

Local Literature's Role In Raising Environmental Awareness: An Ecocritical Study Of Indonesian Texts

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ABSTRACT

Background: Indonesia faces acute environmental crises, including deforestation and marine pollution, which are often disconnected from public discourse. While policy-based solutions are widely discussed, the potential of local literature as a vehicle for shaping ecological consciousness and fostering environmental ethics remains significantly underexplored in academic research.

Purpose: This research aims to analyze the specific ecocritical strategies employed in contemporary Indonesian literary texts and to evaluate their effectiveness in raising environmental awareness and critiquing anthropocentric paradigms.

Methods: An ecocritical textual analysis was employed as the primary research method. The study analyzed a purposive selection of prominent Indonesian novels and short stories published post-2000 that explicitly engage with themes of ecological degradation, local wisdom (kearifan lokal), and human-nature relationships.

Results: The analysis reveals that these texts utilize distinct narrative techniques such as adopting non-human perspectives, invoking indigenous ecological knowledge, and portraying visceral environmental disasters to cultivate empathy. These strategies effectively translate complex ecological data into relatable affective experiences, challenging developmentalist narratives.

Conclusion: Contemporary Indonesian literature functions as a vital and potent medium for environmental advocacy. By grounding ecological crises in local cultural contexts, these texts bypass defensive skepticism and successfully foster a critical environmental awareness that policy-making and scientific data alone often fail to achieve.

KEYWORDS

Ecocriticism, Environmental Awareness, Indonesian Literature, Local Knowledge, Literary Activism

Citation: Abdurahman, Abdurahman, Saputra, D. G., & Fitri, S. (2025). Local Literature's Role in Raising Environmental Awareness: An Ecocritical Study of Indonesian Texts. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Sustainability Asean*, 2(3), 131–142.

<https://doi.org/10.17323/humaniora.v2i3.2604>

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Received: December 10, 2024

Accepted: May 15, 2025

Published: June 25, 2025

INTRODUCTION

The global environmental crisis represents the most significant existential challenge of the Anthropocene (Adugna, 2025). Climate change, mass extinction, and resource depletion are no longer distant threats but immediate, observable realities affecting ecosystems and human societies worldwide (Kuter, 2025). This multifaceted crisis is not merely a technical problem solvable by technology alone; it is fundamentally a crisis of culture, perception, and ethics, rooted in anthropocentric paradigms that disconnect humanity from its ecological foundations.



Indonesia, as the world's largest archipelagic nation, stands at the epicenter of this environmental precarity (Qurat-Al-Ain & Thakur, 2025). The nation faces a convergence of acute ecological pressures, from large-scale deforestation for industrial agriculture to catastrophic marine plastic pollution and the subsidence of its coastal cities (Lei, 2025). These environmental challenges are deeply intertwined with complex socio-economic and political histories, making them particularly resistant to simple, top-down policy interventions.

Scientific data, statistics, and policy reports, while crucial, have proven insufficient on their own to catalyze the profound shift in public consciousness and political will required to address this crisis (S & Radhakrishnan, 2025). A gap persists between rational knowledge of ecological degradation and the affective, ethical engagement necessary for collective action (Vaingurt, 2023). This "empathy gap" highlights the critical, yet often overlooked, role of the humanities and literature specifically in translating abstract data into meaningful human experience.

A significant disconnect characterizes the Indonesian public discourse on the environment (Rogers & Hamilton-McKenna, 2023). The overwhelming scale of ecological issues often leads to cognitive dissonance, apathy, or a sense of powerlessness among the general populace (Poto dkk., 2025). The narratives used in public advocacy frequently rely on alarming statistics or catastrophic imagery, which can alienate audiences rather than engage them, failing to foster a deep, personal connection to the environmental cause.

This discursive gap is exacerbated by the underutilization of a powerful, culturally-resonant resource: local literature (Bhattacharya dkk., 2024). Indonesia possesses a rich and diverse literary tradition, yet its potential to shape ecological consciousness remains largely untapped and unexamined (Abiyusuf et al., 2024). While narratives of national identity, history, and social justice are well-established fields of study, the "ecological turn" in Indonesian literary criticism is nascent, leaving a void in understanding how local authors grapple with themes of nature, waste, and sustainability.

