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HUMAN RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENTAL COLLAPSE IN JAMES GRAHAM BALLARD'S *THE DROWNED WORLD*

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Abstract. This study examines human responses to environmental collapse in J. G. Ballard's novel *The Drowned World*. The study aims to analyze the representation of environmental collapse and human responses to extreme environmental changes in the novel. This study employs a qualitative method using a text analysis approach and applies the concept of An Inconvenient Apocalypse, which views the apocalypse as a slow and ongoing process. Research data was obtained through an analysis of the setting, conflict, and character behavior, particularly that of the main character, Robert Kerans. The results indicate that environmental collapse is depicted through the submergence of major cities, extreme climate change, and the reemergence of prehistoric conditions. These changes not only destroy human civilization but also affect human psychology and behavior. Human responses in the novel are shown through various attitudes, such as preserving civilization, resisting change, and finally accepting and adapting to the new environment. This study concludes that the novel depicts the changing relationship between humans and nature as a result of an ongoing ecological crisis.

Abstract. Penelitian ini mengkaji respons manusia terhadap kehancuran lingkungan dalam novel karya J. G. Ballard berjudul *The Drowned World.* Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penggambaran kehancuran lingkungan serta respons manusia terhadap perubahan lingkungan yang ekstrem dalam novel tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis teks dan menerapkan konsep An Inconvenient Apocalypse, yang memandang kiamat sebagai proses yang lambat dan berkelanjutan. Data penelitian diperoleh melalui analisis latar, konflik, dan perilaku karakter, khususnya karakter utama, Robert Kerans. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kehancuran lingkungan digambarkan melalui tenggelamnya kota-kota besar, perubahan iklim ekstrem, dan kembalinya kondisi prasejarah. Perubahan-perubahan ini tidak hanya menghancurkan peradaban manusia, tetapi juga memengaruhi psikologi dan perilaku manusia. Respons manusia dalam novel ini ditunjukkan melalui berbagai sikap, seperti upaya melestarikan peradaban, menolak perubahan, dan akhirnya menerima serta beradaptasi dengan lingkungan baru. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa novel tersebut menggambarkan perubahan hubungan antara manusia dan alam sebagai akibat dari krisis ekologi yang sedang berlangsung.

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INTRODUCTION

Environmental degradation has become a global issue that is increasingly discussed across various fields, including literature (Muthukrishnan & Datta, 2023). Climate change, rising global temperatures, melting polar ice, and rising sea levels indicate that the relationship between humans and nature is facing a serious crisis. These phenomena not only impact the physical state of the environment but also affect human social and psychological well-being (Mazloum Yar & Ishaq Shaheedzooy, 2023). destruction and human responses to extreme natural changes. Literature serves not only as entertainment but also as a medium for reflecting on the environmental problems occurring in the modern world (Tyagi & Tiwari, 2025).

One literary work that addresses environmental collapse is the novel *The Drowned World* by J. G. Ballard. This novel depicts a future world experiencing extreme environmental changes due to rising global temperatures. Major cities are submerged and transformed into tropical lagoons teeming with wild vegetation and prehistoric reptiles. These conditions lead to the collapse of human civilization and influence how humans survive (Estok, 2024). The novel not only portrays physical environmental damage but also highlights the psychological changes in humans caused by the ever-changing environmental conditions.

Previous studies on J. G. Ballard's *The Drowned World* have mainly focused on dystopian elements, psychological transformation, and climate fiction. Several studies analyze environmental destruction as a background of the story, while others focus on the psychological condition of the characters in post-apocalyptic situations (Adhikari, 2021). However, limited studies specifically examine how humans respond psychologically and behaviorally to environmental collapse through the concept of "An Inconvenient Apocalypse." Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the representation of environmental collapse and the various human responses toward ecological crisis in the novel using an ecocritical perspective (Manjhi, 2022).

The concept of "An Inconvenient Apocalypse" is used in this study to understand apocalypse as a gradual and ongoing ecological process rather than a sudden catastrophic event (Harper & Specht, 2021). This concept emphasizes that environmental destruction develops slowly through climate change, rising temperatures, ecological imbalance, and the collapse of natural systems. In literary studies, this concept is relevant to climate fiction because it reflects how environmental crisis continuously transforms human civilization, psychology, and social structures (Mahvish Rani, 2024). In *The Drowned World*, the environmental collapse occurs progressively as rising global temperatures melt the polar ice caps and submerge major cities, gradually changing both the physical environment and human consciousness.

