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Representation of ecological anxiety toward climate change and environmental crisis in Indonesian and Malaysian children's literature

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Abstract: *Children also experience the ecological crisis and climate change psychologically, notably as eco anxiety, an affective response of sadness, fear, anger, and helplessness toward environmental degradation. Children's literature can both represent and mediate this anxiety, yet ecocritical studies of Indonesian and Malaysian children's literature have developed separately and rarely address its affective dimension. This study maps the representation of the ecological crisis and the manifest and latent textual markers of eco anxiety in Indonesian and Malaysian children's literature, and compares the narrative strategies each tradition uses to manage child characters' ecological anxiety. Using content analysis and close reading grounded in second wave ecocriticism and the concept of the Anthropocene unconscious, the study examines the novel Laskar Pelangi by Andrea Hirata and the graphic novel Kampung Boy by Lat, both set in tin mining regions. The findings reveal a shared emphasis on local wisdom and communal relations as psychological support for children amid extractive economic pressures, alongside distinct strategies: collective resolution through education in the Indonesian text and an open, unresolved nostalgia in the Malaysian text. These findings inform the development of children's reading materials that build environmental awareness without provoking excessive anxiety.*

Keywords: *ecocriticism, eco anxiety, climate anxiety, children's literature, Indonesian and Malaysian comparative literature*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, climate change and the ecological crisis have come to be understood not only as physical problems of temperature, air quality, or water availability but also as psychological issues that touch the inner lives of humans, including children. Environmental psychology shows that awareness of environmental degradation can trigger sadness, fear, anger, guilt, and helplessness, collectively termed *eco anxiety*, or ecological anxiety (Léger-Goodes et al., 2022). The related term *climate anxiety* refers more specifically to distress tied to the threat of the climate crisis (Clayton & Karazsia, 2020; Pihkala, 2022).

Children and adolescents are among the groups most vulnerable to ecological anxiety. A global survey involving ten thousand young respondents across various countries found that the majority of young people feel afraid, sad, anxious, and angry when thinking about the planet's future, while most of them also feel that governments have failed to respond adequately to the climate crisis (Hickman et al., 2021). A recent systematic review even links the level of ecological anxiety among children and adolescents to intertwined social, political, and geographic factors, such as age, gender, media exposure, socioeconomic context, intergenerational relations, and distrust of political institutions (Niedzwiedz et al., 2025). These findings confirm that ecological anxiety is not merely an individual psychological disturbance, but a response embedded

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in the sociocultural context in which a child is raised, including the narratives and stories they read from an early age.

In this context, children's literature occupies a strategic position. Children's literature functions not merely as entertainment but also as a medium for the socialization of values, identity formation, and the cultivation of ecological awareness from an early age (Ibarra-Rius & Pons, 2025). The stories children read or listen to can shape the way they interpret the relationship between humans and nature, while also becoming a space of representation for society's collective unease over the environmental destruction they witness firsthand. At the same time, children's narratives also have the potential to become a space of mediation, in which anxiety arising from the ecological crisis is transformed into hope, courage, and a sense of agency, as shown by various studies on the role of hope in climate literature for children (Ojala, 2012; Sangervo, Jylhä, & Pihkala, 2022).

This issue is particularly relevant for Indonesia and Malaysia, which share a long history of natural resource exploitation, especially tin mining along the Southeast Asian tin belt from the Malay Peninsula to Bangka and Belitung. This shared extractive geography is captured in the two works examined here: the novel *Laskar Pelangi* by Andrea Hirata, set around the PN Timah mine on Belitong Island, Indonesia, and the graphic novel *Kampung Boy* by Lat, set in the tin mining Kinta Valley of Perak, Malaysia. Neither work was written as climate fiction, yet both depict children growing up alongside extraction machinery, changing landscapes, and inequality rooted in resource exploitation. Both texts can therefore be read through the *Anthropocene unconscious*, Bould's (2021) critique of Ghosh's (2016) argument that literature struggles to represent the climate crisis directly. Bould argues that sensitivity to the Anthropocene often surfaces unconsciously, through seemingly trivial details laden with ecological significance, in narratives that do not appear to address climate at all.