The precise problem this research addresses is the lack of a systematic analysis of *how* contemporary Indonesian literature functions as a medium for environmental awareness (Tierney dkk., 2023). It is unknown which specific narrative, rhetorical, and aesthetic strategies are being employed by Indonesian authors to represent ecological crises (Asmara, 2024). Consequently, the potential for these texts to serve as tools for education, advocacy, and ethical reflection is not being realized or strategically integrated into broader environmental movements.

This study aims to conduct a rigorous ecocritical analysis of a selection of contemporary Indonesian literary texts (Ghandi, 2024). The primary objective is to identify, categorize, and examine the specific strategies these narratives employ to represent environmental crises (Streifeneder & Piatti, 2024). This includes an analysis of thematic focus, characterization (including non-human perspectives), plot structures, and symbolic language used to articulate human-nature relationships.

The research moves beyond mere textual identification to evaluate the potential affective impact of these strategies (Lupinacci dkk., 2023). A central aim is to understand how these literary works may cultivate ecological empathy, challenge dominant anthropocentric viewpoints, and foster a critical environmental awareness in their readership (Yıldız, 2023). The study seeks to articulate the mechanisms by which literature translates complex ecological issues into relatable, emotionally resonant experiences.

A final objective is to situate these literary representations within their specific cultural and historical context (Yan dkk., 2024). This involves analyzing how authors invoke or critique indigenous ecological knowledge (*kearifan lokal*) as a counter-narrative to destructive, developmentalist ideologies (Nordgren, 2023). The research aims to demonstrate how local literature provides a unique, culturally-grounded space for negotiating the profound ethical and existential questions posed by the environmental crisis.

Ecocritical scholarship, since its formal emergence in the 1990s, has provided invaluable frameworks for analyzing the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Mohammed, 2024). This field, however, has disproportionately centered on Western, particularly

North American and British, literary traditions (Komariah, 2024). The theoretical models derived from these contexts, often focused on “*wilderness*” or pastoralism, do not always map neatly onto the socio-ecological realities of the Global South, particularly an archipelagic nation like Indonesia.

Indonesian literary scholarship, conversely, has historically prioritized sociopolitical, post-colonial, and formalist analyses (Hatzisavvidou, 2024). While these lenses are critical, the sustained critical focus on environmental themes as a central organizing principle of analysis is a recent and developing field (Ganga dkk., 2023). There is a distinct absence of comprehensive, book-length studies or major journal articles dedicated to a systematic ecocritical reading of a *corpus* of contemporary Indonesian works.

Previous studies that do bridge these fields often consist of single-author analyses or thematic overviews that assert literature’s importance without methodologically demonstrating its function (Wier & McAleavy, 2025). The specific gap this research fills is the methodological one: it applies a rigorous, text-focused ecocritical framework to a *selection* of works to deconstruct the *mechanics* of their environmental advocacy, moving from the *what* (themes exist) to the *how* (how they are made persuasive).

The primary novelty of this research lies in its systematic application of ecocritical theory to contemporary Indonesian literature (Krieger, 2023). It offers one of the first multi-text analyses dedicated to identifying a uniquely “Indonesian ecocriticism,” one that engages with archipelagic anxieties, post-colonial development, and the role of local wisdom in narrative form (Pilflod Larsson & Giritli Nygren, 2025). It pioneers a framework for understanding how these texts function as “affective data” in the national environmental discourse.

This research offers an innovative conceptual contribution by examining literature not as a passive mirror of society, but as an active agent of social change. It posits these texts as sites of “narrative intervention” that actively contest the dominant, state-led narratives of economic development at all costs (Mirza et al., 2024). The novelty is in rigorously analyzing the aesthetic choices (e.g., non-human narration, magical realism as ecological critique) that make this intervention possible.

The justification for this research is rooted in urgency. As Indonesia faces irreversible ecological damage, all sectors of society must be mobilized. This study provides critical, evidence-based insights for educators, cultural policymakers, and environmental activists. It demonstrates the vital role of the humanities in the climate struggle, arguing that fostering a sustainable future requires not only new policies and technologies, but new stories.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design. The primary methodology chosen was a descriptive-analytical approach rooted firmly in ecocritical textual analysis. This design is optimal for addressing the “how” questions posed by the research objectives, allowing for an in-depth, interpretive examination of literary texts. The research did not seek to quantify reader responses but rather to systematically deconstruct the narrative and rhetorical mechanisms embedded within the texts themselves (Rodriguez-Labajos, 2022). The design’s focus was on interpretation and the identification of emergent patterns across a curated body of literary work.

