

Ecological Crisis and Oil Capitalism in Mudun Al-Milh: an Ecocritical Reading

Miftachul Huda * ^{1, a}, Nabhatun Nada ^{2 b}

¹ UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Jl. Marsda Adisucipto, Sleman, Yogyakarta, 55281, Indonesia

² Al-Azhar University, Al Mokattam Road, Nasr City, Cairo, 11511, Egypt

^a 25201011006@student.uin-suka.ac.id *; ^b nabha635@gmail.com

* corresponding author: 25201011006@student.uin-suka.ac.id

Abstract: *This study, titled “The Ecological Crisis and Oil Capitalism in Mudun al-Milh: An Ecocritical Reading”, examines the intersection of literature, environmental degradation, and capitalism through Abdurrahman Munif’s Mudun al-Milh: Al-Tih. It addresses the ecological crisis triggered by the rise of oil capitalism in the Arabian Peninsula, which disrupts the symbiotic relationship between indigenous communities and their environment. Using Greg Garrard’s ecocritical framework, this study analyzes how oil capitalism operates as a destructive force driving environmental and social transformation. Employing a qualitative descriptive method based on close reading and textual analysis, it explores the novel’s depiction of pre-oil oases, the intrusion of foreign extraction industries, and the resulting ecological collapse. The findings indicate that oil capitalism systematically transforms natural landscapes from pastoral environments into arid, apocalyptic spaces. This degradation is evident in deforestation, desertification, water pollution, and climatic disruption. Through the concepts of the pastoral, the apocalypse, and dwelling, the study demonstrates that fossil fuel extraction not only produces ecological crisis but also enacts slow violence, eroding indigenous lifeways and replacing them with unsustainable urban structures.*

Keywords: *ecocriticism; ecological crisis; Greg Garrard; oil capitalism*

INTRODUCTION

The ecological crisis plaguing the world in the 21st century is a manifestation of exploitative environmental management. This crisis does not stand alone; rather, it is the result of a failed interdependence between anthropocentric rationality and the ecological sensitivity of modern humans, who frequently position nature merely as a commodity (White, 1967). An ecological crisis can be defined as a critical condition in which the carrying capacity of the Earth’s ecosystems degrades, thereby threatening the sustainability of life not only for humans in the present, but also triggering intergenerational injustice for future generations (Muthmainnah et al., 2020). An understanding of this crisis justifies research into the root degradation of ethics, morality, and spiritual values that once guided the balanced relationship between humans and their living spaces.

One of the roots of the ecological crisis is the expansion of capitalism, particularly in the form of oil capitalism or petro-capitalism. Capitalism, as a socio-economic system driven by the imperative for limitless capital accumulation, operates by transforming natural webs of life into resources extracted and exploited for market profit (Moore, 2015). In a historical context, the discovery of petroleum and the transition toward fossil capitalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries became a central issue accelerating environmental degradation, wherein this capitalist system demanded massive fossil energy to fuel the expansion of industry, transportation, and infrastructure—giving rise to what is termed petro-modernity (Szeman, 2007).

The intersection between the history of fossil energy and human local cultural history is recorded and represented, among other means, through the medium of literature. One branch of literary criticism that discusses the convergence between humans and the non-human (nature) is ecocriticism. Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary approach tasked with examining and analyzing the relationship between cultural products (literature) and the physical environment, in order to respond to the need for humanistic understanding amidst an era of massive environmental destruction (Zulfa, 2021). Through this approach, literary texts are not merely read as reflections of social conditions, but are evaluated from

an earth-centered perspective, which allows readers to see how literature potentially contributes moral value in responding to real environmental crises (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996).

Within ecocritical theory, the thought of Greg Garrard provides an analytical framework that deconstructs how environmental crises are imagined and represented in human culture. Garrard outlines a number of concepts, such as the *pastoral* (a poetic construction of a peaceful and idyllic nature), *apocalypse* (narratological catastrophes or disaster narratives), and *dwelling* (a concept of inhabitation that involves the historical attachment, memory, and everyday life of humans within the landscape of their homeland) (Garrard, 2004). These concepts function as sociological lenses capable of revealing how nature is culturally constructed and how such narratives can either deconstruct or, conversely, legitimize the hegemony of certain parties over natural ecosystems (Buell, 2006).