Accordingly, this study aims, first, to map the representation of the ecological crisis in *Laskar Pelangi* and *Kampung Boy*; second, to identify the textual markers of *eco anxiety*, both manifest, in the form of explicit emotional vocabulary, and latent, in the form of imagery, metaphor, and narrative structures that imply ecological anxiety indirectly; and third, to compare the narrative strategies the two traditions use to manage child characters' ecological anxiety. The study is expected to contribute to comparative Southeast Asian ecocriticism and to offer practical implications for writers, educators, and publishers developing children's reading materials that build environmental awareness without provoking excessive anxiety.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ecocritical studies of Indonesian and Malaysian literature have grown rapidly, particularly in exposing environmental exploitation, critiquing extractive capitalism, and affirming local wisdom in managing nature. In Indonesia, such studies have mostly examined adult novels and novels touching on childhood, such as *Anak Rantau* by Ahmad Fuadi (Syarif, Tang, & Usman, 2021), *Tanjung Kemarau* by Royyan Julian (Apriliadi & Efendi, 2019), and the *Anak-anak Mamak* series by Tere Liye (Sukowati & Ihsan, 2022). In Malaysia, studies of kampung landscapes, including Lat's works, focus on nostalgia, national identity, and the politics of representing the kampung as a Malay icon (Bunnell, 2002; Desai, 2006; Rahman & Bahfen, 2014), without treating ecological

anxiety as a focus of analysis. These two bodies of scholarship have also developed in isolation and are rarely brought together in a comparative framework that examines how children, the subjects most vulnerable to the ecological crisis, experience and manage their anxiety.

Theoretically, this study draws on second wave ecocriticism. Whereas the first wave emphasized wilderness and nature writing, the second wave extends to urban, industrial, and suburban landscapes and affirms the close link between environmental degradation and the social injustice experienced by vulnerable groups (Buell, 2005; Garrard, 2023). This scope suits *Laskar Pelangi* and *Kampung Boy*, since neither presents pure wilderness but rather landscapes intertwined with mining, where the ecological crisis is bound up with social class, access to education, and economic inequality. Within this framework, the children's ecological anxiety cannot be separated from their position as the group with the least control over the extractive decisions that shape their environment.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach combining content analysis and *close reading*, a model common in recent ecocritical studies of Indonesian literature (Arisandi & Marup, 2025; Susilowati, Ngatma'in, & Affandy, 2022). Content analysis identifies and classifies textual units containing representations of the ecological crisis and markers of *eco anxiety*, while close reading interprets their meaning and ideological implications. The framework combines second wave ecocriticism (Buell, 2005; Garrard, 2023) with the *Anthropocene unconscious* (Bould, 2021), which holds that awareness of the Anthropocene crisis often emerges covertly through setting and metaphor rather than through explicit statements about climate.

The corpus consists of the novel *Laskar Pelangi* by Andrea Hirata (2005), representing Indonesia, and the graphic novel *Kampung Boy* by Lat (1979), representing Malaysia. Both were selected because each features a child growing up in a tin mining region, allowing an equivalent comparison of socioecological setting, and because both are widely used as literary teaching materials in their respective countries (Ridwan, 2021; Rahman & Bahfen, 2014). Data were collected through reading and note taking, recording sentences, paragraphs, or scenes that describe environmental damage or exploitation, as well as vocabulary and imagery expressing negative emotion toward the environment, such as fear, sadness, anger, and helplessness. The data were classified into manifest markers, namely explicit emotional lexicon, and latent markers, namely imagery, personification, and plot structures implying ecological unease, and were then analyzed through data reduction, thematic description, theoretical interpretation, and comparison across texts. Validity was strengthened through theoretical triangulation and repeated readings of crucial passages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis shows that *Laskar Pelangi* and *Kampung Boy* represent the ecological crisis caused by tin mining through two layers of *eco anxiety* markers: manifest markers in explicit emotional lexicon and latent markers in the personification of mining machinery and contrasting socioecological landscapes. Both traditions emphasize local

