

ANIMAL RIGHTS IN SARA GRUEN'S *WATER FOR ELEPHANTS*: AN ECOCRITICISM STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen which released in 2007 tells about August, person in charge of the circus show; treat the animals' circus in terrible way. The main concern of this study is to analyze the rights of animals' circus by using Ecocriticism theory suggested by Cheryll B. Glotfelty. After analyzed the object, the writer found that the rights of animals' circus were totally unfulfilled, and cause further problems such as humane euthanasia, the abuse of human power, industry of circus and many more. It also found that the ideology constructed to the story is how the human's life was depends on the existence of animals. All of those findings are supported by the supporting data from Tamara L. Roleff (1999) which more concerned on the animal that Glotfelty mostly discuss about nature.

Keywords: Abuse; Animal Rights; Circus; Ecocriticism.

1. Introduction

One of major topic which had been discussed this time is the misapplication of treatment towards animals which made a pro and contrary side. By observing the case posed above, since 1970, people have been campaigning 'Animal Rights' to media in order to prevent the mistreatment to the animals. Most of people support this campaign, because they think that the existence of animals as occupant of the earth is as important as human. Moreover, many women are willing to be nude, battling for the animal life. Unfortunately, this huge action still could not prevent the animal abuse which happened in this era. Peter Wilson believes that animals have the right to live free of suffering (Roleff 18). This statement reminds us of torturing the animals which has been done by certain people for their private business. People who disagree with animal rights' campaign consider that torturing, exploitation, or even killing animals are unimportant things. They disbelieve that animals have the right to live. Furthermore, for some rich people, they consider animals as their hobby or even sport, such as; hunting ducks, trunks collection and etc. This action could not be tolerance, because they do this action only for their satisfaction only, not for their daily needs.

One of steps to preserve the environment wisely, we could try to understand in the course of literary texts. In this study, the writer had chosen *Water for Elephants's* a novel written by Sara Gruen to be analyzed. Sara Gruen is an animal lover who lives with her husband, three children, five cats, two goats, a dog, and a horse in an environmental community north of Chicago. Many of the characters and incidents in the novel are based on real people and true stories gleaned from her extensive research into the world of traveling circuses of the 1930s. *Water for Elephants* won the Book Sense Book of the Year Award in 2007, has been a fixture on the *New York Times* bestseller lists and is now a major movie. *Water for Elephants* tells about August, person in charge of the circus show, treat the animals' circus in terrible way. He fed the animals with inappropriate food; putrid, give a drink of whiskey to the animals. Also, he hurt the elephant with bull hook, only because the elephant did not follow his commands. Moreover, the purpose of August torturing animal's circus is to fulfill his ambition to be a successful man in world of circus, so he can pay his workers. Sara Gruen has a superb imaginative style of writing that encourages the readers to read the novel more profoundly and then makes them to imagine the events that occurred in the past. This is applied very well in *Water for Elephants* in which this novel is related to animal rights issue which contains of animal torture which has been done by human.

Since this study is concerning to the environmental issue, *Ecocriticism* is the basic theory to lead the writer in analyzing the problem in the *Water for Elephants*. As in Glotfelty's book, *The Ecocriticism Reader*, William Howarts argues that,

"*Eco* and *critic* both derive from Greek, *oikos* and *kritis*, and in tandem they mean "house judge," which may surprise many lovers of green, outdoor writing. So the *oikos* is nature, a place Edward Hoagland calls "our widest home," and the *kritos* is an arbiter of taste who wants the house kept in good order, no boots or dishes strewn about to ruin the original decor" (Glotfelty 69).

From the description posed above, it implies that there is a connection between human and nature in which human has a conceptual of thinking that they are supposed to nurse the nature as their home as well.

As stated in the Peter Barry's book,

“For the ecocritic, nature really exists, out there beyond ourselves, not needing to be ironised as a concept by enclosure within knowing inverted commas, but actually present as an entity which affects us, and which we can affect, perhaps fatally, if we mistreat it” (Barry 251).

