

## REPRESENTATIONS OF GREG GARRARD'S ECOCRITICISM CONCEPTS IN DON'T LOOK UP MOVIE

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### ABSTRACT

*The relationship between humans and nature serves as a pivotal theme in literature and film, often mirroring societal concerns about the environment and offering profound insights into the dynamics between humanity and the natural world. Adam McKay's film Don't Look Up prominently explores this theme. This study employs Greg Garrard's ecocritical framework to conduct a qualitative descriptive analysis of the film. The primary objective is to investigate how the film portrays environmental issues such as pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, and animal, as outlined in Garrard's ecocritical theory. By closely examining the film's monologues, dialogues, and scenes, this research seeks to uncover the nuances of these themes and their implications for contemporary environmental discourse.*

*Keyword: Ecocriticism, Don't Look Up, Movie*

### INTRODUCTION

This template represents an essential guide for submitting a research article to the Fr Frasa The complex relationship between humans and nature has long been a central theme in literary works, where nature often serves as both inspiration and reflection of human emotions. Whether it's the beauty of a landscape or the harshness of a storm, nature evokes a range of feelings like sadness, joy, or contemplation. Supian et al. (2022) highlight that specific words in literature can craft themes, characters, settings, and atmospheres. For instance, "rain" can symbolize both happiness and sadness, illustrating the emotional versatility of natural elements.

In more recent times, literature has shifted focus to the destructive impact of human actions on the environment. As Prabawati (2023) points out, human greed and environmental negligence have contributed significantly to ecological damage. Literature now serves as a tool for promoting environmental protection, urging humans to play a crucial role in preserving the ecosystem (Maulida & Basid, 2019). Many authors, as Sihotang et al. (2021) observe, emphasize the need for environmental awareness and responsibility in their works.

Films, like literature, can also address environmental concerns and inspire pro-social behavior. As Seelig (2019) suggests, movies do more than entertain, they can educate and encourage action. An example of this is Adam McKay's film Don't Look Up. The film tells the story of two astronomers trying to warn humanity about an impending comet that threatens to destroy civilization, a clear allegory for climate change. The film critiques the indifference of governments, political figures, and the media toward urgent environmental issues.

This intersection of nature and artistic expression has led to the development of ecocriticism, a field that explores human-environment relationships in literature.

According to Juanda (2019), Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory identifies six key concepts: pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, and the earth. This framework not only provides valuable insights into literary works but also serves as a lens through which to analyze various forms of artistic media, including film.

Several studies have explored ecocriticism in literature, including a study compiled by Sartini and Endahati (2023) entitled *Be Aware of Water Zombie: An Ecocritical Study on Shusterman's Dry* and study compiled by Keerthy (2022) entitled *Ecocritical Tropes in Rarlp T.H. Griffith's The Ramayan of Valmiki*. Both studies apply Garrard's ecocritical concepts to examine the relationship between human and nature, highlights how the environmental crisis and the disturbed balance of nature due to human greed are central themes. In *Dry*, concepts such as apocalypse and pollution are raised through water scarcity, while *The Ramayan of Valmiki* uses wilderness and habitation to depict nature as a sacred space to be protected.

Both studies contribute to an understanding of how literary works depict nature and humanity's relationship with it through an ecocritical perspective. This research extends the application of Garrard's theory to the medium of film, showing how modern visual media are also capable of expressing deep environmental critiques, similar to literary works. This analysis demonstrates the continuity of themes between literature and film in highlighting the importance of environmental awareness, as well as showing the threat of ecological disaster due to human indifference to nature.