The character Robert Kerans serves as the primary representation of human responses to extreme environmental change. At the beginning of the story, Kerans still maintains a rational mindset as a scientist. However, as environmental changes worsen, he begins to undergo psychological changes and feels increasingly connected to the new tropical environment (Tinosan & San Jose, 2025). The responses of other characters, such as Colonel Riggs, Hardman, Beatrice Dahl, and Strangman, also demonstrate various forms of human response to environmental collapse, ranging from preserving civilization, resisting change, to accepting and adapting to the new natural conditions.

This study aims to analyze how environmental collapse is represented in the novel *The Drowned World* and how human responses are depicted through the characters' actions, psychology, and behavioral changes. This study is expected to contribute to environmental literary studies, particularly in understanding the relationship between humans and nature in modern literary works. Additionally, this study is also expected to raise readers' awareness of environmental issues and their impact on human life (Ignatius, 2025).

Concept of "An Inconvenient Apocalypse" is used in this study to understand apocalypse as a gradual and ongoing ecological process rather than a sudden catastrophic event. This concept emphasizes that environmental destruction develops slowly through climate change, rising temperatures, ecological imbalance, and the collapse of natural systems. In literary studies, this concept is relevant to climate fiction because it reflects how environmental crisis continuously transforms human civilization, psychology, and social structures. In *The Drowned World*, the environmental collapse occurs progressively as rising global temperatures melt the polar ice caps and submerge major cities, gradually changing both the physical environment and human consciousness.

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RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research method using a text analysis approach. A qualitative method was chosen because this study focuses on understanding the meaning, representation, and human responses to environmental collapse in J. G. Ballard's novel *The Drowned World*. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study does not rely on statistical calculations but instead emphasizes the interpretation of data in the form of narrative, dialogue, conflict, setting, and character behavior found within the novel. The study aims to analyze how environmental collapse is represented and how humans respond to extreme environmental changes in the novel.

The approach used in this study is ecocriticism. The ecocritical approach is employed to understand the relationship between humans and the environment in literary works. This study applies an ecocritical approach and uses the concept of An Inconvenient Apocalypse to analyze environmental collapse as a gradual ecological process that affects human civilization and psychological conditions in the novel. (Rishma & Gill, 2024). This concept is relevant to the environmental conditions in the novel, which undergo gradual changes until they ultimately destroy human civilization and alter the psychological states of its characters.

Ecocriticism examines the relationship between literature and the environment, particularly how literary works represent ecological crisis, climate change, and human interaction with nature (Ryan, 2020). This approach is relevant to this study because *The Drowned World* portrays environmental collapse and the psychological responses of humans toward ecological transformation.

The primary data source for this study is the novel *The Drowned World* by J. G. Ballard, published by Harper Perennial Modern Classics in 2006. The research data consists of words, sentences, dialogue, narration, setting descriptions, conflicts, and character actions related to environmental collapse and human response. Supporting data for this study was obtained from books, journals, articles, and previous research related to ecocriticism, environmental literature, climate fiction, and the works of J. G. Ballard (Oktaviansyah & Safitri, 2024).

Data collection techniques involved close reading and note-taking. The researcher read the novel in depth and repeatedly to understand the plot, conflicts, environmental changes, and the characters' psychological development. Subsequently, the researcher identified and recorded key sections relevant to the research focus. Relevant quotations were then classified based on the research themes: environmental collapse and human response.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages. The first stage involved identifying data related to environmental collapse and human response within the novel. The second stage involved classifying the data based on the research focus and the theories employed. The third stage involved analyzing the relationship between environmental changes and the characters' responses using an ecocritical approach and the concept of An Inconvenient Apocalypse (Prabawati, 2023). The final stage is drawing conclusions based on the analysis results to address the research questions.

