-Topophilia	There is no sense of belonging to a new residence so that they feel they have the right to change its order.

**Table 3. Impact of anti-ecological views in *Wolf Totem***

No.	Characteristics	Due to anti-ecological views
1	Destruction of nature	As a result of the anti-ecological policy, the natural order in Olonbulag was destroyed.
2	Loss of culture	As a result of the destruction of the natural order, the nomadic culture of Olonbulag with its wolf banner was lost.

## DISCUSSION

Deconstructing *Wolf Totem's* novel whose published at 2004 with an ecocritical approach and try to find effects of *Wolf Totem* novel for China's society and government policy, research has succeeded in finding: (1) Chinese people, especially those living in a nomadic (rural) culture, have more ecological views than people living in big cities. (2) Government policy (the Cultural Revolution era) was very thick with anti-ecological and anthropocentrism ideas. (3) Apart from the destruction of the natural order, the result of the anti-ecological viewpoint also results in culture loss. The discussion is divided into four sections: (1) Deconstructing Chinese society's ecological view through the novel *Wolf Totem*. (2) To deconstruct the anti-ecological idea of the novel *Wolf Totem*, to see Chinese society's anti-ecological views. (3) To reveal the impact of anti-ecology and anthropocentrism in *Wolf Totem's* novel. (4) Showing the effects of *Wolf Totem* on society in China.

### *A deconstruction of the ecological view of Wolf Totem*

First, Ecology literature voices nature's voices (Nuo, 2013: 227), and *Wolf Totem* has a strong statement of eco-centrism and environmental damage in Olonbulag. Two central figures voice to nature's voice namely Chen Zhen, who lived in modern life and then lived in traditional life. Bilgee, a Mongolian tribe figure as a symbol of a true ecological model.

Bilgee's character is described as a character who knows the Olonbulag environment's condition, such as the spiritual value of Tengger, the meaning

of wolf totem, and others. Old Bilge is the most brilliant image with ecological wisdom and supernatural color. If we say that the white wolf king in Olonbulag grassland is the embodiment of the wild power to maintain the prosperity of grassland, then we can say that the old man bilige is the embodiment of human power to maintain the prosperity of grassland, and is the white wolf king in Mongolian (Shudong, 2009). By the time Bilgee explained the logic of "big life" and "small life," it was actually beyond the scientific capabilities of people from a modern city like Chen Zhen."Does that mean that grass does not contain life? Is that pasture not a form of life? Out here, grass and meadow are life itself, great life. Everything else is a small life that depends on big life to survive" (Rong, 2009: 51).

Modern life, which inevitably continues to come to the Olonbulag community, has become like the fruit's choice for Bilgee. "We always wanted a school for our children. We didn't have a hospital, and lots of people died when they could have saved. But what will happen to the grasslands later? It is too fragile now to carry the heavy burdens of the livestock. You, Han Chinese can go home. But what about us?" (Rong, 2009: 498). Many studies link environmental damage to human history factors, like human thought, that glorifies Descartes' philosophy. Theories such as mechanism, dualism, and reductionism have separated humans into subject and object parts so that these thoughts have coalesced into anthropocentrism views. Anthropocentrism thought makes humans feel like the center of the universe. Humans think they have

the right to control the environment. At the same time, economic progress has made humans glorify a culture of consumerism and hedonism. Humans have patterned into a hedonistic and anti-ecological society (Mouchang, 2000: 2). But in the end, the unbalanced glorification of modernity and anthropocentrism, the result is the birth of a consumptive life and hedonism which actually makes humans live in opposition to nature.