Previous studies on Mudun *Al-Milh* generally highlight this novel from the perspectives of postcolonialism, class exploitation, and the concept of violence. The novel is a narrative embodiment of how petro-capitalist modernity sows the seeds of its own destruction through a slow but deadly environmental degradation, the impacts of which are only felt by local communities after their resources have been entirely depleted (Nixon, 2011). Other studies also assert that Munif's work explores the aesthetics of the oppressed, wherein oil capitalism represents a shift from an egalitarian community to an alienated society under an authoritarian state power, which ultimately triggers radicalism as a response to expropriated land (Dahab, 2018).

Although examinations of imperialism and social alienation in this novel have been conducted, this study fills the gap by employing ecocritical theory to dissect the ecological crisis within the narrative. The application of Greg Garrard's ecocritical concepts has been utilized to analyze the relationship between humans and nature, as demonstrated in studies of both contemporary poetry and novels (Jamilah & Ayiz, 2024). The successful application of Garrard's theory in postcolonial literary contexts is also evident in deconstructing the narratives of harmonious and conflictual relationships between humans and their physical environment (Syauqi & Muassomah, 2025). Building upon this background, this study aims to investigate how oil capitalism in Mudun Al-Milh constructs an ecological crisis that disrupts human-environment relations through the lens of Garrard's ecocriticism, by unpacking three primary sub-problems: (1) how environmental destruction is represented in the novel; (2) how oil capitalism functions as a destructive force; and (3) how Garrard's concepts of the pastoral, apocalypse, and dwelling are reflected in the novel's text.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method based on an interdisciplinary ecocritical approach. The descriptive qualitative method was selected because this research focuses on efforts to provide a description, interpretation, and understanding of the social and ecological phenomena present within the text (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The ecocritical approach functions as the primary analytical instrument, allowing the researcher to deconstruct the representation of environmental conditions and environmental ideologies, as well as to evaluate the extent to which the literary text disrupts anthropocentrism between modern human civilization and natural ecosystems (Aminuddin, 2011).

The primary data in this study consist of the Arabic novel text titled Mudun al-Milh, volume one (Al-Tih), written by Abdelrahman Munif. Secondary data were obtained through literature reviews of supporting documents, including theoretical books, scientific journals, and research articles relevant to the topics of petro-capitalism, literary ecology, and the specific concepts of Greg Garrard. The triangulation between the literary text as the main corpus and the theoretical framework as the analytical tool is intended to maintain the validity of the ecological interpretations extracted from the work (Endraswara, 2016).

Data collection in this study utilizes a library research technique involving the stages of reading, close reading, and note-taking. The researcher conducts repeated readings of the novel's text, then scrutinizes sections containing environmental symbolism, industrial technology, and characters' responses to environmental destruction. The results of this scrutiny are subsequently recorded into a table and

classified based on the three dominant ecocritical tropes proposed by Greg Garrard: the pastoral, apocalypse, and dwelling (Ahmadi, 2014).

The final stage in this research design is data analysis, which adopts the interactive model analysis framework. This analysis begins with data reduction, wherein the researcher filters the Arabic excerpts from the novel, contextually translates them into English, and eliminates data that do not directly intersect with the issues of oil capitalism or environmental degradation. In the data display phase, the findings are put into dialogue with Garrard's ecocritical framework through narrative exposition. The final process is drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the narrative in the novel *Mudun al-Milh* reveals an entanglement between industrialization, the expropriation of geographical spaces, and ecological destruction. Utilizing Greg Garrard's ecocritical framework, the examination of this text yields findings that are organized into three primary sub-discussions, which unpack progressively from the concrete manifestations of environmental damage and the mechanisms of oil capitalism as a destructive tool, to the deconstruction of space through the tropes of the pastoral, apocalypse, and dwelling.

Table 1. Structural mapping of the ecological dimensions explored in the novel.