Through this method, the study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the representation of environmental collapse and human response in the novel *The Drowned World*. Additionally, this study is also expected to contribute to environmental literary studies, particularly in understanding the relationship between humans and nature in modern literary works.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Results

1. **Finding the Theme**

J. G. Ballard's novel *The Drowned World* explores the central theme of environmental collapse and humanity's response to extreme natural changes. This theme is evident in the Earth's condition, which is experiencing rising global temperatures, causing polar ice to melt and sea levels to rise. As a result, major cities are submerged and transformed into tropical lagoons filled with swamps, wild vegetation, and prehistoric reptiles. These conditions demonstrate that nature has reclaimed territories previously dominated by humans.

The theme of environmental collapse in the novel is not only depicted through the Earth's physical changes but also through shifts in human psychology. Characters in the story begin experiencing dreams of a prehistoric world filled with a red sun and ancient forests. These changes reveal that environmental collapse influences human thought, behavior, and relationships with the modern world. Humans in the novel are slowly losing their attachment to civilization and beginning to adapt to a new, extreme environment.

The novel also explores the theme of nature's dominance over humanity. Humanity's efforts to preserve civilization and control the environment ultimately fail. This is evident in Strangman's attempt to drain the lagoon to restore the old city. However, this endeavor only leads to greater chaos and destruction. By the end of the story, nature reclaims the city after the dam is destroyed and the water floods the area once more. Through this theme, Ballard demonstrates that humans are no longer the masters of nature, but rather a small part of an ever-changing environment.

In adding to the depiction of environmental destruction, this novel also offers a critique of humanity's dependence on modernity and technology. Major cities, which were once symbols of human progress, are unable to withstand extreme climate change. Ballard demonstrates that the progress of civilization cannot protect humanity when nature undergoes major changes. The collapse of cities in the novel serves as a symbol of the collapse of humanity's faith in the power of modernity and human domination over nature.

a. Synopsis

The J. G. Ballard's novel *The Drowned World* is set in a major European city undergoing extreme environmental changes due to rising global temperatures and the melting of polar ice. These changes cause sea levels to rise, submerging the city and transforming it into a system of lagoons and tropical swamps teeming with dense vegetation and various reptile species. Under these conditions, the human population dwindles, and survivors can only endure in the cooler northern regions.

The submerged city becomes the subject of research by a scientific team supported by the United Nations. One of the team members is Robert Kerans, a biologist living in an abandoned hotel. He works alongside Dr. Bodkin and Hardman to study the sunken city from a floating research station, while the team's security is ensured by Colonel Riggs, who leads a military unit tasked with protecting and evacuating the scientists.

As time goes on, Hardman, a pilot experiencing a psychological crisis once a calm and independent officer now suffers from unrelenting nightmares. He becomes obsessed with ancient prehistoric times. Colonel Riggs issues an evacuation order as temperatures continue to rise, and the threat of disease and an increasingly uninhabitable environment grow. A few days later, Hardman disappears without a trace An event Kerans would only fully understand later, as Hardman's disappearance stemmed from his obsession with his recurring dreams of ancient prehistoric times, leading him southward.

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Kerans begins experiencing recurring dreams depicting a prehistoric world with a red sun and primeval forests. Several other team members also experienced the same dreams, which made them feel comfortable staying in the city. This situation signaled changes occurring not only in the environment but also in human psychology. As the situation grew increasingly unstable, the entire team was ordered to return to the northern region.

Amid these conditions, Beatrice Dahl, a woman who had already experienced strange dreams of ancient prehistory before the team of scientists arrived in the city. chose to stay in the city because she felt at home there. This decision influenced Kerans, who began to doubt his own desire to return. Before Colonel Riggs and his troops left the city, he urged the entire team and Beatrice Dahl to head north in search of a safer and more livable place, but they decided to stay in the city and began to feel comfortable staying there even longer. The situation changed when Strangman emerged and led an armed group that arrived with the aim of taking control of the area. He attempted to drain part of the lagoon by building a dam, causing the ruins of the old city to resurface. This action uncovered the remnants of a sunken civilization, including buildings and traces of past human life.

Strangman's efforts sparked conflict and tension, as his actions were carried out without regard for environmental impact or the safety of others. In this situation, Kerans, Bodkin, and Beatrice Dahl were disturbed by Strangman's arrival, which caused the lagoon to dry up, making them feel uncomfortable with the current situation. Meanwhile, Bodkin had a personal plan to destroy Strangman's dam to irrigate the parched city, but his efforts were discovered by Strangman's pirate crew, and Bodkin was shot dead for attempting to sabotage his plan.