Jiang Rong also conveyed ecological thoughts through the characterization of Chen Zhen. It can be said that Chen Zhen is Jiang Rong, the hero of the novel who danced with wolves on the grassland for N years (Boshun, 2006). There are three crucial ecological views of Chen Zhen while in Olonbulag: (1) Human error which always sees natural phenomena with human eyes. In the novel, Chen Zhen initially hates wolves that ferociously prey on deer. A deer known to be friendly to humans, such as being the protagonist, a fierce and savage wolf to humans, is immediately judged by becoming an antagonist. In fact, in the ecosystem cycle, wolves and deer save nature together. If there are too many deer, the grass will decrease a lot, die trampled by deer, even deer dung can make the grass damaged and die. Letting the food chain run according to nature's cycle is a wise decision to protect the environment. (2) Chen Zhen, a figure with a city background, experienced cultural friction when he came to Olonbulag. The reader invited to dive into the life of Chen Zhen, who initially hated all human enemies such as wolves (anthropocentric), turned into an environmentalist, then became a protector of wolves and the Olonbulag

(ecocentric) nature. Readers were invited to see the consequences of deteriorating nature from reckless policies, such as what happened when he returned to Olonbulag a few years later. (3) Through the character Chen Zhen, readers can get the message of how a newcomer can love his new place. Topophilia is a feeling of being bound between humans and a place, a concept in which it explains differences, which then, from personal differences, becomes alive and forms a new personality (Yifu, 2018: 5). Apart from Chen Zhen, Topophilia's attitude is also shown by Yang Ke and Zhang Jiyuan. The attitudes of these three characters change in looking at the wolf, from fear-hate-respect-pity. "Bilgee seems pleased that these young people respect the pasture; he will be a part of us someday" (Rong, 2009: 232). Zhang Jiyuan one of character cried at the time of the mass killing of geese and the swan lake's turning into a farm, it's describe how he loves Olonbulag already."How can we come to a lake of geese which is really to kill and make the geese as food? If you need to kill something, kill me" (Rong, 2009: 326)

Second, the wolf totem is a central theme of *Wolf Totem's* ecological spirit. Totem in Chinese culture originally as a symbol and unity of each tribe. The animal's totem is considered the ancestor of their tribe, so it is through this symbol that they hope for protection. The worship of the totem is also the result of the contemplation and practice of the ancients. In a way, people have the same idea: respect for society in previous cultures for nature (Siqi, 2017: 52). After the birth of the *Wolf Totem* in 2004, China social premise of the identity of "giant dragon", the

publishing planner recommended the book to the readers with sharp questions, which pointed to the collective identity of each citizen: are we the descendants of the dragon or the descendants of the wolf? (Xinjian, 2006). In Mongolian culture, the wolf totem is a symbol of their tribal union with nature. If the totem is lost, the culture and spirit of life taught from generation to generation will also be lost."And once a nation's totem destroyed, their spirits perish. The grasslands, where our life is based, can easily be destroyed "(Rong, 2009: 179).

Third, the *Wolf Totem* tells about the relationship between humans and animals. From classical Chinese history, the three nomadic tribes living in northern China, namely the Huns, the Turks, and the Mongolians, used the wolf as their tribal totem (Shuqing, 2003). History records that the Huns used the king's name as the wolf. These show the close relationship between the Huns and the wolf. The Turks used the wolf as the name of a great general and considered him the god of war. In the Mongolian tribe's history, Genghis Khan forbade hunting the white wolf, who believed to be the wolf group leader and spiritual animal. To this day, the Mongolian tribe still glorifies the wolf as a symbol of this banner. The wolf is a symbol of courage, tactics, cohesiveness, wisdom, and so on. Mongolians in *Wolf Totem* hunt wolves not to be main consume or kill them, but only to maintain the population.

Vegetarians consider animals to be the same as humans. Some think only humans have values and ethics, while animals do not, only in human hands that the right to control the earth

rests. Actually every living thing right whether human or animal have prima facie. These means that these human rights are defended as long as they do not conflict with or violate other rights. So, it is morally legitimate that humans may take advantage of this nature's contents to sustain their own lives, just as other species use certain species to maintain their lives. According to Keraf (2010: 135), what is wanted to be achieved by recognizing the existence of natural rights is that nature and all its contents can sacrifice as long as there are rational reasons and can be morally justified to fulfill vital human needs. Therefore, ethics of respect for nature must have morality in its implementation, and in this universe, only humans have the responsibility for this morality (Schweitzer, 1995: 20).