Dimension of Analysis	Textual Focus in the Novel	Garrard's Ecocritical Concept	Ecological & Sociological Implications
Representation of Destruction	Transformation of the oasis into an arid region.	Pollution & Wilderness	Nature loses its autonomy, the ecosystem degrades, killing endemic flora and fauna.
The Force of Capitalism	Resource extraction. Land expropriation for oil.	The Earth	The egalitarian social order shifts into an alienated society.
Pastoral Concept	The pre-industrial rhythm of life in Wadi al-Uyoun, which depends on seasons and palm trees.	Pastoral	The idealization and romanticization of past ecosystems as a form of critique against destructive modernity.
Apocalypse Concept	Hallucinations and apocalyptic warnings regarding machines ("walking iron").	Apocalypse	Ecological disasters are constructed as the inevitable end of the cosmic order.
Dwelling Concept	The eviction of inhabitants from their historical roots to barracks.	Dwelling	The severance of spiritual and communal bonds between humans and the land; the creation of unsustainable spaces.

Representation of Environmental Destruction

Abdurrahman Munif begins his novel by demonstrating an ecological landscape vital to human existence in the desert: the oasis of Wadi al-Uyoun. In ecocritical discourse, the representation of nature at the beginning of a story functions to establish a baseline or a foundational point of equilibrium prior to the onset of a crisis. Munif positions the valley as an organic subject possessing the agency, power, and autonomy to sustain life. The description provided by the author refers to the phenomenon of the emergence of water and vegetation that almost resembles a miracle amidst the inhospitality of the desert geography:

إنه وادي العيون... فجأة، وسط الصحراء القاسية العنيدة تنبتق هذه البقعة الخضراء، وكأنها انفجرت من باطن الأرض أو سقطت "من السماء"

(This is Wadi al-Uyoun... suddenly, in the midst of the harsh and stubborn desert, this green speck appeared, as if it burst forth from the bowels of the earth or fell from the sky)

في سنوات الخير يظهر الخير، أول ما يظهر، في وادي العيون، إذ إضافة إلى غزارة المياه التي تملأ الأحواض الثلاثة المحيطة بالنبع، فإن مياه العيون تتحدر إلى أماكن لم يكن متوقعا أن تصلها. وفي تلك السنين تزرع الخضرة، وتظهر النباتات المختلفة، خاصة

التي تأتي مع الأمطار المبكرة، ويتصرف الناس في الوادي بطريقة لا يصدقها المسافرون الذين تعودوا المرور على محطات كثيرة مشابهة، إذ يسرف أهل الوادي في الإلحاح على المسافرين للبقاء فترة أطول، ويظهرون تعففاً زائداً في أن يأخذوا مقابل ما يعطون

(In fruitful years, prosperity manifests itself, first and foremost, in Wadi al-Uyoun. In addition to the abundance of water filling the three basins surrounding the spring, the water from the springs flows down to unexpected places. During those years, greenery thrives, and various plants appear, especially those that come with the early rains. The people of the valley conduct themselves in a manner unbelievable to travelers. The inhabitants of the valley persistently urge the travelers to stay longer, and they display immense modesty, refusing to accept anything in return for what they give)

In the aforementioned narrative, Wadi al-Uyoun is consistently depicted through beauty, fertility, and life. However, this representation of ecological balance is shattered when American industry arrives, bringing mechanical technology. Environmental destruction in *Mudun al-Milh* is not presented as a consequence of natural cycles such as summer droughts, but rather due to a technological invasion. Several ecological devastations depicted in the novel's narrative include deforestation, desertification, water pollution, topographical alteration, and climate change. The novel's narrative concerning deforestation (the felling of trees) is portrayed as follows:

"التراكورات وهي تهجم مثل ذئاب جائعة على الأشجار وتبدأ تمزقها وترميها أرضاً الواحدة بعد الأخرى، ثم بعد ذلك تسوي بين شجرة وثانية، بين الساقية والأرض التي حولها، حتى إذا انتهت من مجموعة من الأشجار هجمت بنفس الضراوة والوحشية على مجموعة جديدة وبدأت تقتلعها."

