



Pride's Nemesis: Nature's Ecological Verdict in The Scarlet Ibis

Rufaida Syifa Rohma¹, Henrikus Joko Yulianto²

^{1,2}English Literature/ Faculty of Language and Arts, Semarang State University, Indonesia

Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-06-17 Revised: 2026-06-07 Accepted: 2026-06-30 Keywords: ecocriticism; ecological symbolism; Erik Erikson's psychosocial development; sibling conflict, the scarlet ibis DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.10648 Corresponding Author: Rufaida Syifa Rohma nufaidasyifarohma@gmail.com English Literature/ Faculty of Language and Arts, Semarang State University, Indonesia	<i>This article examines James Hurst's The Scarlet Ibis through Erik Erikson's (1950) psychosocial development theory and ecocriticism. It explains how the narrator's pride, driven by shame, contributes to Doodle's tragic death. Using a qualitative literary approach with close reading analysis, this study focuses on the narrator's inner psychological conflict, the sibling relationship, and the symbolic role of nature. The analysis shows that the narrator's actions change from care to cruelty as shame, ambition, and identity conflict grow stronger, especially during the Initiative vs. Guilt and Industry vs. Inferiority stages. At the same time, natural elements such as the scarlet ibis, the storm, and the swamp work as ecological signs that warn of tragedy and show nature's moral reaction to human excess. Unlike earlier studies that looked at psychological conflict and environmental symbolism separately, this study combines both perspectives to show how shame between siblings and ecological symbols work together to create the tragic ending. This research adds to ecocritical literary analysis by showing how psychological dynamics can be understood as part of ecological symbols, offering a way to connect individual psychology with environmental meaning in literary study.</i>

1. Introduction

James Hurst's *The Scarlet Ibis* (1960), first published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, remains an important work in American short fiction and has long been included in school and college reading lists (Mambrol, 2021). The story is narrated by an unnamed older brother who reflects on his childhood relationship with his younger brother, Doodle (real name William Armstrong). Doodle was born with a severe physical disability that makes him weak, dependent, and initially expected to die in infancy.

At the beginning of the story, the narrator shows care and affection toward Doodle, but his attitude gradually changes. Feelings of shame, pride, and a desire to make Doodle seem "normal" increasingly influence his behavior, eventually contributing to Doodle's death. The short story is therefore not only about the relationship between two brothers

but also highlights the psychological pressure imposed by social expectations, particularly on individuals who are viewed as weak or disabled.

The rural North Carolina setting in the early twentieth century deepens the story's meaning. Nature is not a neutral backdrop but an active presence: the scarlet ibis, storms, swamps, rain, "bleeding tree", and graveyard flowers all contribute to a tense atmosphere filled with signs of danger, fragility, and moral consequence. These natural elements foreshadow Doodle's fate and suggest a deeper critique of excessive pride. In ecocritical terms, nature in the story functions as both symbolic and agentive: it reflects human actions, signals moral tension, and can be read as responding to human excess, particularly pride that ignores fragility and disability.

Many studies have examined *The Scarlet Ibis*, especially its psychological meaning and symbolic elements, but they tend to treat these aspects separately. Some researchers use developmental theories to explain the narrator-Doodle relationship. For example, Orenstein & Kaur (2026) apply developmental frameworks to interpret the brothers' dynamic in terms of pride, guilt, and identity formation. Others adopt an ecocritical approach inspired by Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) to focus on nature as an active force in the story, emphasizing how environment and landscape shape meaning (Oppermann, 2021). However, these studies generally discuss psychological conflict (such as pride and guilt) apart from the role of nature. They rarely explore how psychological processes and ecological symbolism interact or reinforce each other. In addition, while disability is central to the plot, most literary analyses do not engage seriously with disability studies. They mention Doodle's physical limitations but do not examine how disability shapes identity, sibling dynamics, or the moral logic of the narrator's pride (Kafer, 2013).

This gap is significant. Previous studies have examined psychological conflict and ecological symbolism in *The Scarlet Ibis*, but they have generally approached these aspects independently. Developmental and psychosocial studies focus on the narrator's feelings of shame, pride, guilt, and identity formation (Erikson, 1950; Orenstein & Kaur, 2026), while ecocritical research emphasizes the symbolic and agentive role of nature in shaping literary meaning (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996; Buell, 1995; Oppermann, 2021). As a result, the relationship between the narrator's psychological struggle and the story's natural imagery remains insufficiently explored.

