

ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES IN NORTH SUMATRAN LITERATURE (2010–2022) FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: January 2025 Revised: May 2025 Published: July 2025	<i>This article reviews environmental damage as depicted in literary works by North Sumatran authors between 2010 and 2022, focusing on damage caused by natural phenomena. Using a literary ecocriticism framework and a qualitative descriptive method, the study explores how literature reflects environmental concerns. From 25 works analyzed, 7 literary pieces explicitly address ecological degradation, such as Kampung Medan by Afrion (2011), Pincalang by Idris Pasaribu (2012), Langsam by Nani Tandjung (2016), and Young Woman in a Luxury Hotel by Hamsad Rangkuti (2016). The findings indicate that these authors show increasing ecological awareness by portraying themes of nature's beauty, its vulnerability, and the human role in environmental destruction through illegal logging, uncontrolled development, and low ecological awareness. The study concludes that these literary works not only serve as educational and entertainment media but also act as critical reflections and offer solutions, including environmental conservation, sustainable resource management, and fostering human-nature harmony, which can be integrated into language and literature education.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

Nature is an object often used as a background in creating literary works. The author uses nature to depict the atmosphere behind the story and the author's feelings in the literary work. This shows a connection between nature and literary works, which raises new problems in the world of literature. The approach to studying this problem is called literary ecology, which connects literary works with ecology. Literary works as language art aim to express ideas or ideas of the author; in this case, literary works are expected to open readers' minds about the importance of preserving nature or the environment to be wiser in utilizing natural resources. Exploitation of nature has become an activity that is taken for granted by most of humanity. They do not feel afraid and guilty for destroying nature through their activities (Davies, 2023; Rishma & Gill, 2024).

The exploitation of nature by humans will cause many problems, such as the destruction of several ecosystems, environmental pollution, and even disasters such as floods, fires, landslides, deforestation, and so on. Ecocriticism, which examines the relationship between literature and the environment, was chosen as a theory in studying recent Indonesian literature. Ecological insights, environmental ethics, awareness of nature conservation, and other virtues can be spread through literary works and supporting readings. Without judging, literature is exposed through symbols, metaphors, language styles, and so on, so commitment and policy implementation will be effective if the values in literature can be internalized (Tajane, 2024).

Ecocriticism is a new theory examining the relationship between literature and the environment. Ecocriticism comes from the Yunani words *Oikos*, which means 'house,' and *logos*,

which means 'science.' Ecocriticism is close to postcolonial theory because both offer discourses challenging colonial and/or capitalist power (Garrard, 2014). Ecocriticism is a view that questions nature as an inseparable part of humans that humans themselves have exploited for economic and political interests. Therefore, ecocriticism can be operationally defined as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment arising from the global environmental crisis, along with practical and theoretical efforts to improve the crisis (Oppermann, 2012).

The study of Indonesian literature can be done from the perspective of environmentalism. This kind of research is important because it will benefit various parties. So far, literary studies tend to be repetitive and normative due to the limited use of theory. By incorporating an ecocritical approach, researchers can explore how Indonesian literary texts engage with themes of environmental degradation, cultural identity, and the impact of human actions on the environment (Isiguzo, 2017). In addition, ecocriticism has been supported by various academic associations and journals dedicated to studying literature and the environment, such as the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) and the Journal of Ecocriticism. These platforms facilitate the exchange of ideas and research findings, fostering a collaborative environment for scholars interested in exploring the relationship between literature, culture, and ecological issues (Mason et al., 2013).

Environmental issues are a hot topic of discussion, especially in the 21st century. It takes humans with a sense of responsibility and mutual need for the environment to overcome these complex environmental problems (Lin, 2011). The concept of environmental literacy plays an important role in addressing these issues. Environmental literacy encompasses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable a person to engage in environmental issues critically. Research shows that a person's level of environmental literacy directly affects their understanding and actions regarding environmental issues (Ainin & Asafri, 2023; Vilmala et al., 2023). This indicates that an increased understanding of the environment can encourage individuals from different walks of life to participate in conservation activities.