Not only humans have ethics, rights, and freedoms, but animals are also the same. According to Qinghan (2012: 615) animal ethics has two layer, first is how society (humans) regard animal principles; second, animal standards in research, education, and research products prohibit or restrict the use of animals. Some figures such as Henry S. Salt (1892) expressed animal rights, Peter Singer (1973) used the term animal freedom. Regan (1976), quoted by Qinghan (2012: 616), reminds us of the human world and the world outside humans which is the subject of life.

In animal ecology literature, means not an animal with a "narrative." Still, there is a figure of a writer who tells about animals, tells human emotions, ideas, morals, ethics, and so on so that they are presented to readers (Jiayi, 2011: 34), animals do not change their original animal nature. In the *Wolf Totem*,



the story is centered on the wolf's life in Olonbulag, as well as how the Jiang Rong can explain the functions of other animals, each kind of life is colorful, each life is not only a tool for other life, each life is a witness and demonstrator of the universe life (Shudong, 2009). The function of wolves in their position in the Olonbulag ecosystem. "Tengger is the father. The meadow is the mother, who was killed entirely by the wolves are the animals that destroy the meadow, therefore is it inappropriate for Tengger to protect wolves?" (Rong, 2009: 232). The function of the prairie dog in the *Wolf Totem* is practicing archery, horse riding, and a symbol of loyalty for Mongolian tribal children. The position of the horse is similar like prairie dog. In addition to functioning as a means of transportation, horses could teach Mongol children to be brave and strong. Cows and geese are considered supernatural symbols. Goose meat for the Mongols is forbidden to eat. If not obeyed, bad luck will befall them. Other animals in the novel, namely guinea pigs and rabbits, are considered to be destroying the grasslands. Still, guinea pigs' hunting has been going on for hundreds of years on a balanced basis to save poor herders from the cold. Can consume guinea pigs' meat and use guinea pig oil for various Mongolian life things.

The wolf beast's nature was written down in great detail by Jiang Rong, both when in groups and alone (Shudong, 2009). When the wolves attack in groups against the deer, they show a wise attitude, aware of the battle's limits, but still carry the wisdom of not hunting all the deer in the pasture. They attacked the horses because

humans stole the deer they had hunted, and humans plundered the wolf's nests. The wolves' main males lead the charge of horses bred by humans with dangerous thoughts of revenge. In this revenge attack, they fight for self-respect, responsibility, and without leaving the slightest tactics of wisdom, such as their deer's hunting. The wolf's offensive nature, on its own, still carries a high self-esteem trait. Wolves are willing to kill their wounded comrades for the effectiveness of the entire army. The wolf, whom Inspector Xu continued to chase for tens of miles in a jeep and well-equipped, would rather die of exhaustion from running than to be shot dead by the enemy. Another example is Chen Zhen's pet wolf, who does not want to be accompanied by humans or other animals when eating. During moving another place, the wolf still refused to be moved by being wrapped around the back of the horse carriage.

The phenomenon of wolf culture in literature is based on the image of wolf. The success of wolf image building is directly related to the life value of the whole work (Xiuming, 2008). The wolf in *Wolf Totem* is the character represent Mongolian tribe be tough tribe. "Once the wolves exterminated, the bright red sun no longer illuminates the grasslands, and the static stability leads to depression, severe moral decline and boredom, and other fearsome enemies to the soul, eradicating the masculine spirit that has characterized them for years. Thousands of years. After the disappearance of the wolves, the sales of liquor in Olonbulag nearly doubled "(Rong, 2009: 567). Also the story of the famous conquest of Genghis Khan

turned out to be obtained from studying wolf tactics. “The wolf has given the Mongolian people the fierce character of fighting, sophisticated war skills and the best fighting stances. These three military advantages resulted in their fantastic glory “(Rong, 2009: 264). With the loss of the wolf in the grasslands, there was a loss of ecosystem balance and the loss of native Mongol culture, such as the loss of the wolf spirit on the totem of the Mongolian tribe in Inner Mongolia. “Wolf Totem, the soul of the prairie, a symbol of the persistent and independent spirit of the prairie residents” (Rong, 2009: 567).