Upon learning of Bodkin's death, Kerans planned to destroy the dam that very night. Late that night, Kerans headed to Strangman's dam and attempted to blow it up to flood the parched lagoon in the city. Just as his plan was about to succeed, Strangman appeared and realized someone was trying to flood the lagoon he had drained; Kerans was captured and taken to Strangman's ship. The next day, just as Strangman was about to execute Kerans, he prepared to draw a sword from a box. Suddenly, Colonel Riggs appeared, he had previously headed north in search of a safer place but failed to find one, so he returned to the sinking city. Colonel Riggs saw his team about to be killed, he rushed to save them and succeeded in defeating Strangman, and Kerans survived thanks to his help.

After that incident, Kerans stayed with Colonel Riggs and his troops for several days. Afterward, Kerans, who had become one with his dreams, began planning something to refill the dried-up lagoon. When Kerans felt ready with his plan, he began to carry it out and succeeded in refilling the once dry lagoon with water. Meanwhile, Beatrice vanished without a trace, just like Hardman. Following this failure, Strangman and his group left the city. The environment returned to its original state, with the lagoon and swamps dominating the area. Kerans, now alone, realized there was no longer any reason to return to the northern region. He then left his home and headed south, toward a hotter and more extreme region, following the path of the lagoon and the tropical forest.

Midway through his journey, he discovered the ruins of an ancient temple facing a valley. There, he found a man on the brink of death and starvation, sitting slumped against the altar. It was Hardman, a former comrade who had gone missing since Kerans was in the sunken city. Kerans cared for Hardman for three days, feeding him and building a simple shelter out of rocks and leaves. But Hardman no longer recognized him and persistently mistook him for a soldier. On the fourth day, Hardman vanished without a trace. Kerans eventually left the temple and resumed his journey south. His medical supplies were exhausted; he carried only a few berries and a pistol with two remaining bullets. His journey took him out of the forest into the swamps, until he reached a large lagoon surrounded by building ruins and white sand. In one of the still-standing buildings, he rested briefly, reflecting on the past on Strangman and the sunken city.

He realized that Hardman's death might be near, and that his own fate could follow. Yet despite his exhaustion and the drastically rising temperatures, he chose to keep walking. Before leaving, he left a final message on the building's wall:

"Day 27. Have rested and will move south. All is well. – Kerans."

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He reentered the dense, sweltering forest, leaving the lagoon behind and venturing deeper into the woods. Within days, he was completely lost, following the lagoons southward through increasingly intense rain and heat, like a second Adam seeking the forgotten paradises of the reborn Sun. This story illustrates how extreme environmental changes not only alter natural conditions but also influence human lives, their choices, and the direction of their journeys.