It could be implied from the definition posed above that he believes that every action had been done by human in this earth will affect plants and animals. Yet, it also affect to the human itself that they get the good or bad impact based on their action.

As the aim of this study is to reveal the representation of animals' circus that indicates in the *Water for Elephants* novel, the writer uses other theory that support the analysis as a tool to analyze the problems that related to the rights of animals by Tamara L. Roleff et al (1999). Roleff argues that animal has their own rights in order to posses their rights to free of suffering.

“According to a 1995 survey commissioned by the Associated Press, two-thirds of Americans agree with the statement, “An animal's *right* to live free of suffering should be *just as important* as a person's.” This overwhelming public support shouldn't come as a big surprise. No one likes to see an animal suffer. Indeed, kindness towards animals is a praised virtue in our society. Animal rights are really little more than an effort to live up to this ideal” (Roleff 18).

By observing the rights of animal, people should understand more about the definition of rights.

“Rights are an amorphous human concept developed within a culture and differ considerably, depending on the culture and society, and only defined and upheld within the laws and social conventions of a particular society” (Roleff 105).

The definition about rights posed above implies that everything, including human and non human, in this earth has their own right to possessed. Moreover, the rights that built is depends on the culture around them. It means that, not all rights that built in this universe have the same position to apply in every action.

“In searching for a just foundation for ethical behavior, we must reject all the irrational and emotional influences that can lead us astray. This includes our feelings of compassion, our intuitions, and even our most deeply held beliefs. To weed out our hidden prejudices we must be willing to question everything we believe to be true and accept only those beliefs which survive critical scrutiny” (Roleff 19).

Based on the definition posed above, to distinguish the treatment towards animal, as human who had a common sense, people are assisted to treat the animals equal. So, there is no belief that human is superior than animal.

In analyzing this novel, the writer applies qualitative research which is used to cover a wide range of approaches and methods as it stated by Ritchie and Lewis (2003). There are two sources in this data source part, which are used in this study. First is primary source which is using *Water for Elephants*' novel written by Sara Gruen. By using the novel itself, the writer focuses on the animal rights issue done by those major characters whose will be discussed in this paper. Therefore, the second sources is any written about primary sources or original material; a second-hand information. Somehow, website media also used in supporting this paper progress.

Moreover, the writer use an Ecocriticism theory as the basic theory. This theory is mostly talking about nature in which this theory is inappropriate to be applied for further analyzes. Thus, the writer use another theory comes from Tamara L. Roleff (*The Rights of Animals*, 1999) to support the findings. Thus, to make this study more complete, the writer uses three steps in execute this study, there are; the portrayal of animal within the work, the different ways in the text, and the ideology construction.

The literary works already emerges within analyzing on the environmental issue in which novel, poems, film and other literary works. As a result, English Department of Faculty of Humanities in Airlangga University had a researcher as a pioneer who her thesis is analyzing the environment issue that is Chairina Okta Wardani (2011), *Waste as the Major Ecosystem Problem and Its Solution in Andrew Stanton's Wall-e: An Ecocriticism Study*. Wardani's thesis has a similarity with this study it discusses

about the representation of nature and human in the future. Her thesis concluded that the earth that covered by the trash and the only thing that concern about it is the robot. The Robot has much more awareness towards the earth's future than human itself. Hence, Wardani uses *Ecocriticism* as the theory to analyze the problems in the *Wall-E*. Hence, she believes that from the trash itself, it could emerge the human's awareness towards the nature, especially the earth.

The next work is *The American Circus and The Great Depression: 1929-1939* by Frederic Denver Pfening (1976). His thesis also has a much similarity in this study that is talks about the setting of time and place and the American circus. Pfening argues that circus which happened in that time was using train in order to moves from place to place, town to town, region to region (Pfening 1). He also argues that Great depression also give bad impact to the economic factor in which the circuses were still trying to bankrupt one another on the eve of World War II (Pfening 3).