(The tractors attacked the trees like hungry wolves, beginning to tear them apart and hurl them to the ground one after another; they then leveled the space between one tree and the next, between the water channels and the surrounding land, until, having finished with one cluster of trees, they lunged at a new group with the same ferocity and brutality, beginning to uproot them)

Munif anthropomorphizes the tractors as ferocious "hungry wolves" to demonstrate that technology arrives as a lethal predator that obliterates endemic diversity, rather than as an instrument of progress. (Tasya, 2025) in her study, indicates that land clearing through deforestation methods results in the loss of vegetative structures, which permanently severs landscape connectivity and the roaming spaces of endemic fauna.

In addition to deforestation, the phenomenon of ecological destruction also extends to desertification. The narrative in the novel that portrays this desertification is as follows:

ورغم أن الكثيرين تصوروا أثناء ما كانوا يرقبون المشهد الغريب، أن ما يشهدونه حلماً أو ما يشبه الحلم، إلا أن توقف التراكورات واحداً بعد آخر، وذلك الصمت القاسي الذي خيم على هذه الأرض «الجديدة»، فبدأ الوادي وكأنه جزء من الصحراء التي تليه عدا بعض التلال، ثم تلك الأكوام من بقايا الشجر، عند ذاك تأكد الجميع أن ما يرونه شيء حقيقي، شيء قاسٍ لئيم معاد، وأقرب ما يكون إلى الموت

(Although many people, upon witnessing that strange sight, imagined that what they were beholding was a dream or something dreamlike, the tractors stopped one after another, and a harsh silence fell upon this new land; as a result, the valley seemed to become a part of the desert that ensued, save for a few hills and the piles of tree remnants, and everyone grew certain that what they saw was real, something cruel, and akin to death.)

Desertification is land degradation that occurs as a result of climatic factors or human activities. Munif illustrates how mechanical technology has transformed a living valley into a stretch of dead land, leaving behind only a few hills. The piles of tree remnants and the silence of the valley serve as evidence that mechanical land conversion has obliterated the valley's original identity, leaving an arid landscape. Massive land clearing devoid of conservation principles is the primary cause of land degradation, wherein the soil loses its biological capacity (Wahyunto & Dariah, 2014).

The pollution of water, which serves as a fundamental element in the ecosystem, also signifies fatal ecological destruction. Within the novel's narrative, Munif further depicts the impact of oil mining on water quality:

بصمت مشوا. اقتربوا من براميل المياه. كانت الأرض هناك زلقة، مليئة بالمياه الراكدة .. وكانت رائحة المكان كريهة، أما حين لامست المياه وجوههم فقد أحسوا أن لها طعماً غير مستساغ، ربما نتيجة الصدأ، أو نتيجة إضافة مواد غريبة، سأل صويلح ما إذا كانوا يشربون من هذه المياه أم لا

(They walked in silence. As they approached the water barrels, the ground there was slick, filled with stagnant water. The place emitted a foul odor, and when the water touched their faces, they noticed it tasted unpleasant, perhaps due to rust or the addition of strange substances. Suwailih asked whether they drank that water or not.)

The aforementioned narrative demonstrates the perilous impact of modern technology when water, which should be a source of life, transforms into something foul-smelling, slick, and tasting of rust. Anwar (2025) asserts that water pollution is a sign of nature turning unhealthy, which can subsequently lead to toxic impacts on surrounding living things. This indicates that the oil industry mirrored in the novel has stripped away the most fundamental right of living creatures: access to clean water, which has now been contaminated by waste.

Munif also portrays unnatural climate change within his narrative:

بدأ الصيف الثقيل القاسي والناس الذين تعودوا في السنين الماضية على دخول الصيف بتمهل، معلناً عن نفسه بتزايد الحرارة والرطوبة، فوجئوا أن صيف هذه السنة هجم هجوماً سريعاً مبكراً، وتميزت بدايته برياح لافحة وبزوابع رملية، حتى كادت حران تختفي تحت هذه الزوابع التي تهب من الصحراء

(The heavy and harsh summer arrived, and the people who in previous years were accustomed to the gradual onset of summer, marked by a rise in heat and humidity were taken by surprise because this year's summer arrived swiftly and prematurely, its onset was marked by scorching winds and sandstorms, until Harran nearly vanished beneath the gales blowing from the desert)

The aforementioned narrative demonstrates that nature has lost its equilibrium due to human intervention. This is evident when the gradual rise in temperature and humidity, which traditionally signaled the arrival of summer, is replaced by sandstorms following the execution of the mining project. Human activities specifically oil mining in the novel release chemical substances that induce global warming effects, thereby influencing climate change.