Educational approaches that incorporate various disciplines can significantly deepen understanding of environmental issues. By integrating diverse fields of study, students can build a well-rounded knowledge essential for dealing with complex environmental challenges. This educational method enhances cognitive abilities and encourages critical thinking and appreciation of diverse viewpoints (You, 2017). Educational institutions can shape a more environmentally conscious generation by providing students with the necessary tools to understand and address environmental issues (Mahinay et al., 2023; Sihite et al., 2024).

This study examines environmental discourse in literary works from North Sumatra between 2010-2022, consisting of 25 literary works, with 8 titles addressing environmental degradation caused by natural conditions. This is analyzed through the lens of ecocriticism, exploring that literature not only serves as a medium for entertainment but also plays a significant role in education and fostering environmental awareness.

This research introduces a novel approach by integrating environmental themes into the framework of Indonesian literary education. The urgency of this research arises from the escalating environmental crisis, which calls for a re-evaluation of how literature can function as a medium for fostering environmental awareness and education. The period under study, 2010-2022, coincides with significant environmental challenges in Indonesia, including deforestation, climate change, and biodiversity loss. These pressing issues are frequently reflected in literary works produced during this period. The increasing global environmental challenges, particularly those affecting Indonesia, underscore the importance of understanding ecological themes in literature, as highlighted by Hayati et al. (2021). This research not only contributes to the field of literary studies but also emphasizes the crucial role of literature in environmental education, aligning with broader goals of sustainability and ecological

awareness (Clark, 2019). The novelty of this research lies in its interdisciplinary approach, combining literary analysis with ecological criticism. In particular, the research focuses on the urgent environmental issues facing North Sumatra, aiming to demonstrate that literary works are not just a source of entertainment but also a medium for education and a reflection of the author's concern for the environment. The primary objective of this study is to explore how environmental degradation is represented in literary works from North Sumatra published between 2010 and 2022.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research utilizes a qualitative descriptive approach, employing ecocriticism as the analytical framework to examine environmental discourse in literary works from North Sumatra. The study focuses on literary works published between 2010 and 2022, analyzing their depiction of environmental and natural factors that reflect the intersection of literature and ecological themes. A purposive selection method was used to choose the literary texts, based on their relevance to the research questions, particularly their portrayal of ecological and environmental issues. The primary data sources include "*Kampung Medan*" by Afrion, (2011), Novel "*Pincalang*" by Idris Pasaribu (2012), Poem "*Langsam*" by Nani Tandjung (2016), Novel "*Wanita Muda di Sebuah Hotel Mewah*" by Hamsad Rangkuti (2016), Novel "*Perempuan Bernama Arjuna*" by Remi Sylado (2016), The novel "*Gadisku di Masa Lalu*" by Ashadi Siregar (2018), and the novel "*Serdadu dari Neraka*" by Arafat Nur (2019). These texts were chosen because they directly or indirectly address environmental themes. The research analyzes seven works across different genres to ensure a diverse representation of literary forms.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection was carried out through close reading and note-taking, with the researcher focusing on passages depicting environmental and natural factors, particularly those illustrating human exploitation of nature, the effects of natural disasters, and the consequences of environmental degradation. Recurring motifs, metaphors, and symbols linked to the environment were also noted. Thematic categories derived from Garrard's ecocriticism framework were used to guide the analysis, including natural phenomena, human exploitation of nature, the impact of war on the environment, and human negligence toward ecological issues.

Data Analysis

The data analysis followed the steps outlined by Miles & Huberman (2007), which involved identifying relevant passages, categorizing the data, and interpreting the texts. The researcher categorized the data into themes such as natural phenomena (e.g., floods, droughts), human exploitation of nature (e.g., deforestation, mining), the impact of war (e.g., ecosystem destruction), and human negligence toward environmental conservation. Contextual interpretation was applied to each passage, exploring the cause-and-effect relationships within the literary works while considering the authors' cultural and historical contexts. Peer review was conducted to ensure analytical validity, and conclusions were drawn based on the identified themes, summarizing the representation of environmental degradation and human ecological consequences. The research also contextualized the findings within the historical and sociolinguistic background of the authors and the region, emphasizing environmental challenges such as deforestation and climate change in North Sumatra.