As a result, those two works are having dissimilarities with this study. Even the First works talks about the environment issue; the works is focusing on the nature aspect only and the object is film. The second works is concerning about the setting of time and the emergence of circuses in the America. Thus, it also dissimilar with this study which is talking about nature, this study is focusing on the animal aspect in which the rights of animals' circus. Yet, the previous studies will be used to expand the analyzing of this study and also, the writer's idea in working this thesis is an original task.

2. Discussion

2.1 The Portrayal of Animal within the Work

The economic factor is the important thing that people have to concern about. It is because of the setting of this novel is when the great depression in the 1930s was held and that makes many people suffered. Railroad Circus, on that period, is one of the best ways for lower class to earn the money to survive. Thus, the economic factor affect the condition of animals' circus.

Most of problems of animals rights are caused by August, the person in charge, who has an ambition of having a spectacular performance of railroad circus. Unfortunately, another problem such as economic factor may cause August tortures the animals' circus. Torture is the intentional infliction of pain and suffering (Roleff 21). This action surely could not be tolerated, as long as people could remember that the rights of animals are the rights to possess a freedom of life.

Basically, the problems are coming when Uncle Al bought an elephant, Rosie. The existence of Rosie is for replacing the horse, Silver Star, as the main show in the circus. Besides, the other problem which comes out because of the existence Rosie in the railroad circus is because of the different language. The only language that Rosie's understand is Poland, and this case was revealed in the almost the end of story. Before they knew the way of how they could understand each other, Rosie always gets bad treatment from August. Even though Jacob and Marlana, August's wife, already forbid August to stop that terrible thing, August still unchanged and hitting and stabbing Rosie with the bull hook. And, during that period, Rosie noticed to the people who gave her a good and bad treatment toward her. Consequently, in the end of the story which is the disaster situation came out and insist Rosie to kill August in order to saving Marlana who will be killed by August. In this case, an elephant is a type of animal that had a good memory in which it can distinguish the human who ever treat them in a good or bad way.

2.2 Animals in the entertainment industry are abused

Many problems toward animals' circus which had been attract the activist to discuss about the animals circus' problem. It seems that animal's circuses are happy, well cared and far away from mistreatment. Unfortunately, the animal rights movements say otherwise. They say circus animals are exploited, and suffer from disorientation, boredom, and "psychotic behavior." (Roleff 191) Occasionally, animals' circuses are well treated. But, it was only when the trainer are getting the benefit from the animals circus itself. And of course, it was only goes for a moment, and then it goes like before.

The trainer, of course, needs a huge effort in order to change wild animals into animals' circus like they want. Most circus animals are wild, not domesticated. They resist training because it is unnatural and may be painful or frightening for them (Roleff 200). Actually, wild animals interpret the human's treatment as a threat. They were caught, kicked out from their home, felt displacement and disoriented with a new place and were forced to follow the people's command. Instead, trainer feels the opposite way

that wild animals which they teach are the hardest animals in the universe. The discomfort they endure may incite the animals to behave violently, and even de-clawed, trained animals may be a potential danger to their trainers and to the public (Roleff 201). To solve that problem, trainers do the torture which is oppression toward animals in order to change their behaviors, habitual and their mindset about their new life that must be lived. Moreover, this action had been done by human, August, was represented in the *Water for Elephants*' novel. Since this study accentuate to the animals' circus life, the most prominent character of animal in this story is Rosie. Rosie is an elephant that forced to be an animal circus. Moreover, to be an animal circus, Rosie had many abuses treatment from August because of she does not follow August's command. She had been stabbed with a bull hook so many times. Not only physically, but also psychologically she had like August's statement which he always offends her with a matter of intelligence, like "stupid", and these abuses happened for a long time.

Firstly, the writer wants to show the mistreatment toward animals' circus in the case of food. This conversation below is represented when Jacob helping August to feed the cats with putrid, Jacob suddenly realized that these foods are rotten. Jacob begun refuses to feed them but August insists.

