

**THE MARXIST ECOCRITICISM OF CAPITALISM IN
PAOLO BACIGALUPI'S *THE WATER KNIFE***

A THESIS

**Presented in a Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for Completing the
Sarjana Degree in Department of English Literature**



By:

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**FAKULTAS ILMU BUDAYA
UNIVERSITAS 17 AGUSTUS 1945 SURABAYA**

2025

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This is to certify that the Sarjana Thesis of RESTU AISYAH RIZKI PERMATASARI entitled **"THE MARXIST ECOCRITICISM OF CAPITALISM IN PAOLO BACIGALUPI'S *THE WATER KNIFE*"** has been approved by the thesis advisor for further approval by the Examining Committee.

Surabaya, 6th March 2025
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Mateus Rudi Supsiadji, S.S., M.Pd

APPROVAL SHEET II

This is to certify that the Sarjana Thesis of RESTU AISYAH RIZKI PERMATASARI entitled "THE MARXIST ECOCRITICISM OF CAPITALISM IN PAOLO BACIGALUPI'S *THE WATER KNIFE*" has been examined and approved by the thesis Examining Committee as the requirement for Sarjana Degree in English Literature.

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MOTTO

"Perubahan tidak datang dari diam. Perubahan datang dari usaha, doa, dan keberanian untuk memulai."

— Anies Baswedan

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The writer realizes that this thesis still has some limitations. Therefore, constructive suggestions and criticisms are highly welcomed for future improvement. Hopefully, this thesis can be beneficial to readers and all related parties.

Surabaya, 9th July 2025

Writer

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes capitalism in Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife* using a Marxist ecocritical approach. The research focuses on the commodification of water resources as a form of capitalist exploitation and its social impacts. This study employs Marxist ecocritical theory, which combines critiques of capitalism with environmental issues. This study uses an extrinsic literary approach that combines sociological and ecocritical approach to analyze the narrative and dialogue in the novel. Data was collected through reading and note-taking techniques, then analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques. The study finds that water is commodified through privatization, water rights, infrastructure control, and premium access, making it available only to those who can afford it. This creates inequality and unfair distribution. The novel shows social impacts such as economic gaps between rich and poor, environmental damage from overexploitation, alienation and individualism among characters, housing crises, poverty, and declining social welfare. This research contributes to literary studies by offering a new perspective on how water is exploited under capitalism and how this affects society.

Keywords: *capitalism, environmental crisis, water commodification*