b. *Simple Story*

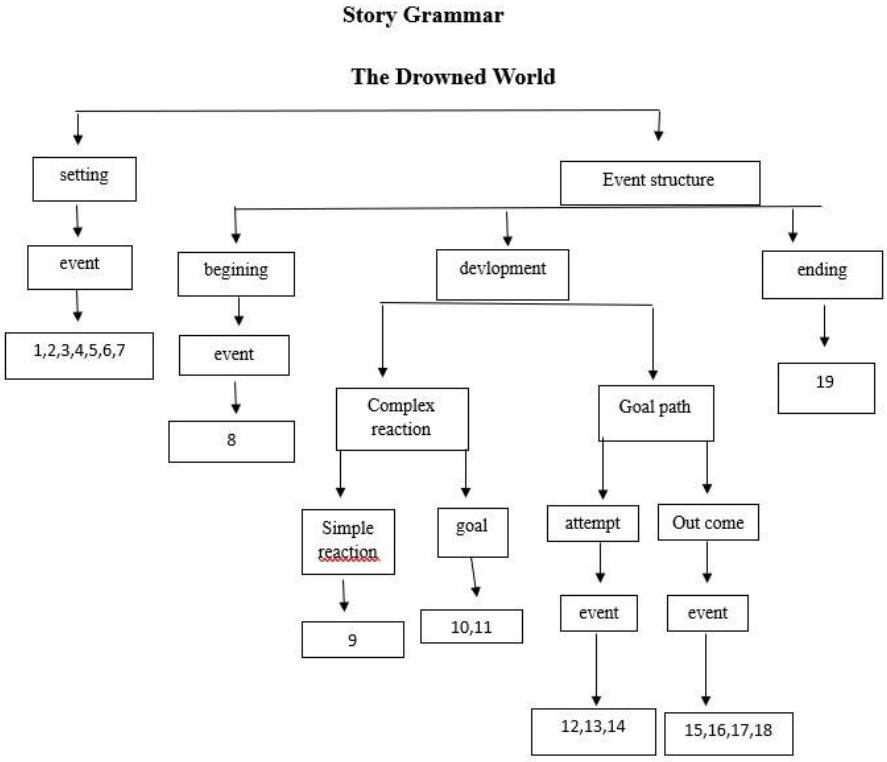
1) The Earth is experiencing extreme climate change, causing temperatures to rise and polar ice to melt, resulting in major cities sinking and transforming into tropical lagoons teeming with wild plants and ancient reptiles.
2) Robert Kerans lived in the sunken city with Dr. Bodkin, Hardman, and Colonel Riggs as part of a United Nations scientific team investigating these environmental changes.
3) Hardman began to suffer from psychological distress due to dreams about the prehistoric world and eventually disappeared after heading south, driven by his obsession with that ancient world.
4) Kerans also began having recurring dreams about a red sun and ancient forests, which gradually influenced his mind and made him feel comfortable living in the sunken city.
5) Colonel Riggs received orders to evacuate the entire team to the northern region because temperatures were rising and the environment was no longer safe for habitation.
6) Beatrice Dahl chose to stay in the city because she felt comfortable living in that environment, and her decision influenced Kerans not to leave the city.
7) After Colonel Riggs and his troops left, Kerans, Bodkin, and Beatrice decided to stay in the sunken city despite the increasingly dangerous conditions.
8) The situation changed when Strangman arrived with his armed group and began draining the lagoon to uncover the old sunken city.
9) Strangman's actions disturbed Kerans, Bodkin, and Beatrice because the city, which had previously been filled with water, began to dry out and grow hot.
10) Bodkin tried to destroy Strangman's dam so that the water would flood the city again, but he was shot and killed by Strangman's men.
11) After Bodkin's death, Kerans carried on with the plan by attempting to blow up the dam at night so that the lagoon would fill with water again.
12) Just as he was about to succeed, Kerans was captured by Strangman and taken to the ship to be executed.
13) Before Strangman could kill Kerans, Colonel Riggs returned to the city and managed to save him from Strangman and his group.
14) After spending a few days with Riggs, Kerans resumed his plan and finally succeeded in destroying the dam, allowing the lagoon to refill with water.
15) Strangman and his group left the city after their plan failed and the city was once again submerged by water.
16) Kerans realized he no longer had any desire to return to civilization in the north and chose to head south toward the hotter, wilder southern regions.
17) On his journey south, Kerans found Hardman in a weakened and near-death state among the ruins of an ancient temple, then cared for him for several days.
18) Hardman eventually vanished again without a trace, while Kerans continued his journey alone toward an increasingly extreme tropical world.
19) At the end of the story, Kerans kept walking southward along the lagoon and through the tropical forest, leaving behind the remnants of human civilization and embracing the new world that had been transformed by environmental destruction.

c. *Story Grammar*

Based on a simple plot analysis, the novel's main theme is environmental collapse and humanity's response to environmental change. This theme is evident in the city's submersion due to global warming, Colonel Riggs' evacuation order, and the psychological changes experienced

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by Robert Kerans and other characters. These events illustrate how humans cope with and respond to a drastically altered environment.



d. The Theme

The central theme of J. G. Ballard's novel *The Drowned World* is environmental collapse and its impact on human life. In this novel, environmental change is depicted in extreme terms through rising global temperatures, which cause polar ice to melt and sea levels to rise. As a result, major cities are submerged and transformed into tropical environments that no longer support human life as they once did. These conditions form the primary foundation driving the entire story.

This theme expands to explore how humans respond to these environmental conditions. Through the main character, Robert Kerans, it becomes evident that humans do not always resist change but can also adapt and even accept these conditions. Kerans undergoes a transformation from a rational scientist into an individual who follows his instincts and embraces the new environment as part of himself. This demonstrates that human responses to a crisis are not always resistance, but can also involve acceptance.