Several of these depicted ecological destructions align with the theory of slow violence articulated by Nixon (2011). Environmental destruction resulting from oil mining does not occur abruptly; rather, it damages quietly and gradually (Nixon, 2011). This demonstrates that the consequence of brutal oil capitalism activities is the ruin of the initial ecosystem's equilibrium, which ultimately impacts both humans and the surrounding biotic elements.

Oil Capitalism as a Destructive Force

Petrocapitalism serves as the primary driver behind the destruction depicted in the novel. Oil capitalism in this work does not operate merely as an economic system, but rather as a new 'force of nature' that eradicates the local cultural order and transforms nature into a purely material asset. As Moore (2015) explains, capitalism does not operate outside of nature. Instead, it organizes nature as a free resource to secure the accumulation of surplus value. The oil extraction by American corporations in the Arabian Peninsula forces a shift from the use-value of water and land for Bedouin society to the exchange-value of crude oil for the global market.

This destructive force is legitimized by the alliance between transnational capital and the local ruling elite class (the Emir). The dialogue between the Emir and his collaborative agent, Ibn Rashed, dismantles the ideology of extractive capitalism, which posits that nature holds no intrinsic value other than the financial potential contained within its bowels. The Emir, devoid of even a shred of empathy toward the ecological crisis looming over his citizens, provides a justification for the destruction of the landscape:

"تحت أرجلنا يا ابن الراشد بحر من النفط، بحر من الذهب والخويا جاءوا ليخرجوا النفط والذهب"

(Beneath our feet, O Ibn Rashed, lies an ocean of oil, an ocean of gold, and these friends (the Americans) have come to unearth that oil and gold)

The phrase 'an ocean of gold' represents the paradigm of petro-modernity. Oil capitalism positions the earth as a vault to be forcibly plundered. This system functions as a socially destructive force through class alienation. The egalitarian Bedouin society, which previously possessed the autonomy to survive independently, was forced to transform into cheap, waged menial labor (Szeman, 2007). They were required to operate the very machines used to obliterate their own homeland.

The destructive force of oil capitalism culminates in the construction of a racist and segregating infrastructure within the worker camps. Barbed-wire fences were erected to separate the comfortable residential areas allocated exclusively for American staff from the suffocating, inhumane barracks designated for local Arab workers. Munif portrays this narrative in the following excerpt:

والبركس الذي كان يضم حوالي خمسة عشر رجلاً في بداية الأمر، أصبح يضم في فترة لاحقة بين العشرين و الخمسة والعشرين. أما الذي فُوحوا به الإنتقال فقد شعروا بالخيبة، لأن الهواء الذي كان يلعب بالخيام، والذي يصبح عذبا رقيقا في الليل المتأخر و عند الفجر، لم يعد له وجود في هذه العلب التي تصبح كأنها الأفران الخائقة، حيث تعبق بالحرارة ورائحة العرق و النوم

(The barracks, which initially housed about fifteen men, later held between twenty and twenty-five. Those who had been evacuated were disheartened, for the air that used to drift into the tents fresh and gentle late at night and at dawn was nowhere to be found in these structures, which became like empty ovens where heat and the stench of sweat lingered during sleep.)

The construction of the 'cities of salt' in the novel reflects a city that possesses absolutely no ecological correlation with its surrounding coastal environment. Munif names this city Mudun Al-Milh as a metaphor that oil capitalism offers only an illusion of prosperity. Its social and economic structures are highly vulnerable, incapable of sustaining a viable existence, and will ultimately collapse dissolving into the sea like salt when the crisis reaches its peak (Munif, 1984).