"August, we can't feed them this."

"Why not?"

"It's gone off." There's no answer. I turn and find that August has set a second bucket beside me and left. He's marching up the tracks carting another two buckets. I grab mine and catch up.

"It's putrid. Surely the cats won't eat this," I continue.

"Let's hope they do. Otherwise, we'll have to make some hard decisions." (107).

From the dialog posed above, it can be seen that the animals' needs was unfulfilled. The animals circus has their rights to get a fresh and healthy food; likewise, August and all of people who join the railroad circus management had the healthy and decent meal. August wants the animals act so beautifully but he treat the animals' circus with heartless.

Secondly, variety of mistreatment toward animals' circus had been showed in the previous part. There is also displacement happened toward animals circus. The horses, lion, and of course Rosie had not enough space when they entered their cage, called beast wagons. This problem seems underestimated and ignored. Roleff argues that the animals are denied basic freedom of movement and may not have enough room to stand up, or even turn around. In one hand, these animals must eat, sleep and defecate in these cages (Roleff 201). On the other hand, these animals are forced to have a good consciousness condition when they would start the show.

2.2.1 The Abuse of Human Power

Violence toward animals circus had been done by August is a crucial action. There are some reasons that makes August treat the animals circus in a false manner, even torture them. Based on great depression time they had, it affects August to run his business ambitiously. Unfortunately, his ambition leads him to the negative way, especially to the animals' circus. August will do anything to make his circus become a famous circus in the world and give him lot of money.

One of problems of animals' abuses is when Uncle Al had just knew that all of those times who stole the lemonade was Rosie, the elephant, and he get mad to August, Marlana and Jacob. Directly, August went to the Rosie's cage and tortures her without any command from Uncle Al, Jacob, or Marlana. Dialog bellow here is the representation of August's anger which appears unexpectedly. This may cause by Uncle Al's statement that he will cut August salary off for another payment. Then, August delivered his anger about Uncle Al's statement towards Rosie. "August stands utterly still. Then he **reaches for his top hat and bull hook. He heads for the doorway.** "I'm not the only one who's going to pay for the lemonade," he says, shaking her off" (271).

Whereas, in this case, the only reason of Rosie had done this is because she is thirsty. By the case of the stolen of lemonade, it can be seen that August limits the supply of water for Rosie. But, August ignored it and forget that elephant is an herbivore animal. By considering the condition of the circus place, it is located in the dry land which far away from grass that contains of water in order to fulfill an elephants' need which is water. Consequently, August limits or never give Rosie enough water. Thus, Rosie who

oppressed to learn and act in a circus show which is in a place that less of water, she suddenly stole the lemonade to fulfill her thirst.

Other cases that shows the brutalism of August toward Rosie is when August get anger about the payment of Rosie's wagon. August had paid of it but he got nothing from Rosie, and once again, then he blame his anger to Rosie. In page 179, it implies w Rosie begins her show for the first time. Unfortunately, her first introduce was not went successfully, it is failed. Rosie which rebelled August's tortures with a bull hook, suddenly she run away out of the tent. Intuitively, Marlana, who still riding her, almost felt onto the ground. Yet, Marlana could hanging on the top pole and act like the dancer and pretend that her action was the part of the show.

Moreover, In the story, Rosie's need was unfulfilled by considering the action done by Rosie when she stole the lemonade water. Rosie has a unique method in case of did not get caught of the people in the railroad circus. She pulls out her stakes, move it into the nearest lemonade. After she drinks, she goes back to her place and brings the stake with her and put it into the ground. It indicates the Rosie's smart and tricky way in stealing the lemonade could be categorized as an animal instinct. In the story, "She pulls out her stake, takes it with her, drinks the goddamned lemonade, then goes back and sticks her stake in the ground!" (270). It implies that Rosie as an animal which had an instinct to fulfill her need as far as she could. Even though she was shackled with stake, she could pull out and takes it back onto the ground. It means that Rosie could think, and it means that she is not stupid animal. Besides, a thief who stole the lemonade for the whole times was Rosie. It stated that much lemonade in every city they arrived was missing. It indicates how often she stole an amount of water to fulfill her needs of thirst level. Thus, the writer found that elephant could not be separated with water. AZA, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, stated that water suitable for drinking or bathing must be available daily or at greater frequency as needed to meet the elephant's cooling needs in the ambient environment (AZA 1). By remembering that elephant has a huge size, and then this animal has a huge requirement also.