This gap becomes even more important when considering the role of disability in the story. Although Doodle's disability is central to the plot, literary analyses often mention his physical limitations without fully examining how disability shapes identity formation, sibling dynamics, and the narrator's emotional responses (Kafer, 2013). The narrator's shame and pride emerge largely in relation to Doodle's perceived difference, suggesting that psychological conflict, disability, and environmental symbolism are closely connected rather than isolated elements. Examining these relationships together provides a broader understanding of how the story constructs tragedy and moral consequence.

This limitation is particularly important because Doodle's disability lies at the center of the narrative. His physical vulnerability shapes the narrator's emotional responses and influences the development of their sibling relationship. Although disability is central to the plot, literary studies often acknowledge Doodle's condition without examining its broader connection to identity, family dynamics, and symbolic representation (Kafer, 2013). A more integrated reading can therefore provide a deeper understanding of how personal conflict, disability, and environmental symbolism contribute to the story's tragic outcome.

To address this issue, the present study combines Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory (1950), particularly the stages of Initiative vs. Guilt and Industry vs. Inferiority, with ecocriticism as developed by Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) and Buell (1995). Through this framework, this study examines the narrator's shame-driven pride,

the symbolic role of natural elements such as the scarlet ibis, the storm, and the bleeding tree, and the ways these psychological and ecological dimensions converge in the narrative.

In a broader literary context, this study contributes to discussions of Southern Gothic literature by showing how landscape in *The Scarlet Ibis* reflects moral tension, emotional disturbance, and tragedy rather than serving as a neutral background (Buell, 1995). It also contributes to ongoing scholarly discussions of disability, empathy, and environmental awareness by showing how Doodle's vulnerability and the story's natural imagery shape the narrator's conflict and the ending's meaning (Kafer, 2013; Mambrol, 2021).

Based on this background, this research aims to:

1. Analyze the narrator's pride, shaped by shame, using Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, and
2. Examine the role of nature as an ecological symbol that foreshadows events and reflects moral consequences through an ecocritical perspective.

This study seeks to show how these two aspects work together in shaping the tragedy experienced by Doodle, offering a more complete understanding of sibling relationships, disability, and environmental symbolism in the short story. To guide this analysis, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory explain the narrator's shame, pride, guilt, and destructive behavior toward Doodle in *The Scarlet Ibis*?
2. How does nature function as an ecological symbol that foreshadows tragedy and reflects human pride in *The Scarlet Ibis*?

By answering these questions, this study contributes to ecocritical literary analysis by demonstrating how psychological conflict and environmental symbolism operate together in shaping literary tragedy. This study also offers a broader understanding of sibling relationships, disability, and ecological meaning in *The Scarlet Ibis*.

2. Method

1. Research Design

This study employs qualitative literary approach to examine how the narrator's psychosocial struggles intersect with ecological symbolism in James Hurst's short story *The Scarlet Ibis* (1960). The approach is interpretive rather than empirical, focusing on meanings, symbols, character development, and thematic connections within the text. The analysis integrates two theoretical frameworks: Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory (1950), particularly the stages of Initiative vs. Guilt and Industry vs. Inferiority, and ecocriticism as articulated by Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) and Buell (1995). These frameworks are applied to the same key passages to reveal how psychological conflict and environmental symbolism interact.

2. Primary Text and Data Source

The primary data source is James Hurst's short story *The Scarlet Ibis* (1960), which serves as the corpus of analysis. As a literary study, the text itself is the object of inquiry. The analysis focuses on the unnamed narrator's (Brother's) psychosocial conflict, his relationship with Doodle, and the symbolic role of nature in the story. Selected passages that depict sibling interactions, moments of shame, pride, guilt, and ambition, as well as passages featuring the scarlet ibis, storm, swamp, rain, and the "bleeding tree," form the core textual material for interpretation.

Supporting theoretical sources include:

- 1) Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (1950) for psychosocial stages;
- 2) Glotfelty and Fromm, *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) for ecocritical concepts;
- 3) Buell, *The Environmental Imagination* (1995) for environmental imagination and Southern Gothic context;
- 4) Selected peer-reviewed studies by Orenstein and Kaur (2026) and Oppermann (2021) for comparative context.
- 5) Kafer, A. (2013). *Feminist, queer, crip*. Indiana University Press.

These secondary sources are used to frame and strengthen the analysis, not as data in themselves.