To ensure data saturation, the analysis included all significant references to environmental themes in the selected texts, incorporating any new themes or patterns that emerged during multiple readings. The completeness of the data was verified by cross-checking the categorized themes against the entire set of texts.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Damage Caused by Natural Phenomena

The cause of natural destruction can be caused by nature itself, for example, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, landslides, and prolonged droughts. Landslides can also cause natural damage caused by humans, for example, free and continuous logging of forests, resulting in deforestation and triggering landslides (Rishma & Ricky Gill, 2024). Literary works often reflect the impact of environmental damage caused by natural phenomena. In the novel *Perempuan Bernama Arjuna* by Remy Sylado (2016), the journey through winding roads in the mountainous area depicts humanity's efforts to adapt to nature without damaging it. The presence of wildlife, such as monkeys along the road, shows that despite the construction of infrastructure, nature remains well-preserved. The tension felt by the driver on the winding road also reflects how nature presents challenges that must be faced by humans.

In the novel *Serdadu dari Neraka* by Arafat Nur (2019), the impact of the prolonged drought is clearly evident in the condition of coconut trees that bear no fruit and whose leaves have fallen. The prolonged dryness disrupts agriculture and increases economic difficulties for farmers, illustrating the close relationship between climate change and food security.

The poem *Kampung Medan* by Afrion (2011) highlights natural disasters triggered by illegal logging, such as flash floods that destroy houses and claim lives. This phenomenon illustrates the negative impact of uncontrolled natural exploitation and emphasizes the importance of preserving the environment to prevent similar disasters in the future.

These literary works highlight various forms of environmental damage caused by natural phenomena, both natural and worsened by human activities, while providing an insight into the challenges faced by society in maintaining the balance between nature and development.

Damage from Human Exploitation

The destruction of nature by human exploitation is based on excessive use of nature. For example, humans need to use nature as industrial land, such as cutting down trees on a large scale without being followed by reforestation, resulting in deforestation. Deforestation will lead to natural disasters, such as landslides, that can be detrimental and take lives if not prevented early on. In addition, industrial factories can also cause water pollution. Water pollution occurs when waste is carelessly dumped into rivers and seas, affecting the health of river and sea biota. Water pollution also occurs due to human behavior in throwing garbage carelessly into rivers or sewers, resulting in obstruction of flow and flooding (Brito et al., 2018; Li et al., 2022).

Several literary works analyzed depict the impact of human exploitation on the environment. The poem *Kampung Medan* by Afrion (2011) reflects the damage to the Deli River, which has been polluted due to human activities such as forest burning and industrial waste disposal, destroying ecosystems and water quality. *Wanita Muda di Sebuah Hotel Mewah* by Hamsad Rangkuti (2016) shows the damage to rivers caused by the dumping of garbage and industrial waste, leading to floods and an imbalance between human infrastructure and the environment.

The novel *Gadisku di Masa Lalu* by Ashadi Siregar (2018) portrays the impact of urbanization in Medan, where the construction of high-rise buildings has displaced trees that once provided green spaces. The loss of these green spaces reduces air quality and disrupts ecological balance. In *Lelaki Bukan Pilihan* by Afrion (2016), the damage to green land that has now become a dumping ground symbolizes environmental degradation due to irresponsible human behavior.

The poem *Halakah Panggang Sajak-Sajak Pilihan* by Damiri (2018) critiques the development of infrastructure that destroys acacia trees along the highways, affecting air quality and ecosystem balance. In *Seumpama Matahari* by Arafat Nur (2017), deforestation that harms

forests is depicted as an intrusion on nature, potentially causing long-term damage to ecosystems.

Furthermore, *T.B. Silalahi Anak Hadal* by T.B. Silalahi (2008) highlights the pollution of Lake Toba due to human activities, where domestic and industrial waste contaminate the lake and damage aquatic habitats. The poem *Kampung Medan* by Afrion also illustrates pollution around Lake Toba, resulting from development that disregards environmental preservation.