In the book of *Management Guidelines for The Welfare of Zoo Animals: Elephant*, for further information that focusing on the Elephant aspect, Animals should have access to drinking water from the indoor area and troughs should be cleaned daily. And also, Elephants need access to water, especially during hot weather (7-8). It is clearly defined that Elephant must have an access to get water as much as they need. Nevertheless, in this story, the elephant was treated cruelty by unfulfilled the important need. In contrary to the story in *Water for Elephants*, Rosie gets less of water in case of her drink, food, and in the matter of her area. As a result, the rights of Rosie in possessing the water is completely ignored by August which means that animal circus' need is unfulfilled.

2.2.2 The Supply of Alcohol for Animals

The use of alcohol, in this story, is frequently consumed by the workers of the railroad circus. It possibly that alcohol also consumed by the animals' circus. The workers force the animals to drink the alcohol in order to make the animals follow their command. This short cut way may be chosen, because workers want the easiest way not the best way. Accordingly, animals who habitually consume the alcohol, it constructs the animals all the things they remembered about is only alcohol. Using animals to test therapeutic drugs has also proven unreliable. These reactions included heart failure, respiratory problems, convulsions, kidney and liver failure, and death (Roleff 74).

The example of alcohol abuse toward Rosie is when she was found after she ran off from the circus show and Rosie was forced to drink alcohol in order to get Rosie back to the tent of railroad circus area as soon as possible. "**Elephants love alcohol. See? One whiff of this and she doesn't care about cabbages anymore. Ah!**" he says, batting the trunk away. "*Powiedzialem przestan! Pozniej!*" (212). Those examples represents us how they use alcohol toward the animals easily without considering the effect. Indeed, alcohol make the animal follow their command, but with a wrong treatment. Many ways to make them follow our command, such as trick them with food or something else.

As the writer had mention before that this study use a novel *Water for Elephants*, as a title itself surely has the implication meaning. By connecting to the theory, the writer relates the title meaning with an *Ecocriticism* viewpoint. Since this study talks about nature, water itself could be decipherable as nature. In which, based on the story, Rosie is the animals circus which always looking for a water. When she was

begin her life in a railroad circus, her supply of water was unfulfilled. It means that water is the important thing to be worried about. And so does the nature. Up till now, the use of nature is still being ignored. Whereas, nature is the only way to make people survive. Without nature, earth is only an infertile land. It implies that nature has a meaning as plants, animals, and other thing that produced in this earth which is addressed for human.

Moreover, the matter of water symbolize the concept of nature in which Rosie, as elephant, could not be separated with water in order to fulfill her needs in case of food, to keep her thick skin which become rough and another else. Thus, to keep her survive, she always looking for the water so that she will not loss energy to spent in the railroad circus life. Hence, the writer found that elephant could not be separated with water. AZA, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, stated that water suitable for drinking or bathing must be available daily or at greater frequency as needed to meet the elephant's cooling needs in the ambient environment (AZA 1).