Reflections on the Pastoral Concept

Within Garrard's framework, the pastoral concept is understood not merely as an aesthetic representation of beautiful natural scenery, but rather as a discourse that positions nature as a harmonious space of escape from the corruption of urban civilization (Garrard, 2004). Historically, the pastoral constructs an illusion of a timeless, rhythmic relationship between humans and nature. Although the landscape of Mudun Al-Milh is situated in the Middle East with a desert geography contrasting sharply with the green pastures common in the European tradition, Munif establishes a mesmerizing version of an Arabian Pastoral in the opening sections of his novel.

Wadi al-Uyoun functions as a pastoral space where humans live symbiotically with palm trees and water oases. This dependence upon and reverence for nature creates a tranquil cycle of life tied to the Earth's ecological rhythms. Munif describes the community's customs in nurturing nature and experiencing communal joy upon the arrival of the planting season:

في سنوات الخير يظهر الخير، أول ما يظهر، في وادي العيون، إذ إضافة إلى غزارة المياه التي تملأ الأحواض الثلاثة المحيطة بالنبع، فإن مياه العيون تتحدر إلى أماكن لم يكن متوقعا أن تصلها. وفي تلك السنين تزرع الخضرة، وتظهر النباتات المختلفة، خاصة التي تأتي مع الأمطار المبكرة، ويتصرف الناس في الوادي بطريقة لا يصدقها المسافرون

(In the years of abundance, bounty manifests first and foremost in Wadi al-Uyoun, for in addition to the copiousness of the water filling the three basins surrounding the spring, the water from the springs cascades to places it was never expected to reach. In those years, greenery is cultivated, and various plants emerge, especially those brought by the early rains and the people of the valley behave in a manner that travelers find hard to believe)

This pastoral harmony is disrupted and destroyed by the power of technology. The concept of *The Machine in the Garden* popularized by Marx (1967) to describe the industrial invasion of rural landscapes, finds its manifestation within this text as American trucks and oil-drilling rigs tear through the oasis. The reflection on the pastoral concept in Mudun Al-Milh is essentially a narrative of fierce protest against environmental degradation. Munif depicts the beauty of past life harmonized with nature to satirize a modern world that marginalizes ecological consciousness. By contrasting the pre-mining conditions with the aftermath, readers are forced to confront the immense scale of ecological destruction that has occurred.

Reflections on the Apocalyptic Concept

The concept of the apocalypse serves as a metaphor to mobilize critical consciousness regarding the destruction of the Earth. According to Garrard (2004), apocalyptic narratives are divided into two primary frames: the comic (where disasters serve as warnings so that humans can reform their behavior and prevent doomsday) and the tragic (where disasters are viewed as an inevitable final destiny, saturated with despair). The narrative of Mudun Al-Milh adopts an apocalyptic frame, wherein the arrival of the oil industry is perceived as the annihilation of the cosmic order.

The characters in the novel who echo this apocalyptic rhetoric are Mut'ib al-Hathal and the marginalized figure of Umm Khosh. For Mut'ib, the American machines and geological surveyors are demons (shayatiin) that bring destruction. He is unable to comprehend a mechanical reality operating at a speed beyond human reasoning; consequently, he articulates it in eschatological terminology. Upon witnessing heavy equipment moving to ravage the landscape, he is struck by terror and despair:

"القيامة؟ اليوم هو يوم القيامة. يقولون: إذا مشى الحديد على الحديد؟ اليوم رأيت الحديد يمشي على الحديد. سيحترق هذا الوادي.. وأنت أصل البلاء"

(The Day of Judgment? Today is the Day of Judgment. They said: When iron walks upon iron? Today I saw iron walking upon iron. This valley will burn... and you are the source of all this catastrophe.)

The phrase 'iron walks upon iron' represents an apocalyptic vision in which industrial technology becomes the agent of doomsday for the local community. On the other hand, the character of Umm Khosh, who has lost her sanity, also gives voice to this ecological apocalypse. She runs through the wadi, issuing bizarre warnings to those around her, prophesying that the oasis will be utterly consumed by fire through a catastrophe brought about by the greedy hands of local rulers and foreigners alike.