Despite extensive research on ecocriticism in literary works, there is a notable gap in applying Greg Garrard's theory to film, particularly *Don't Look Up*. Given the film's engagement with climate change, natural disasters, and materialism, it provides a fertile ground for ecocritical analysis. This study aims to bridge that gap by examining *Don't Look Up* through Garrard's six ecocritical concepts, offering insights into how the film critiques humanity's relationship with the environment and the urgent need for environmental preservation. **Text layout and section headings**

The manuscript should be written in size A4 (210mm by 297mm). It should be on a single column with all margins of 2.5 cm. The texts must be typed in one line spacing using Times New Roman 12 and extra line spacing between equations, illustrations, figures, and tables. Each paragraph should be indented 10 mm. Sub-headings should be positioned at the left margin, in a bold-faced font, the same size as the main text (TNR 12 point) with one line spacing above and below. The first letter of each word in the subheading should be capitalised.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method, emphasizing detailed analysis of phenomena rather than relying on numerical data. The primary material was the film *Don't Look Up*, which was analyzed for its representation of nature. The researcher watched the movie multiple times, taking detailed notes on key scenes, dialogues, and monologues related to nature and environmental concerns.

The analysis involved a coding process in which concepts from Greg Garrard's ecocritical framework, such as pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, and earth, were applied to specific parts of the film. A coding system was created to organize these themes systematically, ensuring consistency in how the data was classified and interpreted. The researcher used six concepts from Greg Garrard's Ecocriticism theory to

code the data, as outlined in the following table:

Table 4.1 Ecocriticism Concepts by Greg Garrard (2004)

No	Code	Garrard's Ecocriticism Concepts
1.	PL	Pollution
2.	WD	Wilderness
3.	AP	Apocalypse
4.	DW	Dwelling
5.	AN	Animal
6.	ER	Earth

For example, the data code **1/PL/00:02:13/DLU** can be broken down as follows:

- 1 : Data number
- PL : Pollution (Ecocriticism concept)
- 00:02:13 : Time stamp in the film
- DLU : Abbreviation for Don't Look Up

The codes were designed to categorize and organize the data for easy access, analysis, and reference. Each element in the code ensured that the data could be systematically identified, making it easier to track relevant scenes and concepts related to Garrard's Ecocriticism theory in the movie. Once the data was coded, the researcher examined the patterns and themes that emerged from each category, interpreting how Don't Look Up reflected environmental concerns according to Garrard's ecocritical principles. This method allowed for a thorough exploration of the film's environmental message, focusing on how it critiqued human responses to ecological crises.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher will explore the main findings from ecocritical analysis of the film *Don't Look Up* using Greg Garrard's (2004) theoretical framework, which includes concepts such as pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, animal, dwelling, and earth.

### a. Pollution

According to Garrard (2004), pollution is considered an ecological problem because it indicates that environmental limits have been surpassed and harmful substances are in inappropriate places. This growing concern affects safety, health, and survival, and offers opportunities for individuals to contribute to solutions both locally and globally. The subsequent section explains how the concept of pollution is reflected in the data.

1/PL/00:22:55/DLU



Figure 1. Pollution

In *Don't Look Up*, President Orlean's decision to smoke indoors exemplifies Greg Garrard's concept of "pollution" in ecocritical theory. The act of smoking not only introduces harmful chemicals like nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide into the immediate environment but also reflects a broader disregard for the health and well-being of others, a key theme in the film. Orlean, as a central political figure, symbolizes those in power who contribute to environmental degradation through their careless actions. Her behavior mirrors the larger narrative of political apathy toward ecological issues, aligning with Garrard's view that pollution results from human activities that exceed environmental limits and pose significant risks to both nature and human health. This scene, through Orlean's casual negligence, highlights how those in authority ignore the environmental consequences of their actions, further emphasizing the film's critique of political irresponsibility toward environmental crises.

2/PL/00:30:20/DLU



Figure 2. Pollution

In the movie, the scene showing a janitor cleaning up a pile of garbage on the roadside represents Greg Garrard's idea of "pollution" from his ecocritical theory. This scene shows how human actions, like poor waste management, can pollute the soil and water, upsetting the natural balance. The pollution shown here connects to the film's larger message about environmental damage. It also relates to how the characters, especially those in power like President Orlean, show little concern for the environment. This reflects Garrard's point that pollution is not just an environmental issue but also a sign of unfairness in society.

