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Ecocritical Analysis of Environmental Ethics and Human Nature Relations in *Aroma Karsa And Bilangan Fu*

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Abstract

Contemporary environmental degradation has increased the need to examine how literature constructs ethical perspectives on human relationships with the natural world. However, existing ecocritical studies of Indonesian literature have tended to examine ecological representation thematically, with limited attention to how environmental ethics and human–nature relationships are constructed through contrasting ecological epistemologies. This study addresses this gap by examining the representation of environmental ethics and human–nature relationships in Aroma Karsa and Bilangan Fu through an ecocritical framework. Employing a qualitative descriptive design and textual analysis, the study examines selected narrative passages that represent nature, human interactions with nature, and ecological values. The analysis is guided by ecocritical perspectives.The analysis identifies two contrasting ecological epistemologies. Aroma Karsa constructs a predominantly scientific-rational and instrumental epistemology in which nature is associated with classification, control, and resource utilization. In contrast, Bilangan Fu constructs a predominantly spiritual, experiential, and relational epistemology in which nature is represented as a meaningful presence requiring understanding, respect, and ethical engagement. These contrasting epistemologies correspond to different patterns of human–nature relationships: instrumental control and utilization in Aroma Karsa, and interconnectedness and coexistence in Bilangan Fu. The study contributes to Indonesian ecocritical scholarship by demonstrating how contemporary literary narratives construct competing ways of knowing, valuing, and relating to nature.

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INTRODUCTION

Environmental degradation has become an increasingly urgent global concern, particularly as climate change, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable resource use intensify pressures on both human societies and ecological systems. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Calvin et al., 2023) reports that human activities, principally through greenhouse gas emissions, have unequivocally caused global warming, with global surface temperature reaching approximately 1.1°C above the 1850–1900 level during 2011–2020. The United Nations Environment Program (Bruyninckx et al., 2024) further identifies climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste as interconnected dimensions of the contemporary "triple planetary crisis." These conditions demonstrate that environmental problems are not merely scientific or policy concerns but also involve fundamental questions about how humans understand, value, and interact with the natural

world. Literature provides an important cultural space in which such relationships can be represented, questioned, and reimagined. Within this context, ecocriticism offers a theoretical framework for examining how literary texts construct representations of nature, environmental values, and human–nature relationships. These ecological crises have not only shaped scientific, political, and economic debates but have also transformed the way literature represents the relationship between humans and the natural environment. Increasingly, literary texts function as reflective cultural media through which ecological anxieties, environmental responsibility, and ethical awareness are expressed and negotiated. In this context, literature provides an important space for questioning dominant anthropocentric perspectives while encouraging readers to reconsider humanity's moral responsibility toward the more-than-human world (Swaminathan & Chakravarthy, 2023).

Within literary studies, ecocriticism has become one of the most influential theoretical approaches for examining the interaction between literature and the environment. Ecocriticism investigates how literary texts represent nature, construct environmental ethics, and portray the relationship between humans and the non-human world while simultaneously challenging anthropocentric assumptions that position nature merely as an object of exploitation. Ecocriticism provides more than a framework for identifying representations of nature; it also enables the examination of the ethical assumptions underlying human relationships with the non-human world. (Garrard, 2004) conceptualizes ecocriticism through recurring environmental concerns such as pollution, wilderness, animals, and the relationship between human culture and the physical environment, thereby providing a framework for identifying how literary texts construct ecological problems and values. (Heise, 2016), meanwhile, extends ecocritical inquiry by emphasizing the cultural and narrative dimensions of global environmental change, particularly the tension between local experiences and planetary ecological processes. Complementing these perspectives, foreground the material dimension of ecological relations, emphasizing that environments are not merely passive backgrounds but participate in networks of material and cultural meaning. Taken together, these perspectives allow the present study to examine environmental representation at three interconnected levels: the representation of ecological problems and values, the cultural construction of human-nature relationships, and the material and relational significance of the non-human environment.