Finally, in *Serdadu dari Neraka* by Arafat Nur (2019), the destruction of hills in Lamaholuh due to deforestation and illegal mining illustrates the impact of exploitation that threatens the balance of nature and leads to ecological disasters. The poetry collection *Selendang Berenda Jingga* by Zulkarnain Siregar (2011) depicts human greed in damaging nature, especially deforestation in Bukit Toba, which worsens environmental conditions and increases the risk of natural disasters. These literary works demonstrate the impact of environmental damage caused by human exploitation, while also reminding us of the importance of sustainable natural resource management to maintain ecosystem balance and the sustainability of life.

Nature Damaged by War

The destruction of nature due to war is one of the reasons natural resources are damaged, especially after the end of the war. That environmental degradation will exacerbate scarcity. The survival of a nation depends on resources from the environment. Resource sources of conflict include territory, strategic raw materials, energy sources, water, and food (Ohmura, 2018). In the novel *Pincalang* by Idris Pasaribu (2012), it is depicted how the sea attempts to recover from human-made pollution, such as shipwrecks that disrupt the balance of the marine ecosystem. The sea, through its waves and currents, naturally cleanses itself of foreign objects discarded into it, showcasing nature's effort to heal the damage caused by human exploitation.

The poem *Langsam* by Nani Tadjung (2016) portrays the impact of a prolonged drought caused by climate change. This drought disrupts water sources, agriculture, and food security, posing additional hardships for rural communities, particularly farmers who rely heavily on water for survival. Additionally, in the novel *Perempuan Bernama Arjuna* by Remy Sylado (2016), the journey through mountainous terrain highlights the topographical challenges faced by humans. The presence of wild monkeys still inhabiting the area shows that, despite the infrastructure challenges, the local ecosystem remains well-preserved.

In the novel *Menolak Ayah* by Ashadi Siregar (2018), the destruction of nature caused by armed conflict is depicted. The damaged landscape is described with images of wounded trees, broken rocks, and dug-up land, symbolizing the destructive trace of war on the environment. In addition to destroying ecosystems, war also obliterates social structures and the livelihoods of local communities, reminding us of the importance of maintaining the balance of nature in the face of conflict. Through these literary works, it is evident that war not only destroys human infrastructure but also disrupts the sustainability of ecosystems that depend on stable natural resources.

Nature Damage Due to Lack of Human Awareness

Human awareness of environmental management is not optimal, and many people tend to ignore it, leading to disasters such as floods, landslides, and so on. Humans are very dependent on the environment, which is a unit that includes various living things and their surrounding components, such as animals, plants, and so on (Baird & Tung, 2023; Haney & McDonald-Harker, 2017). Several literary works from North Sumatra (2010-2022) depict the impact of environmental awareness deficiency. The novel *Pincalang* by Idris Pasaribu (2012) highlights the excessive exploitation of marine resources and the importance of efforts to restore damaged ecosystems. In *Perempuan Bernama Arjuna* by Remy Sylado (2016), the barren mountainous landscape caused by environmentally unfriendly infrastructure development reflects social disparities and environmental degradation.

The novel *Serdadu dari Neraka* by Arafat Nur (2019) portrays environmental damage caused by irresponsible human activities, such as the use of heavy machinery that destroys ecosystems and leads to natural disasters. Meanwhile, in *Wanita Muda di Sebuah Hotel Mewah* by Hamsad Rangkuti (2016), the impact of environmental pollution is exacerbated by garbage clogging water flows and causing floods. The analyzed poems also reveal the damage caused by a lack of care for nature. *Selendang Berenda Jingga* by Zulkarnain Siregar (2011) describes the degraded state of nature, while *Kampung Medan* by Afrion (2011) presents the impact of illegal logging that causes landslides and floods. The short story collection *Mewariskan Lalat* by Dian Nangin (2021) depicts infrastructure damage caused by neglecting environmental concerns.