Fourth, Jiang Rong often wrote about the protection of primitive religious beliefs on grassland ecology. (Shudong, 2009), and the religious value of the Olonbulag (traditional) community is different from modern society. Modern society lives in sophisticated science and technology, making religious values a private sphere. Therefore, modern humans walk alone, without the ties of spiritual values. Humans build a new civilization without religious rules and ties according to logic and reality, as seen from their senses. As a result, humans who feel that they control the universe forget that there are still many mysteries of life beyond logical and rational reasoning that are still untouched by humans. So in advancing civilization, humans forget about the existence of nature as part of human life itself. Kind of folk belief in *Wolf Totem* is naturally handed down from generation to generation without rational investigation, contains profound ecological wisdom, and has a good understanding of the ecological niche of wolves in grassland ecosystem (Shudong, 2009).

The severe environmental damage made people start looking for the cause and its origin. White, Jr. (1967: 1205) states that the cause of specific environmental damage comes from the western world, and Christianity is the religion that looks the most strongly in anthropocentrism. This stern statement certainly caused an uproar among Christians. Then came Juergen Moltmann and John B. Cobb, Jr. refute the claim by providing a scientific explanation of God-Man-Nature’s relationship. According to Moltmann, Christian theology’s trinity view is the beginning of the meaning of ecology itself. The meaning from the beginning of creation is the limitation of the world freed by God and then continues until the time of the end. Therefore can see that God continues to work in creation (Jing, 2007: 13). Meanwhile, John borrowed Alfred North Whitehead’s process philosophy to deconstruct the modern philosophy of anti-rationalism, which considers God the primary form of scientific principles and builds a new way of the religious view of God’s interaction with Man (Jing, 2007: 13). Hence, White, Jr.’s statement can be clear that Moltmann and B. Cobb, Jr., argue that it is not the values of Christianity that teach anthropocentrism, but it is humans who misinterpret the meaning of their own life.

In their eco-spiritualism view, Moltmann and John also stated that to recognize God, and one has to decide how to recognize the relationship between humans and the environment, with different views of divinity, which will form a different view of eco-spiritualism (Jing, 2007: 49). Therefore, for Moltmann and

John, humans' task to represent God's message must be deconstructed so that the meaning of the God-Human-Nature relationship is brighter. So if the view of eco-spiritualism connected with *Wolf Totem*, it will be very thick to see how the Olonbulag people glorify Tengger and Serigala. Tengger or Mongke Tengri is the supreme deity of the Inner Mongolian tribe. Humans in communicating with Tengger, in addition to doing it ritually, it is also done through wolves. It turns out that Mongolian tribes who are considered traditional tribes can more respect God (Tengger), that modern society which glorifies rational cannot control the use of some knowledge. In the end, all they have is knowledge without wisdom (Jing, 2007: 13). The implementation of ritual worship to Tengger, carrying out all hereditary rules, and other spiritual things prove the Mongolian tribe's respect, unity, and gratitude of the Mongolian tribe to Tengger. Rituals against Tengger include praying to Tengger when cutting animals, not destroying and protecting grasslands and everything in them, and so on. If they violate, Tengger will send a wolf to punish the destroyers. The rivers will turn black, and the God of Water will give you no water. In ancient times, the Great Khan would kill the entire family who started the fire in the grasslands. This teaching puts forward belief in nature. The spiritual values laid out in this belief not only think of humans as the center of the universe or God as the center of life but also prioritize all life's sustainability. This thought is called eco-spiritual thought.