3. *Data Collection: Close Reading and Textual Selection*

Data collection was conducted through a systematic close reading of *The Scarlet Ibis*. The process involved several steps:

- 1) First Reading: The entire story was read to gain a holistic understanding of plot, characters, setting, and major themes
- 2) Second reading with annotation: The text was read again with careful annotation to mark passages that:
 - a. Reveal the narrator's feelings of shame, pride, guilt, ambition, or conflict related to Doodle's disability;
 - b. Depict interactions between Brother and Doodle that show shifts from care to cruelty;
 - c. Feature natural elements (the scarlet ibis, storm, swamp, rain, bleeding tree) that seem to foreshadow events or respond morally to human actions.
- 3) Selection of key passages
- 4) Organization of textual evidence

4. *Theoretical Application*

Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory was implied by identifying:

- 1) Initiative vs. Guilt
Moments where the narrator's "trains" Doodle, for instance, teaching him to walk, row, etc., and feels guilt when these efforts harm Doodle.
- 2) Industry vs. Inferiority
Moments where the narrator compares Doodle to other children, feels ashamed of Doodle's disability, and ties his own self-worth to Doodle's progress.

Ecocriticism was applied by treating nature as symbolic, agentive, and morally responsive. The analysis examined how natural elements foreshadow tragedy, reflect Doodle's fragility, and register a moral response to the narrator's pride.

The two frameworks were then integrated to demonstrate how psychological conflict and ecological symbolism reinforce one another.

5. *Trustworthiness*

Interpretive credibility was maintained through:

- 1) Thick description by using detailed quotations to support all claims.
- 2) Theoretical consistency by applying Erik Erikson's stages and ecocritical concepts.
- 3) Triangulation by reading passages through both psychosocial and ecocritical lenses.
- 4) Reflexivity was applied by acknowledging that the findings are based on interpretation and by avoiding excessive generalizations..

3. Result

1. *Psychological Findings: The Narrator's Shame, Pride, Guilt, and Destructive Behavior*

The findings indicate that the narrator's behavior in *The Scarlet Ibis* is shaped by feelings of shame, pride, guilt, and a desire to prove himself (Hurst, 1960). Over the course of the story, his relationship with Doodle changes from one of care and support to one marked by pressure and control. This change suggests that his actions are influenced not only by affection for his brother but also by personal insecurity and concern about how others perceive him (Erickson, 1950). This behavior reflects Erikson's stage of Initiative vs. Guilt, as the narrator actively tries to improve Doodle's abilities but later experiences guilt when his efforts contribute to harm rather than success (Erickson, 1950).

For instance, the narrator describes teaching Doodle to walk and later pushing him to do things he is not physically ready for (Hurst, 1960): "*I tied a stick to his bedpost and taught him to pull himself up... I would not let him be a burden*" (Hurst, 1960, p.1). This quotation reflects the narrator's strong desire to improve Doodle's abilities, while also revealing his difficulty in accepting Doodle as he is. Rather than being motivated solely by concern for his brother, the narrator's pride is linked to his wish to make Doodle conform to social expectations of normality (Hurst, 1960).

That motivation becomes clearer later in the story when the narrator directly admits that shame and pride influence his behavior: "*I did not know then that pride is a wonderful, terrible thing, a seed that bears two vines, life and death*" (Hurst, 1960, p. 3). The findings also show that Doodle is consistently presented as fragile, dependent, and vulnerable throughout the story (Hurst, 1960). From the beginning, he is portrayed as physically weak and emotionally reliant on others, particularly on his older brother (Hurst, 1960). This dependence becomes a key factor in shaping their relationship and increasing the emotional tension between them (Mambrol, 2021). Furthermore, Doodle's disability functions not only as a physical limitation but also as a source of conflict within the brotherly relationship. It contributes to the narrator's feelings of shame and fuels the pride that motivates many of his actions (Kafer, 2013).

2. *Ecological Findings: Nature as Symbolic, Agentive, and Morally Responsive Presence*

Another important finding is that nature plays a symbolic role throughout the story (Hurst, 1960). Elements such as the scarlet ibis, the storm, the swamp, the rain, and the bleeding tree appear repeatedly and are associated with fragility, isolation, decline, and death (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996). These images help create a strong sense of warning and contribute to the tragic mood of the narrative (Buell, 1995). From an ecocritical perspective, nature is not simply a setting for the events of the story. Instead, it acts as an active presence that reflects and responds to the characters' actions and emotional struggles (Oppermann, 2021).