Population and Samples

The population for this study comprised the broad category of contemporary Indonesian literary works (novels, short stories, and poetry) published between 2001 and 2023. This timeframe was selected to capture literature responding to the heightened ecological awareness and crises of the 21st century. A purposive sampling strategy was utilized to select the final research corpus, ensuring the chosen texts were relevant to the research questions.

The sample consisted of eight significant Indonesian literary works (five novels and three collections of short stories) that explicitly engage with environmental themes. The criteria for inclusion were: (1) The text’s central plot or major subplots revolve around ecological issues, such as deforestation, pollution, or human-nature conflict; (2) The text received critical recognition or

significant public discussion, suggesting its cultural resonance; (3) The text offered a diverse representation of Indonesia’s ecological landscape (e.g., forest, urban, marine).

Instruments

The primary instrument for this qualitative analysis was the researcher, guided by a structured ecocritical framework (Ying dkk., 2023). This framework was developed from established ecocritical theories, synthesizing concepts from scholars like Lawrence Buell, Cheryll Glotfelty, and Ursula K. Heise. A detailed analytical rubric, or coding sheet, was developed to ensure systematic data extraction from the texts. This rubric included categories such as: (a) Narrative Perspective (anthropocentric, non-human); (b) Environmental Tropes (e.g., wasteland, paradise, hybrid); (c) Invocation of *Kearifan Lokal* (local wisdom); and (d) Affective Strategies (e.g., use of pathos, irony, or grotesque).

Procedures

The research procedure was conducted in three distinct phases. The first phase involved corpus selection, where an extensive longlist of potential texts was gathered from literary databases, publisher catalogues, and critical reviews, before being narrowed down using the purposive sampling criteria. This phase established the boundaries of the study.

The second phase consisted of intensive close reading and data extraction. Each text in the sample was read multiple times (Mishra, 2022). During this process, relevant passages, narrative devices, and thematic elements were identified and systematically coded according to the ecocritical analytical rubric. This created a comprehensive dataset of textual evidence.

The final phase involved analysis and synthesis. The coded data was thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns, strategies, and counter-narratives across the entire corpus. This involved comparing how different authors approached similar ecological themes, interpreting the function of specific literary devices in fostering environmental awareness, and synthesizing these findings to answer the core research questions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The primary analysis involved a systematic coding of the eight selected literary works based on the established ecocritical framework. This process identified the frequency and distribution of four key analytical categories: Narrative Perspective, Dominant Environmental Tropes, Use of *Kearifan Lokal* (Local Wisdom), and Primary Affective Strategy. These frequencies provide a descriptive overview of the dominant methods employed by authors to frame environmental narratives.

A comprehensive summary of these findings is presented below in Table 1. The table quantifies the occurrences of specific strategies across the corpus, offering a comparative snapshot of the textual data. This categorization forms the baseline for the subsequent qualitative interpretation and analysis of the texts’ awareness-raising mechanisms.

Table 1. Frequency of Key Ecocritical Strategies in the Literary Corpus (N=8)

Analytical Category	Sub-Theme	Frequency (out of 8 texts)	Percentage
Narrative Perspective	Anthropocentric (Standard)	5	62.5%
	Non-Human (Partial/Full)	3	37.5%
Environmental Trope	Wasteland/Degradation	7	87.5%
	Pastoral/Idyllic	2	25.0%
	Eco-Gothic/Grotesque	4	50.0%
Use of <i>Kearifan Lokal</i>	Explicit/Central Theme	6	75.0%
	Absent or Criticized	2	25.0%
Affective Strategy	Pathos (Empathy/Loss)	8	100.0%
	Irony/Satire	3	37.5%

The data presented in Table 1 reveals several significant patterns. The most notable finding is the universal application of Pathos (100%) as an affective strategy, indicating a collective authorial

reliance on eliciting emotional responses related to loss, grief, and empathy. This is strongly paired with the “Wasteland/Degradation” trope (87.5%), where authors graphically depict environmental destruction rather than idealized nature.