The novel *T.B. Silalahi Si Anak Hadal* by T.B. Silalahi (2008) showcases the impact of environmentally unfriendly development on Lake Toba, while *Yang Lahir Hilang Menangis* by Alda Mushi (2011) illustrates the conversion of agricultural land into development areas, which damages ecosystems and food security. *Halakah Panggang Sajak-Sajak Pilihan* by Damiri (2018) reveals the destruction of trees due to urbanization, reflecting the negative impact of development that disregards nature conservation. These literary works show how the lack of environmental awareness can damage nature and threaten human sustainability. The ecosystem degradation depicted in these works serves as an important reminder about the necessity of sustainable actions to preserve the environment.

Discourse Good habits in protecting the environment

In literary works, many discourses reflect good habits in protecting the environment through direct descriptions of nature and human interactions with their environment. These habits are often reflected in actions that support the preservation of nature through land management, plant maintenance, and respect for the surrounding ecosystem (Manugeran et al., 2023). In the literary works analyzed, the authors present examples of how humans can coexist with nature in harmony, maintain the balance of the ecosystem, and show how important environmental awareness is for the sustainability of life. The following are dialogs from various literary works analyzed that discuss good habits in protecting the environment.

In the literary works analyzed, the authors present examples of how humans can live in harmony with nature, maintain ecosystem balance, and highlight the importance of environmental awareness for the sustainability of life. In the novel *Perempuan Bernama Arjuna* by Remy Sylado (2016), environmental awareness is seen in the resilience of farmers in the Karo region who continue sustainable farming practices despite facing natural challenges such as volcanic ash from Mount Sinabung. This reflects the importance of adapting to the environment and maintaining the sustainability of natural resources. The novel *Yang Lahir Hilang Menangis* by Alda Mushi (2011) illustrates good environmental practices through the depiction of a house surrounded by lush trees. The presence of well-maintained ornamental plants and fruit trees grown using techniques such as grafting and cutting shows efforts to maintain ecological balance and create a healthy ecosystem around the home. Additionally, the preservation of local culture is also part of the effort to maintain social and ecological balance.

In the novel *Menolak Ayah* by Ashadi Siregar (2018), the depiction of pristine nature, such as clean lakes and fertile rice field embankments, reflects an awareness of maintaining water cleanliness and sustainable land management practices, supporting ecological balance. The novel *Lelaki Bukan Pilihan* by Afrion (2016) features good farming habits through the portrayal of wisely managed fields, particularly in the planting of cassava. These actions reflect the importance of environmentally friendly land management to preserve the ecosystem.

The short story anthology *Mewariskan Lalat* by Dian Nangin (2021) highlights the benefits of old sugar palm trees that provide water, palm fronds, and fiber, showing the

importance of tree preservation in supporting ecosystems and meeting human needs sustainably. The poem *Kampung Medan* by Afrion (2011) illustrates the well-preserved beauty of Lake Toba's nature, reminding the community to safeguard the ecosystem and take care of the environment to keep it clean and sustainable.

The analyzed literary works offer an important discourse on good practices in environmental preservation, emphasizing the need for balance between the exploitation of natural resources and environmental conservation. Efforts to maintain a clean and lush environment, along with the wise management of natural resources, are crucial aspects to ensure the sustainability of life and social well-being.

Discussion

This study explores the relationship between natural phenomena and human life as depicted in several literary works. In the novel *Perempuan Bernama Arjuna* by Sylado (2016), the author highlights the importance of balancing infrastructure development with environmental conservation. This underscores the idea that, despite infrastructure progress, the beauty of nature must be preserved. This emphasis aligns with the research by Mei et al. (2017), which reveals the significance of ecological awareness within society to minimize environmental damage. Sylado demonstrates that human interaction with nature, such as the natural threats posed by ravines along the road, serves as a reminder of the potential disasters that could threaten human safety. These findings emphasize the importance of environmental awareness in designing more sustainable policies.