wisdom and communal relations as psychological support for children amid extractive pressures, but they differ in how they manage that anxiety. *Laskar Pelangi* relies on collective, education based resilience, whereas *Kampung Boy* relies on nostalgia, domestic humor, and a humble hope left unresolved. Table 1 summarizes these comparative findings, which are elaborated in the subsections that follow.

Table 1. Comparison of eco anxiety representation in *Laskar Pelangi* (Indonesia) and *Kampung Boy* (Malaysia)

Aspect	*Laskar Pelangi* (Hirata, 2005)	*Kampung Boy* (Lat, 1979)
Country, genre, and setting	Indonesia; novel; Belitong Island, around the PN Timah tin mine	Malaysia; graphic novel; a kampung in the tin mining Kinta Valley, Perak
Source of the ecological crisis	Corporate tin mining by PN Timah, followed by illegal tin panning after the company collapses; wild nature (the Blind River, the sea storm) as an additional threat	Tin dredges and tin panning that gradually displace the family rubber plantation; the possible sale of family land to a mining company
Mode of representation	Explicit and critical: the paradox of mineral wealth and structural poverty, "like a colony of rats starving in a rice barn" (p. 34)	Subtle, beneath a warm and humorous nostalgic tone; conveyed through gradual changes in landscape and livelihood
Manifest markers (emotional lexicon)	Bu Mus's and Ikal's anxiety over the school's survival (p. 11); "utterly terrified of drowning" and passengers who "trembled and screamed" in the sea storm (pp. 301–302)	The dredge that would "roar and once in a while groan frighteningly, like a monster"; the closing hope that no tin will be found on the family land
Latent markers (imagery and personification)	Dredges likened to "a herd of dinosaurs" (p. 35); Gedong's luxury versus the leaning kampung school (p. 10); the Blind River's hidden crocodiles and "ghostly figures" (pp. 232–233)	The dredge as a monster; the shift from rubber plantation to mining land; the rubber estate and river as threatened spaces of childhood
Counterbalancing image of nature	The filicium tree and its miniature ecosystem living in "such harmony" (p. 51)	The river, the rubber estate, and fishing trips as everyday, intimate nature
Strategy for managing anxiety	Collective, education based resilience that gives the children agency	Nostalgia, domestic humor, acceptance, and humble hope
Mitigators of anxiety	Humor about the children's antics; prayer (the storm subsides after the call to prayer)	Comic scenes of Mat's mischief, weddings, and circumcision; Koran lessons and the family's daily religious practice
Local wisdom and communal support	Simplicity, mutual cooperation, and faith taught by the kampung school's teachers	The grandmother's advice to stay humble and remember his origins; the kampung community
Narrative resolution	Closed: the anxiety is resolved through educational success	Open: the kampung's fate remains unresolved
Explicit reference to climate change	Absent; the crisis is voiced through local idioms of the mine and the sea	Absent; the crisis is voiced through local idioms of the mine and the home village

Note. Page numbers refer to Hirata (2005); *Kampung Boy* (Lat, 1979) is unpaginated.

As Table 1 shows, the two works converge in locating the source of ecological anxiety in tin mining, in personifying the dredge as a frightening creature, and in relying on local wisdom, humor, and religiosity to buffer the child characters' anxiety. They diverge most sharply in mode of representation and narrative resolution. *Laskar Pelangi* names the crisis openly, links it to structural injustice, and closes it through the children's educational achievement, whereas *Kampung Boy* lets the crisis surface quietly through changes in landscape and livelihood and leaves the fate of the kampung open. These convergences and divergences form the basis of the discussion below.