Contemporary literary studies increasingly recognize literature as a discursive space in which social and ethical consciousness is constructed through narrative strategies. (Muhammad & Purwarno, 2026), for example, demonstrate that literary narratives can transform individual experience into broader forms of social and political consciousness by examining how voice, agency, and self-representation function as strategies of resistance in Abi Daré's *And So I Roar*. Their study shows that textual representations can move beyond the depiction of individual experiences toward the construction of collective awareness and critical engagement with structural conditions. This perspective is relevant to ecocritical analysis because environmental narratives similarly construct meanings and ethical positions through particular ways of representing human experiences and relationships with the non-human world. Thus, literary analysis can examine not only what environmental issues are represented but also how narrative strategies construct particular forms of ecological awareness and ethical positioning.

In the Indonesian literary context, environmental concerns are frequently intertwined with cultural values, indigenous knowledge, spirituality, and local ecological wisdom, producing distinctive perspectives on human–nature relationships. Contemporary Indonesian novels often

portray nature not merely as a physical setting but as a cultural and ethical space through which environmental values are negotiated. Recent ecocritical studies reveal that Indonesian literary works consistently integrate ecological wisdom, environmental justice, and local environmental knowledge into narrative structures (Arianto et al., 2021; Efendi et al., 2025; Hilmi et al., 2024; Wuntu et al., 2024).

Among contemporary Indonesian novels**,** Aroma Karsa (Lestari, 2024) and Bilangan Fu (Utami, 2008) offer two distinctive ecological perspectives that deserve comparative investigation. *Aroma Karsa* narrates the exploration of biodiversity through the mythical Puspa Karsa, portraying how scientific knowledge, commercial interests, and environmental exploitation intersect within modern society (Lestari, 2024). Conversely, *Bilangan Fu* presents nature as a philosophical and spiritual entity, emphasizing sacred landscapes, indigenous cosmology, and ecological coexistence as alternatives to anthropocentric domination (Utami, 2008). These contrasting narratives provide an important foundation for examining how environmental ethics and human–nature relationships are constructed within contemporary Indonesian literature.

Previous studies on ecocriticism have predominantly examined environmental degradation, sustainability, local wisdom, and critiques of anthropocentrism across various literary traditions (Garrard, 2012; Heise, 2016a). More recent scholarship has expanded this discussion by exploring ecological wisdom (Sultoni & Suwandi, 2023), environmental exploitation (Birsyada et al., 2024), eco-postcolonial narratives (Efendi et al., 2025), ecological criticism in contemporary Indonesian literature (Wuntu et al., 2024), and methodological approaches for analyzing environmental justice in literary texts (Vasudevan & Mukherjee, 2025). Taken together, these studies establish that ecocritical research has moved beyond identifying images of nature toward examining ecological values, environmental crises, and the ethical consequences of human intervention. However, their contributions also reveal differences in analytical emphasis, corpus, and method that leave room for a more explicitly comparative investigation.

A critical synthesis of these studies clarifies both their contributions and their limitations.(Arianto et al., 2021), for instance, demonstrate how ecological crisis, human intervention, and ecocentric awareness are represented in Rawa Gambut, but their primary concern is ecological conditions in a single drama script rather than a comparative analysis of environmental ethics across novels. (Wuntu et al., 2024) strengthen ecocritical scholarship by examining ecological criticism, pastoral narrative, environmental degradation, and conservation in Luka Perempuan Asap, yet their study remains centered on one literary work and does not compare competing ecological epistemologies across texts. Recent ecocritical scholarship has also expanded toward intersectional approaches to environmental narratives. (Ramadhani & Purwarno, 2026), for example, employ an ecofeminist perspective to examine the intersection of ecological degradation and patriarchal domination in *A Girl at the End of the World*. Their study demonstrates how literary narratives can connect environmental crisis with broader structures of social domination. However, their analysis focuses primarily on the intersection of ecology and gender through an ecofeminist framework, rather than comparatively examining environmental ethics and human–nature relationships across two Indonesian novels. broaden the field through an ecosemiotic perspective on landscape as a cultural and ecological narrative, but their analytical orientation differs from the present study's explicit focus on environmental ethics and human–nature relationships. Likewise, (Hilmi et al., 2024) and (Sultoni & Suwandi, 2023) foreground ecological wisdom, while (Jaelani et al., 2024) examine human-nature interaction; these studies demonstrate the value of ecological representation and wisdom as analytical categories, but they do not establish a comparative

framework for examining how different Indonesian novels construct environmental ethics through contrasting ways of knowing nature.