In *Serdadu dari Neraka* by Arafat Nur (2019), the author depicts the direct impact of climate change, particularly the prolonged drought that threatens food security. This illustrates the challenges faced by communities dependent on nature. Research by Baird & Tung (2023) strengthens this argument, emphasizing the need for environment-based management to address the impacts of climate change on the agricultural sector. Findings in this work also highlight the necessity of better adaptation policies to reduce the effects of climate change on vulnerable communities.

The poem *Kampung Medan* by Afrion (2011) illustrates the devastating effects of illegal logging on the environment, highlighting how deforestation can lead to disastrous consequences such as flash floods. This theme resonates with the findings of Huang & Kung (2011), whose research emphasizes the crucial role of environmental awareness in encouraging sustainable practices within organizations. Both the poem and the research underscore the destructive impact human actions can have on the natural world, exacerbating the severity of natural disasters. The message is clear: a harmonious relationship with the environment is essential for preventing further ecological damage. These literary works underscore the need for greater ecological awareness within society to prevent further damage to the environment. Previous studies, such as those by Anawati & Utari (2023) and Sapna et al. (2021), also emphasize the importance of integrating environmental education and awareness into social norms to promote sustainable behaviors that protect our natural heritage. The shared message highlights that fostering an ecological mindset is crucial for preserving the environment and ensuring its longevity for future generations.

This research also analyzes literary works that depict environmental damage caused by human exploitation, focusing on deforestation, water pollution, and unsustainable development. These works highlight the negative impacts of human activities on ecosystems and environmental balance, while emphasizing the importance of ecological awareness and social responsibility. This theme serves as a critique of the imbalance between development and nature conservation, as well as a call for more responsible natural resource management to ensure environmental sustainability. The works advocate for a harmonious relationship between

human progress and the preservation of the natural world, urging society to consider long-term environmental health in decision-making processes.

The research by Rassiah et al. (2022) shows that stakeholder involvement, such as hotel managers and hotel industry owners, is crucial for prioritizing environmental aspects. This finding aligns with the critique found in the analyzed literary works, which highlight the importance of being aware of the environmental impacts of human actions. The emphasis on ecological awareness is relevant to the need for integrating environmentally friendly practices across various industrial sectors, as revealed by Jackson et al. (2011). They note a shift in the views of large companies towards sustainability, where many have begun to adopt eco-friendly practices to counterbalance the negative impacts of development. These findings underscore the importance of incorporating environmental consciousness into both business practices and societal values to ensure long-term ecological health and sustainability.

The literary works analyzed also align with the findings of Brogi & Menichini (2019), who emphasize the importance of environmental management systems (EMS), such as ISO 14001, in reducing environmental impacts. Their research shows that compliance with these standards can foster innovation in environmental practices, an idea that also emerges in the literary works that critique the neglect of environmental management. Additionally, Ma & Men (2022) highlight the importance of environmental awareness at the top management level as a key driver of effective sustainability practices. Their findings provide a perspective similar to the critique in the literary works regarding human exploitation, urging a shift in attitudes and actions towards environmental conservation. This is further reinforced by Mei et al. (2017), who show that while environmental awareness is crucial, education and active engagement are essential to create significant behavioral change in society. This highlights the need for both institutional and individual efforts to drive meaningful environmental change.

These findings reinforce the argument that effective environmental management requires the active involvement of all parties, including individuals, companies, and society. Literary works serve as a form of critique against the imbalance between development and the preservation of nature, as well as a call to take an active role in maintaining environmental sustainability. This highlights the urgency of responsible natural resource management to create a better environment for future generations. The environmental damage caused by war has a significant impact on ecosystems and human life, not only in terms of physical destruction but also the scarcity of vital resources. Post-war environmental degradation creates major challenges in ecosystem restoration, as depicted in literary works. In *Pincalang* by Idris Pasaribu, the process of restoring the sea from war pollution reflects the challenges of environmental recovery after conflict. This aligns with Sabola's (2024) findings, which state that environmental restoration is often hindered by the depletion of already limited resources.