Religion can also help humans create complete human nature, create society,

recognition, and attitudes towards nature. Every religion must explain the origin of life and the direction of life's purpose to provide answers to humans about the meaning of creation (Xia, 2004: 3). Therefore, *Wolf Totem* clear that the religion of the Olonbulag people creates a human perspective live with nature. How humans only become part of nature, humans who have a reason but still have limitations, make wolves (animals) as an intermediary for communication (balancing) between human life and the life of the Creator (Tengger). For examples how *Wolf Totem* describes Mongolian burial procedures (Shudong, 2009) whose do not use trees, nor do they burn corpses. "All our lives, we prairie people eat meat, and for that, we kill many living things. After we die, we donate our body back to the pasture. For us, it is just and good for our souls when we go up towards Tengger "(Rong, 2009: 145). So it is the same as what B. Cobb said religion is the strongest and greatest driving force in environmental protection. Therefore, fear the disappearance of wolves in Mongolian culture is the fear of the destruction of the Olonbulag ecosystem and the perfection of their spirit as humans. "What do you mean by letting the wolf eat the corpse, other than so that the soul of the dead can reach Tengger, is also to save the tree! There are no trees here" (Rong, 2009: 145). "If they continue to kill wolves, no one here will be able to go up to Tengger again, and the grasslands will meet their end" (Rong, 2009: 145).

Fifth, the *Wolf Totem* Ecofeminism described in this study is the relationship between humans and nature after mixing how nature and women

become marginal communities in the patriarchal power and dualism pressure. Ecofeminism links ecocriticism and feminism to convey an intersectional view between nature and women (Qingqi, 2019: XVII). Even according to Wiyatmi (2017: 790), the exploitation of nature and the environment causes the suffering and death of women depicted in ecofeminist fiction (novels), showing patriarchal power over nature, the environment, and women. In “*Wolf Totem*,” Jiang Rong explains that: “The nomadic tribe is open and highly appreciates women, therefore being a woman has a very high position” (Rong, 2009: 384). But still, in the Olonbulag community, all decisions are taken by men. The figure for women and their roles are not so conspicuous. In novel shows the community system in Olonbulag is still thick with a patriarchal system, especially many Olonbulag women who have died due to fatigue in taking care of household affairs, children, and even taking care of livestock at night. “They (women) stay up all night watching the herd, then take care of household chores during the day, which means they rarely enjoy a good night’s sleep” (Rong, 2009: 134). Apart from gender pressure, women in Olonbulag are also an educational relay for families by understanding environmental protection from a women’s perspective. “Heaven and humans do not blend easily, but wolves and grasslands mingle like water and milk” (Rong, 2009: 264).

#### *A deconstruction of the novel Wolf Totem’s anti-ecological view*

Another great contribution of *Wolf Totem* is the criticism and Reflection on

the anti ecological forces and behaviors on the Olonbulag grassland. From this criticism and reflection, we can see the root causes of the ecological crisis in contemporary China and even the world (Shudong, 2009). Wang Shudong (2008: 235) explains that an anti-ecological view is an act of expanding the idea of anthropocentrism. From this viewpoint, humans will never feel satisfied with objects and do not care about the value of the universe. Therefore they can quickly treat nature at will so that humans are trapped in anti-ecological history (Qingqi, 2019: 233). Anti-ecology is a human habit in modern times, whether consciously or not. Moreover, in a thought that was eventually used as a state policy, the anti-ecological view was a mass killing weapon of natural and human civilization.