On the other hand, the novel's theme also highlights the conflict between humans and nature, particularly through the contrasting characters of Kerans and Strangman. Strangman attempts to dominate and control the environment by draining the lagoon and exploiting the city's ruins. In contrast, Kerans chooses to adapt to that environment. This difference illustrates two forms of human response to environmental crises: control and adaptation.

Thus, the themes in this novel focus not only on environmental destruction but also on how humans confront and respond to such conditions. The novel demonstrates that environmental changes affect not only nature but also influence human thought, behavior, and life choices.

Throughout the story, the novel *The Drowned World* demonstrates that when the environment is destroyed, humans not only lose their homes and civilization, but also undergochanges in the way they think, act, and understand their place in the world. The novel

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depicts the strong connection between humans and nature, where environmental changes can transform human lives both physically and psychologically.

2. The Historical And Biographical Background

a. Historical Background

The Drowned World by J. G. Ballard can be interpreted as a reflection of the environmental and cultural anxieties that emerged during the mid 20th century (Koseoglu., 2024). The period in which the novel was written was marked by growing concerns about the stability of the natural world, particularly in relation to scientific discussions on climate and environmental change. Although these discussions were still in their early stages, they provided a conceptual basis for imagining large-scale environmental transformations such as those depicted in the novel.

Furthermore, the post-World War II context contributes significantly to the interpretation of the novel. The global anxiety caused by the use of atomic weapons and the rapid advancement of nuclear technology created a sense of uncertainty about the future of humanity. This condition can be seen as influencing the novel's depiction of a world that has undergone irreversible environmental collapse. The destroyed and submerged landscapes in the narrative can therefore be understood as symbolic representations of a broader fear of global destruction.

In addition, the expansion of industrialization during the mid 20th century can be viewed as a contributing factor to the themes presented in the novel. The increasing impact of human activity on the environment, including pollution and ecological imbalance, reflects a growing awareness of the negative consequences of technological progress. Within this context, the transformation of cities into tropical lagoons may be interpreted as a representation of the decline of human control over nature and the return of natural dominance.

The emergence of early ecological awareness also plays an important role in shaping the interpretation of the novel. Although environmental movements had not yet fully developed, the relationship between humans and nature had begun to receive attention in both scientific and literary discussions. This allows the novel to be seen as an early literary response to ecological concerns, particularly in its depiction of environmental transformation and its impact on human life.

The novel can be interpreted as reflecting a shift in philosophical perspectives regarding humanity's position in the natural world. Instead of presenting humans as dominant over nature, the narrative emphasizes the power of natural forces and the limitations of human control. This shift aligns with later environmental theories that highlight the importance of adaptation in the face of ecological crisis.

In a broader sense, the themes presented in the novel can also be connected to contemporary discussions about climate change and environmental sustainability. The depiction of rising temperatures, flooded cities, and ecological transformation closely resembles modern scientific concerns about global warming and sea-level rise. This connection suggests that the novel not only reflects the historical context in which it was written but also anticipates future environmental issues.

The historical background of *The Drowned World* can be interpreted as a combination of environmental awareness, post-war anxiety, and concerns about human impact on nature. These elements contribute to the novel's portrayal of environmental collapse and provide a deeper understanding of its relevance to both past and present ecological issues.

b. Biographical Background

The influence of an author's life experiences can be observed in the thematic and narrative construction of *The Drowned World*. In this context, the background of J. G. Ballard provides important insight into how environmental collapse and human response are portrayed in the novel. His early exposure to unstable conditions during World War II can be interpreted as shaping his perspective on human behavior in extreme and unfamiliar environments.

Ballard's experiences in a detention camp during the war can be interpreted as contributing to his interest in isolated and controlled environments. In the novel, the setting of a submerged

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and abandoned city reflects a similar sense of isolation and detachment from normal social systems. This parallel suggests that Ballard's personal experiences may have influenced his depiction of characters who exist in environments where traditional social order no longer applies.

Ballard's academic background in medicine and his interest in psychology can be seen in the way the novel emphasizes internal transformation rather than external action. The characters, particularly Robert Kerans, are portrayed as undergoing psychological changes in response to environmental conditions. This focus on mental processes suggests that Ballard was not only interested in environmental change as a physical phenomenon but also as a factor that influences human consciousness.