The scarlet ibis itself is described vividly, "*It slipped from the tree... its bill was bright red, and its body was fallen in the grass*" (Hurst, 1960, p. 6). The scarlet ibis's striking red color and unexpected death closely reflect Doodle's fragility and foreshadow his tragic fate (Hurst, 1960). These findings also indicate a strong symbolic connection between the bird and Doodle through repeated parallel imagery. Both are portrayed as delicate figures struggling to survive in challenging environments, and both are characterized by their vulnerability and sense of being out of place. Together, the deaths of both the ibis and Doodle strengthen this symbolic relationship, with the bird's death serving as an early indication of the tragedy that later befalls Doodle.

This study also finds a close relationship between the narrator's psychological conflict and the natural environment in the story (Hurst, 1960). Natural elements such as the swamp, the storm, and the rain frequently appear during moments of struggle, disappointment, and emotional tension (Buell, 1995). These settings develop alongside the narrator's actions and the progression of the tragedy, suggesting that nature is closely connected to the emotional atmosphere of the narrative (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996). This connection is especially clear in the story's final scene (Hurst, 1960): *"The rain was falling... I ran forward, but Doodle was dead"* (Hurst, 1960, p. 8). The storm occurs now when the narrator experiences failure and guilt, highlighting the close connection between nature and the emotional development of the story (Oppermann, 2021). Rather than serving only as weather conditions, the rain and storm reflect the emotional and moral consequences of the narrator's pride (Buell, 1995). This finding supports the ecocritical perspective that nature functions as more than a background setting. Instead, it acts as a meaningful and active presence that responds to human actions and reinforces the story's central themes (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996).

3. Integrated Findings: Interaction Between Psychological Conflict and Ecological Symbolism

The ending of this story confirms the interaction between psychological conflict and ecological symbolism (Hurst, 1960). The narrator's abandonment of Doodle during the storm, followed by Doodle's death and the repeated red imagery, marks the climax of the story (Hurst, 1960). In this moment, the narrator leaves Doodle alone in the storm because of his pride and inability (Erikson, 1950): *"He lay very awkwardly, with his head thrown far back, making a 'V' in the neck of his sheet... his neck and chest were bright red"* (Hurst, 1960, p. 8). The final scene brings together the story's major themes of pride, guilt, vulnerability, and nature's warnings in a single tragic event (Hurst, 1960). The repeated use of red imagery, including the scarlet ibis, the red flowers, and Doodle's bleeding body, creates a strong connection between the narrator's emotional conflict and the symbolic role of nature (Buell, 1995). These findings suggest that the narrator's pride, which is rooted in shame, and the warnings conveyed through the natural environment are closely connected rather than separate elements of the story (Oppermann, 2021). Together, they contribute to the chain of events that leads to Doodle's death (Hurst, 1960).

When viewed through Erikson's theory, this scene highlights the consequences of the narrator's unresolved struggles in the stages of Initiative vs. Guilt and Industry vs. Inferiority (Erikson, 1950). His pride drives him to push Doodle beyond his physical limits, while his feelings of guilt emerge only after the tragic outcome has already occurred (Orenstein & Kaur, 2026). From an ecocritical perspective, the same scene presents nature as an active and meaningful presence. The storm, rain, and recurring red imagery reflect the consequences of the narrator's actions, particularly his pride and inability to accept Doodle's vulnerability (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996).

Together, these findings suggest that the tragedy in *The Scarlet Ibis* results from the close relationship between the narrator's psychological conflict and the story's ecological symbolism (Hurst, 1960). The narrator's pride, rooted in feelings of shame, leads him to place excessive demands on Doodle, while the natural environment repeatedly foreshadows danger and loss (Buell, 1995). By combining Erikson's psychosocial theory with an ecocritical approach, this study demonstrates how personal conflict and environmental symbolism work together to shape the story's tragic ending (Oppermann, 2021).

4. Discussion

This discussion demonstrates that *The Scarlet Ibis* is more than a story about a tragic relationship between two brothers. It also reveals a strong connection between psychological conflict and ecological symbolism. Through the combined use of Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory and ecocriticism, the narrator's feelings of shame, pride, guilt, and responsibility can be understood in relation to both Doodle's vulnerability and the natural environment surrounding them. Rather than functioning as a simple backdrop, nature plays an important role in reflecting emotional tension, foreshadowing tragedy, and reinforcing the story's central themes. This integrated interpretation is significant because it connects two aspects that previous studies have often examined separately: the narrator's psychological struggles and the symbolic role of nature (Erikson, 1950; Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996; Orenstein & Kaur, 2026; Oppermann, 2021).