This reflection on the apocalyptic concept demonstrates that for indigenous civilizations, the ecological crisis is not a phenomenon of the future; rather, the apocalypse has already occurred—unfolding the very moment the system of oil capitalism encroached, forcibly uprooting palm trees and destroying the water aquifers that served as the lifeblood of the entire community.

Reflections on the Dwelling Concept

Garrard (2004) elaborates on the concept of dwelling by drawing upon the philosophical thought of Martin Heidegger, who conceptualizes dwelling not merely as the physical act of residing within a structure, but rather as an existential process of being-in-the-world. Furthermore, Garrard (2004) explains that dwelling involves organic bonds, ethical responsibilities, and historical memories passed down through generations upon a specific landscape. It stands as the antithesis to the lifestyle of modern society, which is alienated, nomadic, and perceives geographical space merely as commodities or real estate to be traded.

Prior to the discovery of oil, Wadi al-Uyoun stood as a manifestation of dwelling. The relationship between the Bedouin society and nature was bound by reverence and spirituality. The integration between human biological identity and the environment is evident when Mut'ib al-Hathal speaks to his youngest son, linking his child's age with the growth of a palm tree in their orchard:

"ذلك النخلة الرابعة على اليسار، بعمرك يا وليدي؛ وكل ما تكبر أنت يوماً تكبر معك... ويظل وادي العيون أخضر"

(That fourth palm tree on the left is the same age as you, my son; every day you grow bigger, it grows along with you... and Wadi al-Uyoun will remain green.)

The quote above demonstrates that dwelling in Wadi al-Uyoun is a manifestation of ontological rootedness. However, this order is deconstructed by petrocapiatalism. The oil company carries out forced evictions, destroying orchards and residents homes to clear the way for pipeline installations and drilling rigs. The displaced local inhabitants are forced to migrate to the coastal city of Harran. In Harran, the concept of dwelling shatters entirely. The city is an artificial space, severed from the values of indigenous wisdom, and operates under the control of industrial time (shift work schedules, factory whistles) that alienates its workers.

Through Garrard's ecocritical theory, the displacement from the oasis to Harran constitutes a form of spatial genocide. The Americans are depicted as having no intention of dwelling, settling with moral responsibility, but rather merely sojourning, staying temporarily to extract financial profit. Conversely, the local Arab community, having lost their ancestral lands, is forced to inhabit a new space of alienation where their identity, dignity, and emotional relationship with the Earth have been transformed into the commodification of the working class under global capitalism.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of Abdurrahman Munif's novel *Mudun al-Milh: Al-Tih*, it can be concluded that oil capitalism operates as a destructive force that transforms the natural landscape from an ideal pastoral space into an arid wasteland. The penetration of the extractive industry brought by foreign corporations triggers an ecological collapse within the Wadi al-Uyoun oasis. This physical damage manifests through activities of deforestation and desertification, the pollution of water sources, and climate changes that induce premature sandstorms. Theoretically, this succession of degradation confirms the operation of the concept of slow violence, wherein environmental destruction resulting from fossil fuel extraction does not occur instantaneously, but rather gradually erodes the order of the ecosystem over time.

This study demonstrates that oil capitalism operates not merely as an economic system, but rather as a neo-force that commodifies the web of life. A fundamental shift occurs from the Bedouin community's utilization of nature based on use-value to a reliance on the exchange-value of crude oil for the global market, a process legitimized by local ruling elites. Through Greg Garrard's threefold ecocritical framework, this spatial deconstruction is captured as tranquil pastoral harmony is transformed into an impending apocalyptic threat experienced by the indigenous society. Meanwhile, the concept of dwelling rich with historical memory and spirituality, is replaced by an alienating living space within the labor barracks of Harran. This research underscores that petro-modernity has simultaneously given rise to spatial genocide. The system of petro-capitalism not only physically ruins the carrying capacity of the ecosystem, but also strips away the identity, dignity, and communal way of life of the native population. The egalitarian Bedouin society is forced to transition into an alienated, cheap labor class within the fragile urban structures of Harran.

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