The synthesis therefore identifies three interconnected gaps. First, although previous studies demonstrate that literature represents ecological crisis, biodiversity, ecological wisdom, and environmental exploitation, fewer studies make environmental ethics the central analytical problem. Second, most existing ecocritical studies examine individual literary works independently, which limits understanding of how different texts construct and negotiate competing ecological epistemologies. Third, environmental ethics and human–nature relationships have rarely been integrated within a unified comparative framework that places two Indonesian novels in direct analytical dialogue. Accordingly, the present study addresses not merely a thematic gap but also an analytical and comparative gap by examining how two novels construct different ethical principles for understanding, valuing, and relating to nature.

Therefore, this study aims to analyse how environmental ethics are constructed and how human–nature relationships are represented in Aroma Karsa (Lestari, 2024) and Bilangan Fu (Utami, 2008) through a comparative ecocritical framework. Unlike previous studies that examine each novel independently or focus primarily on ecological representation, symbolism, spirituality, or environmental crisis, this study places the two novels in direct comparison to identify similarities and differences in their underlying ecological epistemologies. By examining these contrasting perspectives, the study seeks to explain how contemporary Indonesian literature negotiates scientific-rational, instrumental, spiritual, and relational ways of knowing nature and how these epistemologies shape environmental ethics and human–nature relationships.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative comparative ecocritical textual analysis design. This design is selected because the study investigates how environmental ethics and human–nature relationships are constructed through narrative language, characterization, dialogue, and descriptions of the natural environment rather than through numerical measurement. The comparative dimension enables the study to identify similarities and differences in the ecological perspectives constructed in *Aroma Karsa* and *Bilangan Fu*, while the ecocritical framework provides the analytical basis for interpreting representations of nature, human positioning toward nature, environmental values, and ecological responsibility. The analysis therefore proceeds from textual evidence to thematic coding and comparative ecocritical interpretation.(Creswell & Poth, 2016; Given, 2008). Qualitative descriptive design combined with document analysis, thematic coding, and interpretive textual analysis in literary studies

The study adopts ecocriticism as its principal analytical framework because ecocriticism investigates how literary texts represent ecological realities, environmental values, and human interactions with the natural world. Contemporary ecocritical scholarship has expanded beyond environmental representation toward the examination of environmental ethics, ecological justice, sustainability, and relational ecology, making it particularly relevant for investigating literary constructions of ecological meaning (Al Fawareh et al., 2023; Swaminathan & Chakravarthy, 2023). Furthermore, recent methodological developments in ecocritical literary research emphasize systematic textual interpretation to understand how narratives construct environmental ideologies and ethical perspectives (Vasudevan & Mukherjee, 2025).

Data Sources

The corpus of this study consists of two contemporary Indonesian novels: *Aroma Karsa* by Dee Lestari and *Bilangan Fu* by Ayu Utami. The novels were purposively selected based on four criteria. First, each novel contains sustained representations of the natural environment rather than merely incidental references to nature. Second, each novel presents human interactions with nature that are relevant to questions of environmental ethics. Third, the novels contain narrative episodes involving ecological knowledge, environmental utilization or exploitation, cultural or spiritual understandings of nature, or human responsibility toward the environment. Fourth, the two novels provide sufficient textual material for comparative analysis of human–nature relationships. The selection is therefore criterion-based and theoretically purposeful rather than intended to statistically represent Indonesian literature.