Moreover, Ballard's concept of "inner space" can be interpreted as a key element in understanding the narrative. Instead of focusing on technological advancement or external conflict, the novel explores the internal experiences of the characters, including dreams, memories, and subconscious responses. This approach reflects Ballard's broader literary interest in the psychological dimension of human existence, particularly in extreme conditions.

The contrast between different characters in the novel can also be linked to Ballard's perspective on human behavior. While some characters attempt to maintain control over the environment, others move toward adaptation. This contrast may reflect Ballard's observation of human responses to crisis situations, where individuals react differently depending on their psychological condition and perception of reality.

In a broader sense, Ballard's life and experiences can be interpreted as contributing to his critical view of modern civilization. The depiction of abandoned cities and the decline of human structures in the novel suggests a questioning of the stability and sustainability of modern life. This perspective aligns with Ballard's tendency to explore scenarios in which human systems break down and are replaced by new environmental conditions.

The biographical background of J. G. Ballard can be interpreted as playing a significant role in shaping the themes and narrative of *The Drowned World*. His experiences, interests, and literary approach contribute to the portrayal of environmental collapse as not only a physical event but also a psychological process that influences human response.

B. Discussions

a. The Representation of Environmental Collapse in the Novel

Environmental collapse in the novel is depicted as a gradual process that transforms the Earth's physical and social conditions (al Qudah & Al Ahmad, 2024). Rising global temperatures cause polar ice to melt and sea levels to rise, submerging major cities. The environment, which was once the center of human life, has transformed into tropical lagoons and swamps overgrown with wild vegetation. Skyscrapers and city streets, which once symbolized the progress of civilization, have become ruins overrun by water and vegetation. The submergence of major cities in *The Drowned World* symbolizes the collapse of anthropocentric civilization. Cities, which traditionally represent human progress, technology, and power, are transformed into lagoons and swamps controlled by nature. Through this depiction, Ballard criticizes humanity's belief that modern civilization and technological advancement can fully dominate the natural world. The destruction of urban spaces demonstrates that humans ultimately have limited control over ecological forces. These conditions signify the loss of human dominance over the environment.

Environmental collapse affects not only the physical state of the world but also the psychological state of humans. Characters like Robert Kerans and Hardman begin to have dreams of a prehistoric world with a red sun and ancient forests. These dreams indicate that environmental changes affect human consciousness and cause people to gradually lose their connection to modern life. Kerans and Beatrice Dahl even begin to feel at home living in the sunken city despite the increasingly dangerous surroundings. This demonstrates that environmental changes also lead to shifts in human identity and ways of thinking.

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Environmental collapse in the novel is also evident through the conflict between humans and nature. Strangman attempts to drain the lagoon to resurrect the sunken city as a symbol of humanity's effort to control the environment and preserve the old world. However, his actions instead cause greater chaos and destruction. The drained city transforms into a hot, filthy area filled with the stench of corpses and ancient ruins. These conditions demonstrate that human efforts to resist natural change only result in further destruction.

In the end, Kerans destroyed Strangman's dam, allowing the water to reclaim the city. This event demonstrates that nature remains a dominant force beyond human control. The environmental collapse in the novel is portrayed not as a temporary disaster, but as a permanent shift that transforms humanity's relationship with the world around it. Ballard shows that humans have limitations when it comes to coping with ever-evolving ecological changes.

b. The Representation of Human Response in the Novel

Human responses to environmental collapse in the novel are illustrated through the attitudes and actions of the characters as they face extreme natural changes (Varutti, 2024). Colonel Riggs represents those who are still trying to preserve civilization by evacuating to safer northern regions. He believes that humans can still survive by maintaining social systems and staying away from extreme environments. This response reflects to preserve the old world and resist the environmental changes taking place.

In contrast to Riggs, Robert Kerans demonstrates a shift in response from rejection to acceptance of the new environment. At the beginning of the story, Kerans continues to fulfill his duties as a scientist rationally studying environmental changes. However, after experiencing recurring dreams of a prehistoric world, he begins to feel at ease in the extreme tropical environment. Robert Kerans represents humanity's gradual psychological adaptation toward environmental collapse. At the beginning of the novel, Kerans still maintains scientific rationality and attempts to observe environmental changes objectively. However, as the tropical environment becomes increasingly dominant, his psychological condition also changes. His recurring dreams of prehistoric landscapes symbolize the unconscious human desire to reconnect with primitive nature. Kerans' transformation demonstrates that environmental collapse does not only destroy civilization physically but also reshapes human identity and consciousness. This transformation causes Kerans to gradually lose his attachment to modern life and begin accepting the new environment as an integral part of himself.