The poem *Langsam* by Nani Tandjung illustrates the impact of prolonged drought exacerbated by climate change on food security, which is supported by Mahrous's (2019) research on the influence of climate change on food production. On the other hand, *Perempuan Bernama Arjuna* by Remy Sylado highlights the tension between development progress and environmental preservation, which aligns with Gregory et al.'s (2005) thoughts on the impact of climate change on food security. These works reinforce the idea that environmental changes directly influence agricultural sustainability and the need for balancing development with ecological conservation.

The literary work *Menolak Ayah* by Ashadi Siregar also depicts the impact of war on both the environment and local communities, echoing the findings of Kanu & Onyekwere (2024) regarding the effects of climate disasters on post-conflict household food security. These works underscore how war and environmental degradation create a complex landscape, where recovery and sustainability become increasingly challenging. The narratives emphasize the need for ecological awareness and social responsibility, as well as the importance of integrating

climate change adaptation strategies into resource management to ensure the resilience of ecosystems and the well-being of post-conflict communities (Favas et al., 2024; Masipa, 2017).

A critical reading of the analyzed literary works indicates that environmental degradation is not solely caused by natural factors, but is a direct consequence of human behavior that neglects ecosystem sustainability. In the novel *Pincalang* by Idris Pasaribu, the excessive exploitation of marine resources reflects ecological degradation due to the ignorance and indifference of coastal communities. This aligns with the findings of Nguyen et al. (2021), which emphasize the importance of governance and environmental responsibility in industries with significant impacts on ecosystems. Furthermore, *Perempuan Bernama Arjuna* by Remy Sylado highlights the transformation of the natural landscape due to development that disregards ecological balance, leading to both environmental destruction and social inequality. This phenomenon reflects the reality of development in Indonesia, where economic aspects often take precedence over ecological concerns. Huang (2022) underscores that economic growth without environmental control can exacerbate environmental degradation. Thus, this work not only reveals ecological realities but also offers a critique of exploitative development practices.

Arafat Nur's novel *Serdadu dari Neraka* offers a sharp critique of illegal logging and deforestation. These activities not only destroy ecosystems but also trigger widespread ecological disasters. Potts et al. (2016) confirm that socio-economic pressures are one of the main factors exacerbating ecosystem conditions. This literary work serves as a cultural reflection on the relationship between humans and the environment, while also acting as a cautionary narrative about the damage caused by an unsustainable economic system. Hamsad Rangkuti's short story *Wanita Muda di Sebuah Hotel Mewah* addresses the issue of pollution and environmental degradation caused by the consumptive behaviors of urban society. This aligns with Jefferson et al. (2021), who emphasize the importance of public perception in influencing the effectiveness of environmental conservation efforts. In this context, literature functions as both an educational medium and a tool for transforming ecological awareness.

The poems *Selendang Berenda Jingga* by Zulkarnain Siregar and *Kampung Medan* by Afrion both highlight the environmental degradation caused by destructive human behavior. These works not only offer aesthetic value but also carry a moral call for society to take more responsibility for nature. This finding aligns with the argument by Darnall et al. (2010), who assert that increased social pressure can influence more accountable environmental practices, particularly in smaller institutions that are more responsive to public criticism. Meanwhile, the literary works *Yang Lahir Hilang Menangis* by Alda Mushi and *Anak Hadal* by T.B. Silalahi explore the impact of development driven by personal profit motives without considering sustainability. Drevno (2016) emphasizes the need for a collaborative approach in resource management and pollution reduction in the agricultural sector. These narratives reinforce the importance of integrating development and environmental conservation in national policy and development practices.

The findings of this study show that Indonesian literary works play a strategic role as a form of socio-ecological critique that reflects and responds to the dynamics of environmental degradation due to unsustainable development practices. From an ecocritical perspective, these works are not only aesthetic reflections but also advocacy tools to build collective ecological awareness. Practically, these findings are relevant to be used as references in the development of an environment-based literature curriculum, especially in secondary and higher education.