3/PL/01:10:26/DLU



Figure 3. Pollution

The food waste scattered by Kate in the room, as depicted in the figure, exemplifies this comprehensive concept of pollution. This situation creates an unsanitary and visually displeasing environment that compromises the health and well-being of the space's inhabitants. The presence of such waste can attract pests, spread bacteria, and produce unpleasant odors, reflecting a violation of environmental cleanliness and aesthetic integrity. This example illustrates Garrard's idea that pollution encompasses a wide range of environmental impacts, including those resulting from everyday human actions that affect both ecological health and aesthetic values.

**b. Wilderness**

Garrard (2004) conceptualizes wilderness as a pristine and undisturbed natural state that remains unaffected by human civilization, representing a stable and pure entity of nature. This concept underscores the importance of safeguarding ecosystems and species from human-induced pollution while providing an opportunity to reconnect humans with the natural environment. The following are scenes that depict wildness in the movie

4/WD/02:05:12/DLU



Figure 4. Wilderness

In the context of Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, the forest scenes in *Don't Look Up* can be interpreted as visual representations of the wilderness concept. According to Garrard, wilderness represents a pristine, untouched state of nature, largely free from human interference. In the film, these forest scenes symbolize one of the last remaining refuges of wild nature. However, the narrative contrasts this natural purity with human-caused environmental destruction, such as the comet threatening Earth. By linking these wilderness scenes to the broader storyline, the film highlights humanity's disconnection from nature and the imminent danger posed by ignoring environmental issues.

**c. Apocalypse**

Apocalypse refers to the depiction of extreme and dire conditions affecting the natural environment, including issues like climate change, environmental harm, biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and an increase in natural disasters. The concept of apocalypse reflected in the film *Don't Look Up* can be seen as follows:

5/AP/01:45:27/DLU



Figure 5. Apocalypse

The explosion from the failed rocket launch in *Don't Look Up* shows the idea of an apocalypse as described by Greg Garrard in his ecocritical theory. This scene points out how the film criticizes human failure with technology and its disastrous effects on the environment and people. The damage from the rocket not only stands for the coming environmental crisis but also shows how humans have failed to prevent ecological collapse. Characters like President Orlean and other political leaders in the film demonstrate the recklessness and irresponsibility that lead to these catastrophic events, connecting Garrard's idea to the actions and mistakes of those in power in the movie.

6/AP/02:03:38/DLU



Figure 6. Apocalypse

In the figure above, the comet's descent towards Earth after the failure of the BASH and United States Government's rescue project highlights the apocalypse concept from Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory. This event underscores human vulnerability and our dependence on the environment, while also illustrating the potential for catastrophic disasters that threaten Earth's survival. By explicitly linking Garrard's theory to the film's narrative, we see how the film reflects these theoretical concepts. The comet's impact not only symbolizes the dangers of ignoring ecological issues but also emphasizes the urgent need for humanity to take responsibility and act to protect our planet. The narrative, with its portrayal of failed rescue efforts and their dire consequences, directly ties into Garrard's ideas about ecological responsibility and the risks of environmental neglect.

9/AP/02:03:49/DLU



Figure 7. Apocalypse

The above data illustrates a scene of chaos in the streets where people are fleeing in panic due to the meteor's impact. In the context of Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, this depiction of chaos and its effects on public facilities can be understood through the apocalypse concept, as it demonstrates the widespread disintegration of social structures. This scene reflects how apocalyptic events can lead to significant damage to critical infrastructure and public order.

#### d. Dwelling

Dwelling encompasses more than just a physical living space; it represents the environment where people work, create memories, and ultimately experience the full arc of their lives. It serves as a foundation for personal growth, future planning, and is deeply intertwined with human progress. The film's depiction of dwelling, as analyzed by the researchers, is as follows:

8/S/00:00:47/DLU



Figure 8. Dwelling

Dr. Mindy and Kate's workplace, where they study and analyze Comet Dibiasky, represents more than just a physical setting. In the context of Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, this space is an integral part of the dwelling experience, supporting both their professional tasks and daily routines. This setting reflects the film's exploration of how scientific work connects with the natural world. By examining their interactions with the comet, we see how their environment shapes their responses to the impending disaster. Garrard's framework helps us understand how their workplace not only supports their research but also highlights the broader relationship between human activity and environmental issues depicted in the film.