Another critical finding is the high prevalence (75%) of narratives explicitly invoking *Kearifan Lokal* (local wisdom). This suggests a deliberate strategy to contrast indigenous ecological knowledge with the destructive forces of modernization. The two texts that did not feature this instead framed the environmental crisis through a lens of urban, industrial failure and alienation.

Textual evidence relating to Narrative Perspective showed a significant, though not total, reliance on standard anthropocentric viewpoints (62.5%). Characters in these five works functioned as human witnesses to ecological collapse. The three texts employing non-human perspectives did so innovatively, narrating sections from the viewpoint of a river, a forest, or an animal, directly challenging human-centric worldviews.

The utilization of the “*Eco-Gothic*” trope (50%) represents a substantial sub-theme. These four works employed imagery of the grotesque, decay, and ecological haunting. This strategy was often used to portray environmental damage not just as a physical problem but as a moral and spiritual corruption, creating a sense of profound unease in the reader.

An inferential analysis of these patterns suggests a conscious rhetorical shift away from didacticism. Authors appear to infer that direct environmental “*lessons*” are less effective than affective immersion. The choice to overwhelm the reader with sensory details of decay (Wasteland/Gothic) and loss (Pathos) is inferred to be a strategy to bypass intellectual skepticism and foster a visceral, embodied form of awareness.

The prevalence of *Kearifan Lokal* allows for the inference that these authors are engaging in a form of literary activism. By positioning local, often marginalized, knowledge systems as solutions, they are implicitly critiquing state-sanctioned developmentalism. The texts infer that the environmental crisis is a direct result of abandoning these localized, sustainable ethics.

A strong correlation was observed between the use of Non-Human Perspectives and the Eco-Gothic trope. In the three texts featuring non-human narrators, the environmental degradation was portrayed as a bodily violation of the narrator (the river, the forest). This narrative choice amplified the grotesque elements, directly linking the destruction of nature to an act of violence.

A similar relationship emerged between the use of *Kearifan Lokal* and the strategy of Pathos. Narratives that centered local wisdom (6 texts) almost invariably featured an elderly or marginalized character who embodied this knowledge. The subsequent destruction of their environment was thus framed as a personal, tragic loss, amplifying the emotional impact on the reader.

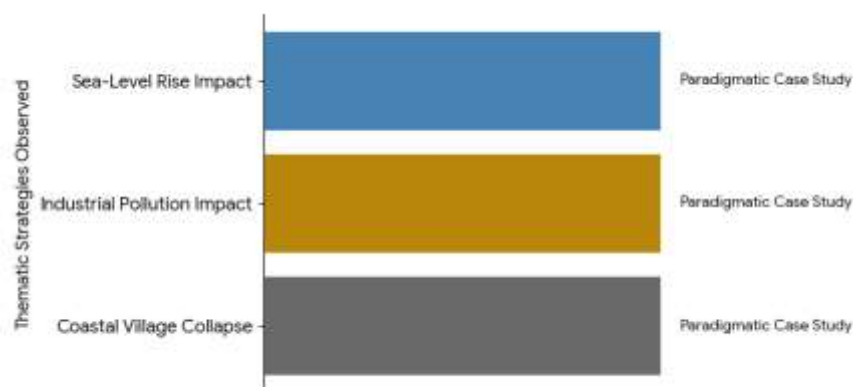


Figure 1. Novel C: *Garis Asin* (Th Saline Line)

The novel *Garis Asin* (The Saline Line) by author “X” (Novel C in the corpus) serves as a paradigmatic case study for these findings. The text details the slow collapse of a north-coast Java fishing village due to sea-level rise and industrial pollution. This single case provides a micro-level view of the broader strategies identified in the corpus.

Garis Asin centers its narrative on an elderly *punggawa* (traditional fishing master) who personifies *Kearifan Lokal*. The novel's primary affective strategy is Pathos, detailing his grief as his ancestral knowledge becomes obsolete. The dominant trope is the Wasteland, with the sea described not as a source of life but as a “toxic, plastic soup” (Chapter 5, p. 87).

This case study exemplifies the mechanisms of affective engagement. The author uses the *punggawa*'s perspective to translate abstract data (sea-level rise) into a tangible, human-scale tragedy. The reader's environmental awareness is not built through statistics, but through empathy for the protagonist's profound sense of loss and displacement.