The discourse on good habits in environmental conservation, reflected in the various literary works analyzed, not only portrays a harmonious relationship between humans and nature but also offers practical approaches to environmental preservation rooted in local cultural values. In the narratives examined, representations emerge of farmers' resilience in the face of natural disasters, sustainable farming practices, plant care around homes, wise water

management, and vegetation preservation as concrete forms of the community's ecological ethics. These practices underscore the importance of integrating traditional knowledge and ecological responsibility in fostering a sustainable environment. Such portrayals demonstrate that literature has a transformative potential in shaping readers' ecological consciousness. As Myren-Svelstad (2020) asserts, teaching literature that highlights environmental issues can serve as a means to connect students with sustainability principles and cultivate a sense of responsibility for the preservation of nature. In this context, literary works act as an educational medium, bridging the gap between aesthetic reflection and ecological awareness.

Moreover, the narratives in literary works that emphasize the preservation of culture and protection of ecosystems reveal a strong connection between social and ecological well-being. Kopnina (2014) critiques the dominance of anthropocentrism in environmental education and advocates for a more holistic approach that integrates both social and ecological concerns simultaneously. Within this framework, literary discourse functions not only as a critique of environmental exploitation but also as an affirmation of local values that support sustainability. In addition to reflecting cultural values, narratives about farmers' resilience and sustainable practices also embody dimensions of transformational leadership, which is crucial for driving social change. Althnayan et al. (2022) demonstrate that transformational leadership in environmental contexts can promote pro-environmental behavior and generate positive impacts on sustainability performance, particularly when driven by grassroots communities. The representation of farmers and local communities in literary works reflects a form of environmental citizenship that emerges from community-led initiatives.

The theme of sustainable agriculture in the literary works discussed also contributes to the discourse on sustainable development, which integrates ecological and economic interests. Crotty & Hall (2014) emphasize that environmental education plays a crucial role in fostering awareness of the interconnectedness between local economies and ecological sustainability. In this regard, literature can serve as a tool of social critique against exploitative development practices, as well as encourage communities to reconsider environmentally destructive economic paradigms.

Furthermore, the discourse on the necessity of collective action to protect the environment, as depicted in the analyzed literary works, aligns with the principles of sustainable entrepreneurship. Sołoducho-Pelc (2020) highlights that innovative, ecologically oriented approaches in entrepreneurship can serve as solutions that bridge the demands of economic development with the need for environmental protection. In this context, literary narratives play a significant role in fostering environmentally conscious entrepreneurship rooted in ethics and social values. Thus, it can be concluded that the literary works analyzed contain profound narratives emphasizing the importance of ecological awareness and sustainable practices. These narratives are not merely fictional constructs, but rather reflections of value systems that regard nature as an inseparable part of life. Literature serves as a medium that not only shapes awareness but also mobilizes collective action to preserve the environment for the sustainability of future generations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that Indonesian literary works play a crucial role in raising ecological awareness and promoting sustainable practices. These works, through various narratives, offer critiques of human exploitation of the environment and highlight the importance of balancing development with ecological preservation. The novels, poems, and short stories examined reflect the need for greater environmental consciousness and call for responsible natural resource management. They also emphasize the interconnectedness between social well-being and ecological health, encouraging readers to adopt practices that ensure long-term environmental sustainability.

From a pedagogical perspective, these literary works provide a valuable tool for educators in fostering ecological awareness among students. Incorporating such works into the curriculum, particularly in secondary and higher education, can inspire students to engage with sustainability issues and develop a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving the environment. Moreover, these narratives offer practical examples of local cultural values and traditional knowledge that can be integrated into environmental education, bridging the gap between academic learning and real-world ecological responsibility.

For educators and curriculum planners, it is recommended that these literary works be used as a foundation for developing an environment-based literature curriculum that not only highlights ecological issues but also encourages critical thinking about human-nature relationships. Such an approach would enrich students' understanding of the complex dynamics between development and conservation, while also nurturing a sense of responsibility for the planet's future. Integrating these works into teaching can contribute to a more holistic approach to environmental education, one that aligns theoretical knowledge with actionable environmental stewardship.

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