23/DW/01:21:49/DLU



Figure 9. Dwelling

The figure above illustrates the location where Kate continues her work after her exile. From Garrard's perspective, work environments such as DrinkMo Supermarket are integral to how individuals "inhabit" their social and economic contexts. Though not a physical residence, the workplace shapes how people engage with their surroundings and informs their decisions and actions. Consequently, DrinkMo Supermarket exemplifies the concept of dwelling in ecocritical theory as it represents a space where Kate experiences her role and impact within the social and economic landscape.

10/DW/01:51:27/DLU



Figure 10. Dwelling

In the context of Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, the supermarket where Kate, Dr. Mindy, and Yule are shopping represents the concept of dwelling. It serves as a setting where individuals interact with the environment through their consumption practices, reflecting their daily living and relationship with natural resources (Garrard, 2004).

**e. Animal**

In Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, the concept of the animal explores the dynamics between humans and animals, focusing on the significance of animals within ecological systems and cultural narratives. Garrard argues that animals play vital roles in ecosystems and possess subjective experiences that merit acknowledgment. The following illustrates how the concept of the animal is represented in the film *Don't Look Up*:

11/AN/00:33:20/DLU

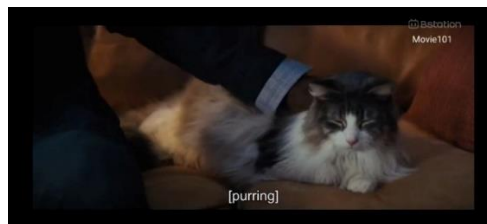


Figure 11. Animal

In Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, the concept of animal explores the relationships between humans and animals and their roles in ecological and cultural frameworks. The scene of Dr. Oglethorpe petting his cat while watching TV reflects this concept by showcasing the emotional bond between humans and animals. Garrard argues that such interactions reveal the significant roles animals play in human lives and their contributions to our emotional and psychological well-being.

12/AN/02:05:00/DLU



Figure 12. Animal

The depiction of deer running away from a meteor shower in the film illustrates Greg Garrard's concept of the animal, which emphasizes how animals are sensitive to environmental changes and disturbances. This scene reflects the animals' dependence on ecological balance for their survival and serves as an example of how animal responses can reveal broader ecological concerns.

38/S/AN/-/02:05:07/DLU



Figure 13. Animal

The data illustrates that the otters, through their roles as predators and omnivores, are vital in maintaining ecosystem balance and biodiversity. In Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, the concept of the animal encompasses the understanding of animals' ecological roles and their subjective experiences. This example underscores Garrard's argument about the importance of acknowledging animals' contributions to environmental stability and their intrinsic value in natural setting.

## CONCLUSION

The ecocritical analysis of the film *Don't Look Up* reveals that the film effectively illustrates key concepts from Greg Garrard's ecocritical theory, including pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, and animal. Through depictions of environmental pollution from President Orlean's smoking, garbage accumulation, and food waste, the film highlights the negative impacts of human actions on the environment and public health. Additionally, forest scenes represent the concept of wilderness as a symbol of untouched and pristine nature. The film's portrayal of rocket explosions and meteor impacts exemplifies the apocalypse concept, showcasing potential catastrophic events threatening Earth's survival. The concept of dwelling is illustrated through Kate's workspaces and her role in the social and economic environment. Finally, the film explores the animal concept through human-animal interactions and animals' responses to environmental changes, emphasizing the significance of animals in ecological systems and human lives.

*Don't Look Up* serves as a critical commentary on contemporary environmental issues and human behaviors. By illustrating Garrard's concepts, the film not only reflects current ecological and societal challenges but also prompts viewers to reflect on the impact of their actions on the environment. This analysis highlights the film's role in raising awareness about the urgency of addressing environmental crises and the need for responsible action to prevent ecological and social collapse.

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