The units of analysis consist of textual passages including narration, dialogue, character interactions, and descriptive representations of natural environments that explicitly or implicitly portray environmental ethics and human–nature relationships. These textual units were selected because they contain ecological meanings relevant to the objectives of the study.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted through systematic close reading and documentary analysis. The procedure consisted of five stages. First, both novels were read in their entirety to establish an understanding of their narrative contexts. Second, passages relevant to the sampling criteria were identified during repeated readings. Third, each selected passage was copied into a data matrix together with its source information and immediate narrative context. Fourth, the passages were assigned preliminary codes based on the ecological issue or human-nature relationship represented. Fifth, passages with similar codes were grouped into broader thematic categories for subsequent comparative analysis. This procedure ensured that the analysis was based on traceable textual evidence rather than on general impressions of the novels. Following recent methodological recommendations in ecocritical literary studies (Vasudevan & Mukherjee, 2025), the coding process was conducted systematically using conceptual categories that facilitate comparative interpretation between the two novels.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using qualitative content analysis within a comparative ecocritical framework. The analysis followed four sequential stages. First, the collected textual data were reduced by selecting passages directly relevant to environmental ethics and human–nature relationships. Second, the selected excerpts were classified according to the predetermined coding categories. Third, each category was interpreted through ecocritical concepts including anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, environmental ethics, ecological wisdom, environmental justice, and human–nature connectedness (Beery et al., 2023; Garrard, 2012; Oppermann, 2013; Swaminathan & Chakravarthy, 2023).

The final stage involved comparative interpretation to identify similarities and differences in the ecological epistemologies constructed by Aroma Karsa and Bilangan Fu. Following (Vasudevan & Mukherjee, 2025), the comparison focused not merely on identifying ecological themes but on examining how each novel constructs different ethical frameworks governing human relationships with the environment. This analytical procedure also considers recent discussions concerning ecological narratives in Indonesian literature (Efendi et al., 2025; Wuntu et al., 2024).

Through this procedure, the study distinguishes between textual description and interpretive claims. Textual passages constitute the empirical evidence, coding organizes the evidence into recurring ecological patterns, and ecocritical concepts provide the theoretical basis for interpreting

those patterns. The comparative stage then examines how the two novels differ in their representations of nature, environmental ethics, and human–nature relationships.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Environmental Representation in *Aroma Karsa*

The results reveal that *Aroma Karsa* represents nature through rich biodiversity and sensory perception. Various medicinal plants and spices are portrayed as integral components of the ecological environment, emphasizing the abundance of Indonesia's natural resources. This representation is illustrated in the following passage:

> *Sangit kayu bakar dan uap rempah menyisip ke penciuman Jati yang mulai siuman. Ia mengenali wangi jahe, kunyit, sambiloto, tapak liman, biji dewandaru, dan akar biduri. Ia juga mengenali wangi lempuyang, temu hitam, dan daun pepaya berkacau di udara..."* (Lestari, 2024 p.517)

This passage demonstrates that the novel foregrounds biodiversity through detailed descriptions of medicinal plants and aromatic species. Rather than functioning merely as background scenery, these natural elements become ecological entities that shape the protagonist's perception and understanding of the environment. The narrative therefore presents nature as a living repository of biological diversity and ecological knowledge.

1. Environmental Representation in *Bilangan Fu*

The analysis reveals that, unlike *Aroma Karsa*, *Bilangan Fu* represents nature as a living entity endowed with philosophical, spiritual, and cultural meanings. Mountains, forests, and cliffs are portrayed not merely as physical landscapes but as active ecological presences that shape human consciousness and spiritual reflection. The sacred representation of nature is illustrated in the following passage:

> *Mereka adalah liang-liang udara, terbentuk oleh pusaran angin selama juta tahun. Berabad-abad pasukan angin menderu dan dalam ziarahnya mereka menembus gunung batu…. Semai itu menjelma kawanan ruh anjing-anjing tebing…. ruh-ruh anjing hutan dari masa purba itu masih semayam di dalam gunung* (Utami, 2008, p.16)

This passage portrays the mountain not simply as a geological formation but as a sacred ecological space inhabited by spiritual forces. The mountain is represented as possessing agency and memory, suggesting that nature functions as a living presence that deserves reverence rather than domination. Another passage further emphasizes the intimate relationship between humans and the natural environment:

> *Aku membayangkan negerinya. Sebuah wilayah berhektar-hektar di antara laut Selatan dan Watugunung. Di intinya adalah keheningan. Keheningan alam. Tanpa suara manusia. Hanya ada suara unggas, hewan, gemericik air, desis daun-daun bambu. Dan, sesekali, hembusan angin-angin* (Utami, 2008, p.80)

The quotation highlights nature as an autonomous ecological system where harmony is achieved through the absence of human domination. The emphasis on birds, flowing water, bamboo leaves, and wind constructs an ecocentric worldview in which environmental meaning emerges from coexistence and spiritual awareness rather than exploitation. These findings indicate that *Bilangan Fu* presents nature as an active participant in human existence, grounding environmental values in interconnectedness, contemplation, and ecological wisdom.