Based on the case posed above, the indication of using alcohol in order to replace the use of water in here, it is because of the railroad circus which always moves in one place to another place only by train. Because of this nomad railroad circus, the supply of water is hard to get. It might be caused of the great depression era in which water is hardly to get, and might be caused of the price was expensive. Also, the awareness of using water as the animals need is ignored. Indeed, alcohol is easy to get, but, it contains a bad effect which is could affect animals' health

The animals' circus' life, in this story, has a lot of mistreatment done by August. Food and drink for animals' circus must be fulfilled and it should be health as well. On the opposite, the animals' circus' need which is water is not fulfill. "They've loaded the water wagon, **but it won't last three days**. We'll have to stop along the way" (100). It implies that the people in the railroad circuses are aware about the existence of water. Indeed, they do load the water for the people and the animals in the railroad circus. Nevertheless, the amount of the water itself is not enough to fulfill them because they have to stay in the train in which moves to the next destination. So, the people could not do anything in case of fulfill the need of water for animals' circus except only giving them a food.

2.3 Different Ways within Environmental Issue

There are so much ways in order to deliver the environment issue portrayed in the novel *Water for Elephants*. The writer found the 'behind the scenes' of animals circus life that revealed in this novel. By concerning to the issue of animal rights, this step will resume the previous step by showing the different ways within environmental issue. Thus, this step will lead this study to the last step, ideology construction.

2.3.1 The Dark Side of Animals' Circus' Life

The ability of animals to understand of what people commands is the greatest ability to be proud of. It is not because of the human who succeed train the animals. But, it is because animals have no choices. Animals are teaches to jump, roll over, ride a bike, and others. As a result, firstly, the animals are oppressed, forced by those treatments done by human. Human do the stabbing, hitting with a stick and even with a hook. Those cases are habituating the animals to obey the master. Then, their mindset was changed that they must follow human's command in order to keep them away from abuses and torturer.

Based on this story, life of animals circus is depends on human's treatment. The animals' circus' life looks happy. But, the truth is, they are suffered. They were displacement from their true life. Even though they are went to the show, they were out of the cage, they still not feel free because in the show performance, they are forced to act and follow the trainer command to give the audience best show on earth. Their brief moments of illusory freedom only come when they perform (Roleff 201). After they do the performance, they go back to their limited cage, and live their boredom life until they were expected to perform again.

2.4 The Ideology Constructed in *Water for Elephants*

Ecocriticism is not only criticizing the environmental issue that contain of plants, but also concerned to the animals which interpret the relation between human and animal. Man named all the animals, thus establishing his dominance over them. God planned all of this explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes (Glottfelty 9). In other word, human are supposed to give a good treatment toward animals. As time goes by, the function of animals

are changed and replaced by the technology which created by human. Horses are not used to pull the vehicle, buffalo are not used to help people in the field, pigeon are not used to deliver the mail anymore, etc. In this case, the function of animals is replaced by the technology which gives a bad effect towards animals in which animal's function is needless anymore.

By considering the function of the technology that created by human, the function of animals are changing. Some animals are moved to other place and feels displacement because of their home was taken by human which is the development of building. And some animals are catches and being pet. Furthermore, many wild animals are catches and will be used as animal circus. As represented in this study, the writer wants to analyze the case of animal circus which their rights were taken by human. The rights of animals are to get a freedom of life in which free of torture, abuse, oppress mistreatment and other else. "An animal's *right* to live free of suffering should be *just as important* as a person's" (Roleff 18). Moreover, the human's treatment towards animals' circus is clearly portrayed in the *Water for Elephants* novel by Sara Gruen.

The treatment had been done by August, as the prominent character who against the animal's rights, towards animals' circus is inappropriate way. August fed the animals with putrid, placed them in a limited cage, and maximize the function of the animals' circus even though they are sick. This mistreatment made animals' circus suffered and they could not just reject what human's command, because human will torturer them until the human itself get what they want. The DNA molecule is the reflexiveness of matter; the animal mind is the reflexiveness of instinct; the human mind is the reflexiveness of the animal mind (Glotfelty 44). Thus, animals have no choice except they follow human's command and then their mindset about their behavior will changed.

By relating the final step of the study which is to find the ideology construction, the writer found that how the humans' live was depends on the existence of animals. The most important function of circus show is not only to make the audience happy, but also to get the life from animals. Animals' circuses are forced to fulfill humans' need. Human apply the discipline toward wild animals brutally, cruelty in order to make them become a good animals circus. Many circuses are guilty of not providing the most basic of necessities, such as adequate care and housing for the animals (Roleff 200).