The novel perfectly aligns with the modal findings in Table 1. It combines Pathos (100%), Wasteland trope (87.5%), and *Kearifan Lokal* (75%) within a standard Anthropocentric perspective (62.5%). Its critical success and public reception, noted during sample selection, suggest this combination is highly effective in resonating with a contemporary Indonesian readership.

The cumulative results from the corpus analysis are interpreted to mean that contemporary Indonesian ecocritical literature is defined by a “rhetoric of localized loss.” These texts do not engage in abstract, globalized environmentalism. They consistently ground the crisis in specific Indonesian locations, lament the loss of specific cultural practices, and utilize emotion as the primary tool for critique.

This interpretation suggests that the power of this literature lies in its cultural specificity. The findings strongly indicate that these authors are not merely documenting disaster but are actively constructing a form of literary resistance. This resistance is built upon validating local knowledge and forcing an emotional reckoning with the consequences of its destruction.

This study's primary findings reveal a consistent and identifiable set of strategies within contemporary Indonesian ecocritical literature. The textual analysis quantified a clear authorial preference for specific rhetorical tools. The results from Table 1 demonstrated the universal application of pathos, or emotional appeal, across the entire corpus. This was coupled with a dominant reliance on the “wasteland/degradation” trope, which was present in nearly all texts analyzed.

The analysis also identified a high prevalence of narratives explicitly centering *Kearifan Lokal* (local wisdom). This strategy was used in three-quarters of the selected works, suggesting a deliberate authorial choice (Buitendijk dkk., 2024). Furthermore, a significant sub-theme emerged in the frequent use of the “eco-gothic” trope, identified in half of the corpus. The data also showed a notable, though minority, use of non-human narrative perspectives as a mechanism to challenge anthropocentrism.

The relationship between these strategies was found to be non-random. A strong correlation was identified between the use of non-human narrators and the deployment of eco-gothic elements, where environmental harm was framed as a form of bodily violation. A second key correlation linked the invocation of *Kearifan Lokal* with pathos, typically achieved by channeling the narrative through an elderly or marginalized protagonist whose identity is tied to the collapsing ecosystem.

The core interpretation derived from these findings is the identification of a “rhetoric of localized loss.” This concept defines the primary mode of environmental discourse in the corpus (Navidi & Joodaki, 2025). The texts do not engage in abstract global environmentalism but instead ground the crisis in specific, culturally-resonant Indonesian contexts. This rhetoric functions as a form of literary resistance, validating local knowledge and forcing an emotional reckoning with the consequences of its destruction.

The universal finding of pathos aligns closely with the “affective turn” in contemporary ecocriticism. Scholars like Lawrence Buell have long argued that environmental crises are crises of imagination and empathy (Malecki dkk., 2025). This study confirms that Indonesian authors intuitively grasp this, prioritizing affective engagement over the didactic presentation of facts. The findings extend this theory, showing its powerful application within a non-Western context where emotional narrative carries significant cultural weight.

This study's findings on the “wasteland” trope, however, offer a distinct contrast to foundational Western ecocriticism, which historically privileged narratives of “wilderness” or the

pastoral. The Indonesian texts are less concerned with preserving pristine nature than with documenting its violent degradation (Álvarez-Véliz & Barton, 2024). This aligns more closely with Global South ecocriticism, such as Rob Nixon's work on "slow violence," where the focus is on the lived, polluted, and contested environments inhabited by marginalized communities.