2. Human Nature Relationship Patterns

Comparative analysis identified two dominant patterns of human–nature relationships across the novels.

Table 1. Comparative Patterns of Human–Nature Relationships

Aspect	***Aroma Karsa***	***Bilangan Fu***
Human position	Controller and explorer	Ecological participant
Representation of nature	Scientific resource	Living ecological presence
Environmental orientation	Instrumental and utilitarian	Relational and spiritual
Human–nature interaction	Extraction and management	Coexistence and contemplation
Ecological perspective	Anthropocentric tendency	Ecocentric tendency

The comparison reveals that the two novels offer contrasting ecological orientations. In *Aroma Karsa*, human–nature relationships are characterized by scientific exploration and resource management, whereas *Bilangan Fu* emphasizes mutual interconnectedness between humans and the environment.

3. Construction of Environmental Ethics

The analysis further reveals that environmental ethics in the two novels are constructed through different narrative frameworks. In *Aroma Karsa*, environmental ethics emerge from scientific inquiry and the utilization of biodiversity. Ethical considerations are closely associated with the management and preservation of valuable natural resources, although these resources remain largely positioned within human-centered systems of knowledge and economic interests. By contrast, *Bilangan Fu* constructs environmental ethics through cultural traditions, spirituality, and ecological wisdom. The narrative emphasizes respect for nature as an integral component of human existence, encouraging ethical coexistence rather than environmental domination. These findings demonstrate that contemporary Indonesian literature does not present a single model of environmental ethics but instead offers multiple ecological perspectives reflecting different philosophical assumptions regarding the relationship between humans and nature.

4. Comparative Ecological Perspectives

Based on the comparative analysis, two contrasting ecological epistemologies are identified. The first epistemology, represented by *Aroma Karsa*, is characterized by scientific rationality, biodiversity exploration, and environmental utilization. Ecological knowledge is constructed through empirical observation, classification, and the practical application of natural resources. The second epistemology, represented by *Bilangan Fu*, emphasizes relational ecology, spiritual awareness, and ecological wisdom. Knowledge of nature is developed through cultural experience, ethical reflection, and recognition of the interconnectedness between humans and the environment. These contrasting perspectives indicate that Indonesian contemporary literature provides diverse ecological narratives through which environmental ethics and human–nature relationships are negotiated.

Discussion

1. Scientific Rationality and Environmental Instrumentalism in *Aroma Karsa*

The findings reveal that *Aroma Karsa* constructs environmental representation through the richness of Indonesia's biodiversity, particularly medicinal plants and aromatic species. The detailed descriptions of ginger, turmeric, sambiloto, tapak liman, dewandaru, lempuyang, and other native plants demonstrate that nature is portrayed as a living repository of ecological knowledge rather than merely a narrative setting. Jati's exceptional ability to identify various plants through their scents further reinforces the idea that ecological understanding is developed through close interaction with the natural environment. This finding supports (Garrard, 2012) assertion that literary texts represent nature as an active ecological presence capable of shaping human perception and environmental awareness. Likewise, (Al Fawareh et al., 2023) argue that ecocritical literature encourages readers to recognize biodiversity as an essential component of both cultural identity and environmental sustainability.

However, the novel also reflects an anthropocentric perspective by presenting biodiversity as a source of scientific exploration and practical utilization. The identification and classification of plants highlight the role of ecological knowledge in supporting human interests, particularly in the production of fragrances and the discovery of valuable natural resources. This representation is consistent with (Swaminathan & Chakravarthy, 2023), who emphasize that ecological wisdom should balance scientific advancement with environmental responsibility. Furthermore, (Beery et al., 2023) argue that meaningful human–nature relationships emerge when ecological knowledge fosters connectedness rather than exploitation. Therefore, *Aroma Karsa* portrays nature as both a source of knowledge and a valuable ecological asset, illustrating the dynamic relationship between biodiversity, scientific inquiry, and environmental ethics in contemporary Indonesian literature.