Anti-ecological thinking, according to Wang Shudong (1) Anti-ecological writing in left ideology, for example happened in China. Such a “Great Leap Forward” policy clears the forest and the redness of Chinese literature, which is overshadowed by the leftist ideology of 1949-1976. Describing red as the color of revolution gives the meaning of courage, can also mean blood and death. While nature is symbolized by green, it is associated with fresh life (Shudong, 2008: 237). (2) Anti-ecological writing in humanitarianism. It’s refers to the definition of humanitarianism in the dictionary “*Webster’s New World Dictionary*” which states that humanitarianism is a science that focuses on human interests and values, with an attitude or way of life. (3) Anti-ecological writing in consumptive culture. There are many more thoughts

in the context of anti-ecology, like the new fascist thinking that is carried out by society or government policies. Naming streets/villages with the origin of transmigrants (Anya Fatma, seputarpapua.com, 5 August 2019), the transmigration policy is a cultural transfer (migrants). If this policy not carried out correctly and carefully, social jealousy will arise between transmigrants and residents (Indira Ardanareswari, tirto.id, 22 August 2019). Other anti-ecological thoughts include, humans too glorify modernity, resulting in hedonism, glorifying western culture so forgets own culture (westernization), especially in the era of industrial revolution 5.0 where the flow of information and social media technology is developing super-fast, the dynamics of human social change make it further with nature, such as a lot of human behavior becoming a crazy trend (FoMO Syndrome), mental disorders that overly admire oneself (Narcissistic Personality Disorder), the need for excessive recognition from others on social media (Low Forum Frustration Tolerance), addiction to gadgets, and other mental illnesses. These sad thing makes humans too preoccupied with the progress of life and technology, so they don't think about the harmony of nature and the wisdom of life.

The *Wolf Totem* which is full of anti-ecological criticism, explains humans' superiority so that nature is considered to be under human control. First, anti-ecological are almost all outsiders (Shudong, 2009). We can see Jiang Rong's idea on Bilgee's dialogue "People like this who even he ignores his hometown, if he comes to another place, then he will continue to destroy

anything greedy." (Rong, 2009: 567). Many of these anti-ecological views are expressed explicitly through Bao Shungui, Dorji, and other figures' words and actions. The destruction of nature and the loss of culture that plagued the Olonbulag are also clearly explained in the novel's ending, with Chen Zhen and Yang Ke coming to Olonbulag several years later.

Bao Shungui is as Mongolian tribe, has a background of agrarian culture, a very loyal party member and really praise modern life but his decision as government spokesman really opposite with ecological spirit. "I am a farmer," replied Bao, "and I see the practical side of everything" (Rong, 2009: 327). "Shut up all of you! We will kill the wolves to eliminate the destructive power and protect national property" (Rong, 2009: 239). "But here in the most primitive and backward areas, you are like a fish in the water. You instantly matched with the Old Rotten!" (Rong, 2009: 119). "The Mongolians here are backward" (Rong, 2009: 183)

Bao Shungui character presented by Jiang Rong is like asking the readers questions. Even though the blood that flows in Bao Shungui's body is genuine Mongolian blood, why when he enters other environments and cultures (Olonbulag), he has to impose his value on life in Olonbulag? Is the value and self-knowledge of local nature and culture so low for newcomers that they can easily change the existing order, even thousands of years old? From Bao Shungui's behavior and dialect, we can see that often humans don't use their senses to read the signs of nature, so the senses fail to juxtapose them with morality. anthropocentrism is thick in

the characterization of Bao Shungui, who says “Chairman Mao said that humans are the main element” (Rong, 2009: 102) explained that for Bao Shungui, humans are the center of the universe, the human position is higher than anything else.

Humans have the right to have a different perspective on reading nature. Still, if humans do not feel superior to other communities and nature, then the destruction of nature and other cultures’ destruction will not occur. Fredric Jameson, quoted in Ursula K. Heise (2015: 7), describes the lack of understanding of humans in the use of their organs (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch). If human identity is faced with other places and areas, it will often pressure others to become like him. Apart from the destruction of the environmental order, another very important is the loss of a society’s spirit and culture. Like in the novel, after the end of the wolf community in Olonbulag, the people lost the meaning of their wolf banner spirit. They were no longer a tough society to face problems in the Olonbulag realm. They also lost pride in the history of Genghis Khan’s descendants. “The horse-riding nation has turned into a motorcyclist nation, and one day it may evolve into an ecological refugee nation” (Rong, 2009: 584). The expansion of agrarian life everywhere without thinking about the good and bad factors is also an anti-ecological attitude. If a region is changed by force, then the present effect is severe natural damage. Like Bao Shungui, who made the grasslands into agricultural land, forced a nomadic culture to turn into an agrarian culture. “Using primitive thinking to deal with today’s needs is