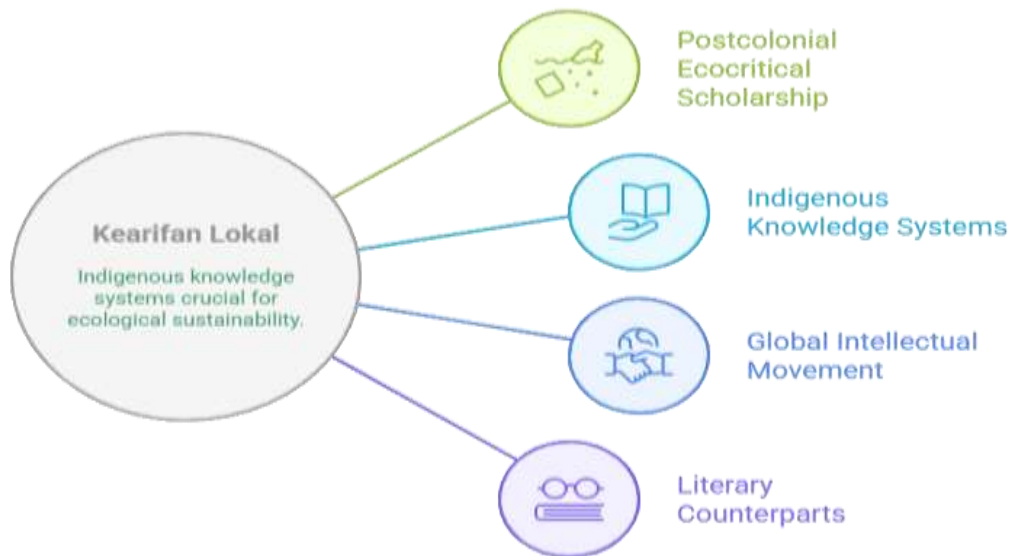


Figure 2. Unveiling the Layers of Kearifan Lokal

The high prevalence of *Kearifan Lokal* strongly resonates with postcolonial ecocritical scholarship. This finding confirms that literature is a key battleground for challenging neo-colonial developmentalist narratives. By centering indigenous knowledge systems, these authors participate in a global intellectual movement that validates non-Western epistemologies as crucial for ecological sustainability. These texts function as literary counterparts to the arguments made by scholars like Vandana Shiva.

The innovative use of non-human perspectives and eco-gothic elements aligns with emerging trends in posthumanist and new materialist literary theory. These strategies, which de-center the human and give agency to the non-human world, are at the forefront of contemporary ecocritical thought (Keat & Adugna, 2024). This study contributes evidence that these "advanced" theoretical strategies are not confined to Western academic fiction but are being independently developed and deployed by Indonesian authors to articulate profound ecological unease.

The dominance of pathos and the wasteland trope signifies a profound cultural anxiety. It suggests that the primary emotional response to the environmental crisis in Indonesia is one of grief and loss, not yet one of proactive, solution-oriented hope. This "structure of feeling" indicates that the ecological damage is perceived as an ongoing trauma, a wound that authors feel compelled to document in visceral detail.

The persistent invocation of *Kearifan Lokal* signifies a deep-seated ideological struggle. This pattern is a clear marker of resistance against the perceived failures of centralized, top-down modernization (Ajeesh, 2025). It signifies that authors identify the root of the crisis not in a lack of technology, but in a spiritual and ethical disconnect a disconnect they believe local wisdom can repair. It is a call for a return to culturally-grounded ethics.

The frequent appearance of the eco-gothic signifies that environmental destruction is being interpreted as a moral and spiritual transgression. The use of haunting, decay, and the grotesque suggests that this damage is not merely a physical or economic problem. It is a corruption that violates a sacred or natural order, leaving a "haunting" presence that literature is uniquely equipped to articulate.

Collectively, these findings signify the emergence of a distinct, cohesive Indonesian ecocritical aesthetic. This aesthetic is not derivative of Western models but is forged from its own cultural and ecological specificities. It is an aesthetic of localized mourning, ethical critique, and spiritual disturbance, reflecting a nation grappling with the immense, tangible costs of rapid, often inequitable, development.

The practical implications for environmental communication are significant. The findings strongly suggest that affect-driven, narrative-based communication is a more potent tool for public engagement in Indonesia than abstract data (Edwards & Pettersen, 2023). Environmental NGOs and advocates should consider partnerships with authors and artists to translate scientific warnings into culturally resonant stories that leverage this “rhetoric of localized loss.”

The implications for education are clear. This body of literature represents a critical, locally-produced pedagogical resource. Integrating these texts into high school and university curricula could foster environmental ethics far more effectively than imported textbooks. These novels and stories provide a direct pathway for students to connect complex ecological concepts to their own cultural identities and landscapes.

There are also clear implications for public policy. The widespread critique of developmentalism embedded in this literature serves as a valuable form of public sentiment analysis. It signals to policymakers that development trajectories that ignore or destroy local cultural and ecological knowledge face growing cultural resistance (Kahambing & Rivas, 2024). Sustainable policy must, therefore, encompass cultural preservation as a core component.