A similar response is seen in the character Beatrice Dahl, who chooses to remain in the submerged city despite the increasingly dangerous environmental conditions. Her decision suggests that some people are beginning to adapt to the new environment and are no longer interested in returning to modern life. Meanwhile, Hardman undergoes a more extreme psychological transformation. He becomes obsessed with the prehistoric world in his dreams and eventually leaves the group to head south. Hardman's response demonstrates that extreme environments can influence human consciousness to the point of altering their behavior and way of thinking.

The novel also depicts the human response in the form of an attempt to control nature through the character of Strangman. He tries to drain the lagoon and resurrect the sunken city as an effort to maintain human dominance over the environment. However, this attempt fails because nature in the novel is portrayed as stronger than humans. Strangman's efforts instead lead to conflict, violence, and death. These conditions demonstrate that humanity's desire to control nature can no longer be sustained when the environment undergoes extreme changes.

At the end of the story, Kerans chooses to leave the northern region and head south, toward a hotter and wilder landscape. This decision indicates that the Kerans have fully accepted the environmental changes and chosen to adapt to the new world that has emerged. Kerans' journey south symbolizes the shifting relationship between humans and nature. Humans are no longer the center of the world, but merely a small part of an ever-changing environment.

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Through the various responses of these characters, the novel *The Drowned World* shows that environmental collapse not only destroys the physical conditions of the world but also alters human psychology, behavior, and relationship with nature. Human responses in the novel evolve from efforts to preserve civilization toward a process of acceptance and adaptation to an extreme new environment.

Environmental conditions depicted in *The Drowned World* closely reflect contemporary ecological issues such as climate change, rising sea levels, and global warming. Ballard's novel can be interpreted as a warning about humanity's inability to fully control environmental destruction caused by modern civilization. The gradual collapse presented in the novel reflects the reality of today's climate crisis, where environmental degradation develops slowly but continuously threatens human life and social stability.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on the research findings, J. G. Ballard's novel *The Drowned World* depicts environmental collapse as a gradual process that transforms the physical, social, and psychological conditions of the world. Environmental degradation is represented through rising global temperatures, the submergence of major cities, and the transformation of the modern environment into a tropical landscape filled with swamps, wild vegetation, and prehistoric reptiles. These conditions indicate that nature has reclaimed dominance over the human world, leading to the collapse of modern civilization.

This study also demonstrates that environmental collapse elicits diverse human responses. Colonel Riggs embodies humanity's efforts to preserve civilization through evacuation and crisis management. Conversely, Robert Kerans demonstrates the process of acceptance and adaptation to a drastically altered new environment. Hardman experiences psychological distress due to the influence of the extreme environment, while Strangman represents humanity's desire to maintain dominance over nature and restore the old world. However, all these efforts ultimately fail because nature is depicted as possessing greater power than humans.

Through his characters, Ballard demonstrates that the relationship between humans and nature undergoes a fundamental shift as a result of environmental collapse. Humans are no longer the masters of nature, but rather a small part of an ever-changing ecosystem. Thus, *The Drowned World* not only depicts the physical destruction of the environment, but also shows how an ecological crisis can transform human thought, behavior, identity, and relationship with nature.

Suggestions

This study is expected to contribute to the field of environmental literature, particularly in understanding the relationship between humans and nature in modern literary works. Future research is encouraged to employ other ecocritical approaches or interdisciplinary methods to expand the analysis of environmental issues in literary works. Additionally, subsequent studies could compare *The Drowned World* with other literary works addressing themes of climate change and ecological crises, thereby yielding a more comprehensive understanding of the representation of environmental collapse and human responses in contemporary literature.

This study is also expected to raise readers' awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. The novel *The Drowned World* demonstrates that environmental degradation not only impacts nature but also affects human social, psychological, and future lives. Therefore, the relationship between humans and nature must be understood as an interdependent and inseparable one.

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