a big problem. I’ve been thinking hard and long since coming to this ranch. In terms of size, this farmland, as you said, same as a district in south, while its population is only a thousand less than the population of one village in our place. That’s redundant. To create the greatest possible prosperity for the party and nation, we must end this primitive and backward nomadic way of life “(Rong, 2009: 295). In this novel, Jiang Rong also reminds us that the policy of “Down The Countryside Movement” (上山下乡运动) in the era of the Cultural Revolution was an anti-ecology movement, where the movement of young people to the village to teach the party ideology, was a major massacre towards local culture. Moreover, suppose the power holders are anti-ecological. In that case, the same destruction will occur as in Olonbulag: the destruction of wolves, destruction of *Wolf Totem*, destruction of spirit like wolves, destruction of nomadic civilization.

### ***The impact of anti-ecology and anthropocentrism in the novel Wolf Totem***

*Wolf Totem* tells the relationship between three important wolves in the Olonbulag meadow, namely the wolf animal-Bilgee-Bao Shungui. If the wolf is the king of the animal in meadow, then Bilgee is the “King of the Olonbulag Encyclopedia,” and Bao Shungui represents the human being but bring an animal character. In the end, the role of the three wolves in the Olonbulag meadow, was closed by the disappearance of the wolf animal community and the death of Bilgee. Bilgee is the last generation whose

bodies and spirits can perfectly fly to Tengger because they still had time to be eaten by the previous wolf in Olonbulag.

Environmental damage in *Wolf Totem* is a humanistic problem. Therefore humans must first recognize themselves. If humans do not recognize themselves, they will never find a perfect solution for the earth and everything in it. Humanistic problems, economic problems, politics, or even problems in society must be realized from the heart so that they can deeply influence human perspectives and attitudes, therefore only the desired goals will be obtained (Yifu, 2018: 2). Humans are also a signpost for ecology, thus not only writing signs on a map, but humans must again do in-depth readings to carry out all actions (Yifu, 2018: 2).

#### ***The impact of the Wolf Totem on Chinese society and government policies***

The birth of the *Wolf Totem* is a breath of fresh air for ecological literature. The new vocabulary “wolf” trend in China is considered a new spirit to care more about the environment, especially animals. Representing wolves in Chinese literature is leading literature and new cultural phenomenon (Chengzhou. 2014). After all, through literary works, writers and readers will respond to each other so that *Wolf Totem* readers can be aware of environmental damage. Therefore, writers and critics of literature can directly or indirectly provide effects and answers to people’s thinking (Heise, 2015: 4).

Along with the explosion of sales of the novel “*Wolf Totem*” to hundreds of thousands of copies, it does not mean that there is no disagreement with Jiang

Rong’s thoughts. It is because Jiang Rong too adores nomadic culture and its invasion of the West’s invasion by nomadic tribes is a bloody record of humankind’s mass murder of humanity (Shudong, 2009). *Wolf Totem* caused the phenomenon of over-worshiping wolves causing cultural critics. The *Wolf Totem*, which tells of a nomadic society in the Cultural Revolution era, is considered outdated and does not reflect the current spirit of the Chinese government, which puts forward the spirit of Xi Jinping’s Ecological Civilization (生态文明).

The progress of the Chinese economy in the present, especially accompanied by the spirit of improving Ecological Civilization (生态文明), actually still has complicated problems in the country. Such as poverty, corruption, and difficult ecological improvements. Among them is the repair of the Loess Plateau in Shanxi, which has problems with water sources, landslides, the ecological environment of the mining area that has badly damaged (Wei, et al. 2019: 8817), to disrupt the housing and quality of life of the local people (Weixing. 2020).