Discussion

Representation of the Ecological Crisis in Laskar Pelangi

Laskar Pelangi presents Belitong Island as a space of ecological paradox. The island holds extraordinary mineral wealth, from tin to granite, zirconium, and gold, lying beneath the residents' stilted houses, yet this wealth is controlled almost exclusively by the state mining corporation PN Timah, leaving the native Belitong Malays in generational poverty. The narrator captures this irony through the simile of indigenous inhabitants living "like a colony of rats starving in a rice barn" (Hirata, 2005, p. 34), exposing the gap between resource abundance and structural poverty.

The narrator also depicts mining as a force that transforms the landscape on a massive scale. Dredges operate a hundred and fifty giant steel buckets that tear through sea, river, and swamp day and night, their sound likened to "a herd of dinosaurs" (Hirata, 2005, p. 35). This personification is a latent marker of ecological anxiety, positioning extraction not as neutral progress but as a destructive force that frightens the children nearby. The novel contrasts the elite mining settlement of Gedong, with its swimming pool, golf course, and imported orchids, with the impoverished kampung and a school whose whole building "already leaned as if about to collapse" (Hirata, 2005, p. 10). This spatial gap ties the ecological crisis to social injustice, in line with second wave ecocriticism (Buell, 2005; Garrard, 2023).

Toward the end of the novel, the ecological crisis turns into an economic crisis when PN Timah goes bankrupt, depicted as the collapse of a corporate empire that had governed nearly every aspect of life on the island. The collapse is followed by illegal, traditionally conducted tin panning by more than nine thousand people, which the narrator calls a "disguised blessing" for ordinary people (Hirata, 2005, p. 355), and which at the same time exposes the failure of the grand narrative of extractive capitalism. This shift confirms that the ecological crisis in the novel is cyclical, moving from exploitation on a corporate scale to exploitation on an individual scale that keeps eroding the same resources, so that the children of Belitong continue to grow up in the shadow of ecological and economic uncertainty.

The ecological anxiety in this novel does not stem solely from the extractive industry but also from wild nature itself, depicted as a force that threatens children. When the character Flo gets lost in the forest of Mount Selumar, the narrator describes in detail the dangers of the Blind River, a tributary whose surface is calm "like a lake, like still glass," yet which conceals "huge crocodiles and strange bottom-dwelling snakes," along with dead trees forming "giant ghostly figures" (Hirata, 2005, pp. 232–

233). This description presents nature not as an always-friendly idyllic space but as a dual force capable of turning against a child's safety, thereby broadening the scope of ecological anxiety in the novel from mere anxiety over mining induced damage toward an existential anxiety over the uncontrollable power of nature, a dimension also apparent in the sea storm scene discussed next.

The Filicium Tree: Ecological Harmony amid Crisis

Amid this imagery of threat, *Laskar Pelangi* offers an important contrasting image: the filicium tree that shades the yard of the Muhammadiyah school. The tree hosts a miniature ecosystem of tailorbirds, prinias, sunbirds, butterflies, praying mantises, and chameleons living in "such harmony" (Hirata, 2005, p. 51). The economically powerless school thus shelters one of the richest ecological spaces in the novel, placing human poverty beside nonhuman abundance. The tree is even likened to the teacher, a support for life that "shades the roof of our classroom" (Hirata, 2005, p. 31).

The presence of this filicium imagery is important to read as a narrative strategy that balances ecological anxiety with ecological hope. Whereas the dredging vessels and the Blind River represent nature as a source of threat, whether from human exploitation or from its own power, the filicium tree represents nature as a source of shade, knowledge, and positive affection that can still grow amid limitations. The presence of such a contrasting image aligns with the second wave ecocritical argument that marginal and urban landscapes, including a small patch of a poor school's yard, deserve attention equal to that given to wilderness in environmental literary studies (Buell, 2005; Garrard, 2023), while also serving as evidence that the novel does not merely display anxiety but also provides a contemplative space in which children can experience a soothing closeness to nature amid the socioecological economic crisis they face.