Thus, animals' circus becomes a commodity of circus industry. By using animals' circus as their commodities to gaining the benefit for human's life, people took the life of animals' circus that they were supposed to posses their freedom life without any mistreatment that had been done by human.

3. Conclusion

In great depression era, the economical factor has collapsed. American people are hardly to earn money to survive. Some people are trying to join the railroad circus which moves from city to city, region to region, etc. Because of the background of great depression era, a novel *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen, animals' circus in the railroad circus of Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth were treated in an awful way and their needs are much unfulfilled.

This study of animal will be more comprehensive if also analyze about animal welfare in which animal welfare is not specifically depicted in this story. Also, it will be a great topic for the next research because animal rights only examines about the basic needs of animal, meanwhile animal welfare observes the essence of animal. The purpose of animal welfare is showing the relationship between human and animal that brings benefit from both parties. Accordingly, if animal rights were covered, the animal welfare would be fulfilled. In addition, the animals' life will be much more guaranteed. Hence, this topic could be used for the next research emphasizing to the beauty of animals' performance since the beauty of Rosie whose could amuse the audience is not clearly covered because this study is discussing about the unfulfilled of basic needs of animals' circus.

The hero of this novel is an animal, the elephant, not the human. Through her action, Rosie emerge the reader's awareness about the relation between human and animal supposed to be. And also, this story tells about the life of animals' circus that is rarely exposed in the literary works, because railroad circus is different with the settled circus. As a result, the socio economical context are depicted in this story from the American history in the 19th century which is the life of railroad circus that happened in great

depression has an exclusive characteristic. Recently, railroad circus is not popular anymore because of the difficulty of managing the animals moved in and out of the wagon.

Based on the novel, August, as the person in charge, represented as the human who had the power to conquer all. By relating to the theory of *Ecocriticism*, August is depicted as the human as the owner of the land. It implies that human as the supreme being in which human has the power to set up everything as they want. By linking to the explanation posed above, human as the oppressor and the environment as the oppressed. In contrary with the story of *Water for Elephants*, the writer found that this story could reverse the hierarchy. To sum up, there is no hierarchy between human, plants, and animals, they are all equal. They are equal to possess their right to be free, free of suffered, abused and the other pain thing. Human are not supposed oppress animals in order to satisfy their desire.

Besides, in order to emerge the awareness to the readers, water is very important not only for nature, but also for animal as the living thing in this earth. Hence, the story of *Water for Elephants* reveals the behind the scenes of animals' circus life where the life of animals' circus is different with the appearance. The life of animals' circus seemed beautiful. Nevertheless their happy life is only an illusion.

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Water for Elephants, published in 2007, is Sara Gruen's third novel. The inspiration for the book was a Chicago Tribune article about Edward J. Kelty, a photographer who followed traveling circuses around the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. Gruen was so fascinated by the images that accompanied the article she bought two volumes of old-time circus photographs. She abandoned the book she had been planning to write and immediately began researching the world of the train circus. A few years later, Water for Elephants was published. Ranked number one on the New York Times bestseller list for several weeks, Water for Elephants was one of the most popular novels of 2006. Author Biography. Sara Gruen was born in 1969 in Vancouver, Canada. An elephants faithful "one hundred per cent!" THEODORSEUSS GEISEL, Horton Hatches the Egg, 1940 WATER FOR ELEPHANTS P r o l o g u e Only three people were left under the red and white awning of the grease joint: Grady, me, and the fry cook. Grady and I sat at a battered wooden table, each facing a burger on a dented tin plate. The cook was behind the counter, scraping his griddle with the edge of a spatula. He had turned off the fryer some time ago, but the odor of grease lingered. The rest of the midway "so recently writhing with people" was empty but for a handful of employees and a smal