From the ecological problems in China, especially the impact on the quality of society, economy, ethics, and culture, as well as pressure from the international world, Xi Jinping declared a government based on Ecological Civilization (生态文明). The concept of Xi Jinping (2017) mentions, "In the hard work of some long time, Chinese-style Socialism, has entered the New Era of China," which "aggravates mountains-rivers-forests-fields-lake-meadow as communities of life". In the 19th party meeting, also declared

strategic requirements "Carrying out the overall responsibility for ecological improvement and protection and controlling all land use, coordinating the systematic restoration of mountains-water-forest-fields-lake-grasslands". Post-state institutional reform in 2018, The Ministry of Natural Resources will function as an Institution "in charge of improving the overall ecology of land", as well as establishing a Directorate for Land Ecology Improvement. In 2019 the construction of a land planning system was formally launched, proposing "Promote the improvement and protection of the ecological system" (Bo, et al. 2020: 142).

Behind the strength of government policies in repairing environmental damage, if the community does not support it, then the repairs will be difficult to implement, especially if the Chinese public's understanding of the view of ecotology is still fragile (Liming. 2020). Like Jiang Rong's criticism written in *Wolf Totem* sixteen years ago, it turns out that it does not significantly change Chinese society's view, which continues to clash between capitalist consumerism and efforts to improve the environment of ecotology. According to Liu Guanjun (2015), consumerism and all its negative effects have entered Chinese society, not only western and global consumerism, that has influenced the Chinese economy and culture but also the socialist market economy has shaped consumerism. Apart from an economic point of view, also from various sides, Chinese society has shown similarities to Western consumerism society (Fangjie. 2012), such as the number of television shows that sell feelings to viewers shedding

tears such as the Talent show, an example of a culture of consumerism that sells emotions through television (Gewe. 2012). The case of the explosion of the chemical company Tianjiayi Chemical fined in 2015 and 2017 for violating regulations on solid waste and water management (China Daily.com.cn. 22-03-2019).

Behind the incessant repair of domestic ecological damage that the Chinese Communist Party proclaimed, China's plan that was supposed to host the 25th UN Conference on Biological Diversity in 2020, unfortunately, the foreign policy carried out was against the spirit of its Ecological Civilization. It has led to reactions from other countries to discourage anti-ecological Chinese foreign investment with the emergence of many criticisms of "China's Environmental Threat Theory" (中国环境威胁论) (Zichu. 2020), which China has denied as baseless theories. In Indonesia itself, efforts to stop the Chinese investment project are being carried out by the Movement to Save the Indonesian Rainforests. The Chinese government stops the Sinohydro Company Koukoutamba dam project funded by Bank China, endangers the tapanuli orangutan's sustainability. The construction of PLTU Teluk Sepang in Bengkulu by Power China and PT Intraco Penta Tbk has left behind the mass deaths of protected turtles and other anti-ecological investment cases. The good news is that there are Chinese companies in Indonesia such as the nickel battery company Hua Pioneer canceling requests for permits to dump tailings into the Morowali sea because the project will indeed destroy Indonesia, which



contains very high species diversity (nearly 600 species of coral reefs) and supports the surrounding marine life (Administrator001.2020). It shows its consistency by the International Union for Conservation of Nature Congress 2016 in prohibiting dumping tailings into the sea.

## CONCLUSION

Jiang Rong tried to deconstruct anthropocentrism, blind ideology, the anti-ecological culture that occurred in society, and the policies of the Chinese government through *Wolf Totem*. Although the emergence of *Wolf Totem's* novel and discourse transfer has revived ecological literature with a locality, creating a new trend of "wolf" vocabulary, still, hedonic, consumptive culture, glorifying modernity and so on is still thick in the life of Chinese society. The Chinese government in the Xi Jinping era, which launched the Ecological Civilization (生态文明), still requires time and steep implementation. It can be seen from China's active campaign to improve the earth, but it is followed by a lot of domestic environmental damage and investment outside of China, which continues to destroy the world.

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