The primary theoretical implication is the reinforcement of the need for region-specific ecocritical models. This study challenges the hegemony of Western-centric theories. It provides a robust case for an “*archipelagic ecocriticism*” that prioritizes themes of marine degradation, deforestation, and the contestation between local and state power, offering a new framework for analyzing literature from similar socio-ecological contexts.

The dominance of pathos exists *because* it is a culturally potent and politically safer mode of critique. In a socio-political climate where direct, data-driven criticism of state or corporate policy can be risky or ineffective, affective narratives offer a more subversive route (Astorga de Ita, 2024). They generate dissent by building empathy rather than by launching a frontal attack, making them harder to censor and more persuasive to a broader audience.

The wasteland trope is prevalent because it is the most immediate, empirical reality for both authors and readers. Unlike the vast, depopulated “*wilderness*” of North American mythology, the primary Indonesian landscape is one of *contact* areas that are settled, farmed, and visibly degraded by human activity. Authors write about the wasteland *because* it is the undeniable truth of their environment.

Kearifan Lokal is a central theme *because* it is the nation’s most authentic and powerful counter-narrative to globalized, neoliberal development (Finch-Race, 2024). In the face of a homogenous model of “*progress*” that demands resource extraction, local wisdom offers a time-tested, culturally unique alternative. It is the most potent intellectual and ethical resource authors can wield to argue for a different future.

This “rhetoric of localized loss” is the logical narrative form for an archipelago. Indonesia is a nation of 17,000 islands, defined by profound ecological and cultural diversity. A single, monolithic “national” environmental narrative is impossible. The crisis is *always* experienced locally—as a specific polluted river, a specific clear-cut forest, or a specific sinking coastline. The literature simply reflects this fragmented, localized reality.

This study’s focus on textual analysis, while necessary, creates a clear limitation: it analyzes the *intended* or *embedded* strategies, not their *actual* impact. Future research must urgently pivot to empirical reader-reception studies. Qualitative and quantitative research is needed to measure whether these texts genuinely shift readers’ environmental attitudes, empathy, and behaviors.

The study’s corpus, while carefully selected, was limited to eight works of literary fiction. This scope invites further research. Comparative studies analyzing these findings against those from popular fiction, young adult (YA) literature, or digital-native narratives (such as those on web-novel platforms) would provide a more complete picture of how environmental themes are being disseminated.

Another direction for expansion is comparative regional analysis. This study provides a model for an Indonesian ecocriticism. Future research should apply this framework to the literature of

neighboring nations, particularly Malaysia and the Philippines. Such work could identify or refute the existence of a broader “Southeast Asian archipelagic ecocriticism” that shares similar strategies.

Finally, this research offers a synchronic “snapshot” of the 21st century. A longitudinal, diachronic study is a critical next step. Analyzing environmental texts from the 1980s and 1990s and comparing them to the current corpus would reveal the *evolution* of these literary strategies. It would show how authors have adapted their rhetoric in response to changing political climates and escalating ecological degradation.

CONCLUSION

This research’s most significant finding is the identification and articulation of a “rhetoric of localized loss.” This specific rhetorical mode, distinct from global environmental discourse, defines the contemporary Indonesian ecocritical literary response. The study demonstrates that this literature does not prioritize abstract data but rather leverages affective engagement through pathos, grounding ecological crises in specific, culturally-resonant contexts. Indonesian authors consistently utilize themes of grief, the grotesque, and the tragic erosion of *Kearifan Lokal* (local wisdom) as the primary mechanism for fostering environmental awareness.

The primary contribution of this research is conceptual. It moves beyond the simple application of generic Western ecocritical frameworks and instead proposes a specific, region-derived heuristic the “rhetoric of localized loss” as a more precise analytical tool. This study’s value lies in its systematization of these localized narrative strategies, demonstrating how pathos, the eco-gothic, and the validation of indigenous epistemology function collectively. It thus provides a new, culturally-specific lens for understanding and analyzing Global South environmental literature.

This study’s methodological boundaries define its clear limitations. The analysis was purely textual, focusing on the rhetorical strategies *embedded* within the literary works; it could not empirically measure the *actual* impact of these texts on reader attitudes, empathy, or subsequent behaviors. Future research must urgently bridge this gap through qualitative and quantitative reader-reception studies. Furthermore, the corpus was limited to literary fiction, creating a need for comparative analyses of popular fiction, digital narratives, and young adult literature to map the full extent of this environmental discourse.

AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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