The narrator's shame and pride form the emotional center of the story. From the beginning, his wish to hide Doodle's disability and prove himself to others shows that his care is mixed with insecurity. His confession that he had planned to kill Doodle because of shame reveals how deeply social pressure shapes his behavior (Hurst, 1960). This supports Erikson's view that identity is formed through struggle, especially when the self is tested by social expectations and feelings of failure (Erikson, 1950). The narrator's efforts to teach Doodle walking, swimming, and other skills at first appear loving, but they are also driven by pride and the need to escape embarrassment. In this sense, care becomes control, and support becomes pressure. Orenstein and Kaur's discussion of disability and family expectations helps clarify this tension, since Doodle's disability is not treated as a neutral condition but as something that becomes emotionally loaded within the family relationship (Orenstein & Kaur, 2026).

Doodle's fragility is central to this conflict. He is physically weak, dependent, and emotionally vulnerable, which makes him deeply reliant on the narrator for both safety and affection. His repeated plea, "Brother, Brother, don't leave me! Don't leave me!" shows how strongly he depends on that relationship for survival and comfort (Hurst, 1960). From a psychosocial perspective, this dependence intensifies the narrator's sense of responsibility and guilt, because every act of "help" is also an act of power over someone more vulnerable. The result is not simply a story about an older brother helping a younger brother, but a story about the danger of linking love to achievement and worth (Erickson, 1950). Doodle's body and behavior are repeatedly framed through weakness, and this encourages the narrator to measure him against standards that he cannot fully meet. That pattern deepens the emotional distance between them and makes the final tragedy more likely.

At the same time, the story's natural imagery gives the psychological conflict a wider meaning. The scarlet ibis, the storm, the swamp, the rain, and the "bleeding tree" are not just decorative details. They create a pattern of fragility, displacement, and death that mirrors Doodle's situation. In ecocritical terms, this supports the idea that literature can present nature as active in shaping meaning rather than passive in the background (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996). The ibis, a rare bird thrown into an unsuitable environment, can be read as a parallel to Doodle, who is also fragile and out of place in a harsh world. The image of the bird lying "like a broken vase of red flowers" is especially important because it joins beauty with brokenness, much like Doodle's own presence in the story (Hurst, 1960). The bird's death does not simply predict Doodle's fate; it also gives the reader a way to understand Doodle as a vulnerable life surrounded by danger.

This ecological pattern becomes even clearer in the scenes involving the swamp and the storm. The swamp is described with a mix of beauty and decay, which matches the unstable nature of the narrator's attempt to force Doodle's development. What looks like progress is also risky and unnatural. The storms that damage the landscape similarly

suggest disorder and imbalance, and they frame the moments when the narrator's actions become most harmful (Hurst, 1960). Buell's discussion of environmental imagination is useful here because it reminds us that landscape in literature often carries moral and emotional weight, especially in Southern writing, where setting frequently reflects inner tension (Buell, 1995). In this story, the natural world can therefore be read as more than a symbolic background. It becomes part of the emotional structure of the narrative, helping to shape how readers understand fear, pressure, and loss.

The final tragedy brings the psychosocial and ecological dimensions together most clearly. When the narrator leaves Doodle behind in the storm, the scene joins emotional failure with environmental danger. Doodle's cry, "Brother, Brother, don't leave me! Don't leave me!" makes the psychological cost of the narrator's pride undeniable (Hurst, 1960). The storm does not merely accompany the moment; it heightens it, making the abandonment feel even more severe. The repeated red imagery, especially in the final description of Doodle's body, links him back to the ibis and completes the story's symbolic pattern (Hurst, 1960). From an Eriksonian perspective, this moment marks the collapse of the narrator's effort to prove his worth. His initiative has turned into guilt, and his desire to overcome shame ends in irreversible loss (Erikson, 1950). From an ecocritical perspective, the scene suggests that nature is not neutral here. It functions as a morally charged presence that reflects the cost of human excess, although this should be understood as an interpretive reading rather than a literal claim about nature's intentions (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996; Oppermann, 2021).