2. Relational Ecology and Ecological Wisdom in *Bilangan Fu*

The findings demonstrate that *Bilangan Fu* constructs environmental representation through an ecocentric perspective, where nature is portrayed as a living entity with spiritual, philosophical, and cultural significance. The descriptions of mountains, cliffs, and natural landscapes suggest that the environment possesses intrinsic value beyond its physical existence. Rather than functioning merely as the setting of the narrative, nature actively shapes the characters' ethical awareness and worldview. This representation supports (Garrard, 2012) assertion that ecocritical literature positions nature as an active participant in human experience rather than a passive background. Similarly, (Meyer, 2024) argues that environmental ethics emerge from human engagement with nature as a meaningful and lived experience, while (Bobaru, 2025) emphasizes that contemporary environmental narratives increasingly recognize the agency of nature and challenge anthropocentric assumptions.

Furthermore, the novel promotes an ecological worldview grounded in coexistence, spiritual awareness, and interconnectedness between humans and the natural environment. The portrayal of mountains as sacred spaces and repositories of collective memory reflects local ecological wisdom, where respect for nature becomes an ethical obligation rather than merely a cultural tradition. This finding is consistent with (Beery et al., 2023), who highlight that human–nature connectedness is fundamental to developing environmental responsibility and sustainability. It also aligns with (Efendi et al., 2025), who argue that contemporary Indonesian literature integrates ecological narratives with cultural values to construct environmental ethics. Therefore, *Bilangan Fu* presents nature as an ethical partner whose preservation depends on reciprocal relationships between humans, culture, and the environment rather than on exploitation or domination.

3. Human-Nature Relationships: From Domination to Ecological Connectedness

The comparative analysis reveals two contrasting patterns of human–nature relationships. *Aroma Karsa* portrays humans primarily as controllers and explorers of ecological resources, whereas *Bilangan Fu* positions humans as participants within interconnected ecological systems. These contrasting representations demonstrate that contemporary Indonesian literature negotiates multiple understandings of humanity's place in nature. The dominance of scientific exploration in *Aroma Karsa* reflects an anthropocentric tendency where ecological relationships are mediated through knowledge production and resource management. Conversely, the relational perspective developed in *Bilangan Fu* aligns with recent discussions concerning human–nature connectedness, which emphasize emotional, cultural, and ethical relationships with the environment.

These findings correspond with (Barragan-Jason et al., 2022), whose global meta-analysis demonstrates that stronger human–nature connectedness contributes significantly to sustainable environmental behaviour. Similarly, (Beery et al., 2023) argue that contemporary ecological crises are closely associated with increasing human disconnection from nature. The ecological coexistence represented in *Bilangan Fu* therefore offers an alternative narrative that challenges modern environmental alienation by emphasizing mutual dependence between humans and ecological systems. The comparison also supports (Jaelani et al., 2024), who found that literary narratives often construct environmental meaning through interactions between human characters and natural landscapes rather than through explicit environmental messages alone. In both novels, ecological relationships become central narrative mechanisms through which broader environmental values are communicated, although the ethical orientations differ substantially.

4. Environmental Ethics in Contemporary Indonesian Literature

The findings demonstrate that environmental ethics in contemporary Indonesian literature cannot be understood as a single philosophical position. Instead, the two novels construct different ethical frameworks through which human responsibilities toward nature are interpreted. In *Aroma Karsa*, environmental ethics emerge through scientific inquiry, biodiversity management, and ecological utilization. Ethical responsibility is associated with preserving valuable natural resources while maintaining their practical usefulness for human society. This perspective reflects what (Meyer, 2024) describes as anthropo-related environmental ethics, in which ecological responsibility remains closely connected with human interests.

By contrast, *Bilangan Fu* constructs environmental ethics through ecological wisdom, spirituality, and cultural traditions. Ethical relationships are grounded in coexistence, respect, and recognition of the intrinsic value of nature rather than its instrumental function. This interpretation supports (Edor et al., 2025), who argue that environmental ethics should be based upon ecological relatedness and communal responsibility instead of human domination. Furthermore, these findings reinforce recent Indonesian ecocritical studies showing that environmental ethics are closely linked with local ecological knowledge and cultural narratives (Efendi et al., 2025). Rather than separating environmental conservation from cultural identity, Indonesian literature frequently integrates ecological values within broader philosophical and social traditions.

5. Comparative Ecological Epistemologies

One of the principal contributions of this study lies in identifying two contrasting ecological epistemologies embedded within contemporary Indonesian literature. *Aroma Karsa* constructs ecological knowledge through scientific rationality, empirical observation, and biodiversity

classification, reflecting an epistemology that prioritizes environmental management and technological understanding. In contrast, *Bilangan Fu* develops ecological knowledge through spirituality, lived experience, and ecological wisdom, emphasizing relational engagement with nature rather than scientific mastery. These contrasting epistemologies illustrate the diversity of ecological narratives within Indonesian literature. Rather than presenting a single environmental worldview, the novels negotiate different ways of understanding ecological existence, each shaped by distinct philosophical assumptions regarding the relationship between humans and nature.

This finding extends previous ecocritical studies that primarily focused on environmental representation by demonstrating that literary narratives also construct competing ecological systems of knowledge. As suggested (Bobaru, 2025), contemporary environmental narratives increasingly move beyond simple depictions of nature toward ethical and posthuman understandings of ecological coexistence. Similarly, (Al Fawareh et al., 2023) argue that modern ecocriticism should investigate how literature shapes environmental consciousness through diverse cultural perspectives. Therefore, this study contributes to ecocritical scholarship by showing that contemporary Indonesian literature simultaneously accommodates scientific environmental rationality and relational ecological wisdom, thereby enriching current discussions on environmental ethics and human-nature relationships within the environmental humanities.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Aroma Karsa and Bilangan Fu construct contrasting perspectives on environmental ethics and human–nature relationships. Aroma Karsa represents nature through scientific rationality, biodiversity exploration, and resource utilization, reflecting an anthropocentric orientation. In contrast, Bilangan Fu emphasizes spirituality, ecological wisdom, and coexistence, promoting an ecocentric understanding of the relationship between humans and nature. These findings indicate that contemporary Indonesian literature offers diverse ecological epistemologies that enrich discussions of environmental ethics and sustainability.

This study contributes to ecocritical scholarship by providing a comparative analysis of two significant Indonesian novels and highlighting literature's role in fostering ecological awareness.
This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis is limited to two Indonesian novels, Aroma Karsa by Dee Lestari and Bilangan Fu by Ayu Utami. Although the two novels provide contrasting ecological perspectives, they cannot fully represent the diversity of environmental representations and ecological epistemologies in contemporary Indonesian literature. Second, the study relies exclusively on textual evidence and qualitative interpretive analysis within a comparative ecocritical framework. Therefore, the findings primarily reflect the researchers' interpretation of the selected textual passages and do not include empirical evidence from readers, authors, or other stakeholders. Third, the study focuses specifically on environmental ethics, human–nature relationships, and ecological epistemologies; consequently, other dimensions of ecological representation, such as environmental justice, gender, postcoloniality, or the agency of nonhuman entities, are not examined in depth. These limitations define the scope of the present study and should be considered when interpreting its findings.

Future research may expand the corpus by incorporating additional Indonesian literary works or conducting cross-cultural comparisons with literary texts from other national or linguistic contexts. Further studies may also employ theoretical perspectives such as eco-postcolonialism, ecofeminism, or posthumanism to examine additional dimensions of ecological representation. In addition, reader-response studies and empirical research could investigate how literary

representations of environmental ethics influence readers' ecological awareness and how ecocritical literature can be incorporated into literature and English language teaching contexts.

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Credit Author

Ayu Melati Ningsih: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Data Curation, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing. **Saiful Anwar Matondang**: Supervision, Validation, Methodology, Writing - Review & Editing. **M. Manugeren:** Methodology, Validation, Formal Analysis, Writing - Review & Editing. The contribution statement should be confirmed by all authors to ensure that it accurately reflects their actual involvement.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or institutional interests that could have appeared to influence the research reported in this article.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used solely to assist with language editing, grammar, readability, and revision of selected manuscript sections. All AI-assisted outputs were reviewed, edited, and verified by the authors, who retain full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, interpretation, and integrity of the final manuscript.

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