These findings also have broader literary implications. For Southern Gothic studies, the story shows how setting can embody moral tension, emotional decay, and bodily vulnerability, rather than simply providing atmosphere (Buell, 1995). For ecocritical literary studies, the story demonstrates how natural imagery can work together with character conflict to produce meaning, not just foreshadow events. For disability representation, the story reveals how a disabled body can become a site of family anxiety, social judgment, and tragic misunderstanding, which helps explain why Doodle's fragility is so central to the narrator's psychological conflict (Orenstein & Kaur, 2026). Taken together, this study shows that *The Scarlet Ibis* is not only a story about brotherhood and loss, but also a layered exploration of shame, disability, and the uneasy relationship between human emotion and the natural world.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that *The Scarlet Ibis* is not only a story about the death of a disabled child, but also a story about how shame, pride, and emotional pressure damage a fragile sibling relationship. Through Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, the narrator's behavior can be understood as a struggle between care and insecurity, especially in the stages of Initiative vs. Guilt and Industry vs. Inferiority. His desire to train Doodle reflects both concern and control. Although he wants to help his brother improve, his actions are also shaped by shame and by the wish to appear capable in the eyes of others. In this sense, his behavior is not guided by love alone, but also by fear of failure and social judgment (Erikson, 1950; Orenstein & Kaur, 2026).

At the same time, an ecocritical reading shows that nature in the story is not merely a background. The scarlet ibis, the storm, the swamp, the rain, and the decaying landscape all work as meaningful symbols that build tension and foreshadow the tragedy. These natural elements also reflect the emotional atmosphere of the story and the fragility of Doodle's life. Rather than standing apart from human experience, nature becomes part of the story's emotional structure, helping to reveal the seriousness of the narrator's actions and the

vulnerability at the center of the narrative (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996; Buell, 1995; Oppermann, 2021).

The final scene brings these two perspectives together most clearly. Doodle's death marks the point where the narrator's inner conflict and the story's ecological symbolism meet. The narrator's pride, shaped by shame, leads him to push Doodle beyond his limits, while the storm and repeated red imagery intensify the sense of loss. From this point of view, the tragedy is not caused by one factor alone, but by the interaction of psychological pressure and environmental symbolism. This combined reading shows that pride becomes destructive when it replaces compassion and respect for fragility.

This study contributes to a fuller understanding of *The Scarlet Ibis* in three ways. First, it shows how Erikson's theory helps explain the narrator's unstable sense of self and his destructive behavior toward Doodle. Second, it demonstrates that nature in the story functions as an active symbolic force, not just as decoration. Third, it shows that the tragedy becomes more meaningful when psychological and ecological readings are brought together instead of being treated separately. In this way, the story offers a strong example of how sibling conflict, disability, and nature can be read within one connected framework.

This study also has some limitations. It relies on a qualitative close reading of one literary text, so the interpretation is necessarily shaped by textual analysis rather than measurable data. It also draws mainly on English-language scholarship, which may narrow the range of perspectives included. Because of this, the findings should be seen as an interpretive reading rather than a final or universal explanation of the story.

Future research could build on this study in several ways. Researchers may compare *The Scarlet Ibis* with other works that explore disability, shame, or nature symbolism. They could also use reader-response approaches to see how different audiences interpret the story's emotional and ecological meanings. Another possible direction is to examine how disability representation in literary texts changes when read through both psychosocial and ecocritical lenses. These approaches would help expand the conversation beyond a single text and deepen the discussion of how literature represents human vulnerability.

In conclusion, this study shows that *The Scarlet Ibis* remains relevant because it speaks not only about loss, but also about shame, responsibility, and the cost of pride. It also suggests that literature can reveal how human behavior and the natural world are closely connected. Through this combined reading, the story becomes a reflection on emotional harm, fragile life, and the consequences of failing to value compassion.

6. References

- Buell, L. (1995). *The environmental imagination: Thoreau, nature writing, and the formation of American culture*. Harvard University Press.
- Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Glotfelty, C., & Fromm, H. (Eds.). (1996). *The ecocriticism reader: Landmarks in literary ecology*. University of Georgia Press.
- Hurst, J. (1960). The scarlet ibis. *The Atlantic Monthly*.
- Kafer, A. (2013). *Feminist, queer, crip*. Indiana University Press.
- Mambrol, A. (2021, June 12). Analysis of James Hurst's *The scarlet ibis*. *Literariness.org*. <https://literariness.org/2021/06/12/analysis-of-james-hursts-the-scarlet-ibis>
- Masruddin, M., Amir, F., Langaji, A., & Rusdiansyah, R. (2023). Conceptualizing linguistic politeness in light of age. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 11(3), 41-55.

- Oppermann, S. (2021). Material ecocriticism and the creativity of storied matter. *Frame: Journal of Literary Studies*, 26(2).
- Orenstein, G. A., & Kaur, J. (2026). Erikson's stages of psychosocial development. In *StatPearls*. StatPearls Publishing.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK556096/>