Representation of the Ecological Crisis in Kampung Boy

Unlike *Laskar Pelangi*, which openly criticizes the mining corporation, *Kampung Boy* presents the ecological crisis subtly, behind a warm and humorous nostalgic tone. Mat grows up in a kampung in the Kinta Valley of Perak, at the heart of the world's largest tin mining region. The mine is first conveyed through a continuous rumbling heard from afar. When young Mat sneaks out to find its source, he sees a gigantic dredge floating in a mud pool that would "roar and once in a while groan frighteningly, like a monster" (Lat, 1979). This is a fairly explicit manifest marker of ecological anxiety, as the child voices his fear of a machine personified as a threatening creature.

Otherwise, the crisis is represented mostly through latent markers, namely gradual changes in landscape and livelihood. Early kampung life centers on the family rubber plantation and the river where children fish and play. As the story progresses, illegal tin panning displaces rubber cultivation, and Mat's father, who had planned to pass the plantation on to his son, must accept that the land may be sold to a mining company if it proves to contain tin. This shift from agriculture to extraction becomes a metaphor for the loss of a traditional way of life, part of the contestation over kampung landscapes in modern Malaysia (Bunnell, 2002).

The peak of ecological anxiety comes at the close, when Mat leaves for a boarding school in the city. Rather than ending in full optimism, the narrator suddenly hopes that no tin will be found on the family land, because above all he wants his kampung to

remain a home to return to (Lat, 1979). This ending reveals a child's awareness that the mineral wealth long regarded as a source of pride threatens the place he loves. Unlike *Laskar Pelangi*, which achieves closure through educational success, *Kampung Boy* ends with an open question about the kampung's fate, consistent with the *Anthropocene unconscious*, in which ecological unease remains suspended beneath the narrative surface without full resolution (Bould, 2021).

Textual Markers of Eco Anxiety: Manifest and Latent

Two layers of ecological anxiety markers emerge from both texts. Manifest markers consist of explicit emotional lexicon such as anxious, trembling, afraid, and terrified, which in *Laskar Pelangi* cluster in the sea storm scene. The once calm sea becomes a threatening force as waves seven meters high snap the mast; the narrator admits that he "felt utterly terrified of drowning" (Hirata, 2005, p. 301), while the passengers "trembled and screamed hysterically" (Hirata, 2005, p. 302). The storm subsides abruptly after the call to prayer, positioning religiosity as an antidote to peaking anxiety, a pattern discussed further below.

Another manifest marker appears in the opening scene, where Bu Mus is so anxious that she ignores the sweat trickling into her eyelids while counting the students, and Ikal admits that he too "felt anxious watching the uneasy Bu Mus" (Hirata, 2005, p. 11). Although this anxiety appears educational, its root lies in the community's structural dependence on tin mining, which makes it an extension of a broader ecological and economic anxiety. In *Kampung Boy*, the strongest manifest marker is the closing expression of hope discussed above.

Latent markers appear mostly as imagery and personification of mining machinery. In both texts the tin dredge becomes a terrifying creature, a herd of dinosaurs in *Laskar Pelangi* and a monster in *Kampung Boy*. Such personification channels an anxiety that children cannot yet grasp cognitively, given the complexity of the extractive industry, into a concrete and comprehensible image. Other latent markers lie in contrasting landscapes: the luxury of Gedong against the poverty of the kampung in *Laskar Pelangi*, and the harmony of the rubber plantation against the threat of mining land in *Kampung Boy*. These contrasts imply a structural unease about the environmental future of children, consistent with the *Anthropocene unconscious* surfacing through ordinary background details (Bould, 2021).

Narrative Strategies for Managing Ecological Anxiety

Each text manages this anxiety differently. *Laskar Pelangi* builds a narrative of collective resilience centered on education. Facing poverty and the threat of school closure, the children build solidarity, nurture a love of learning, and eventually outperform the elite school of PN Timah. This strategy aligns with psychological research showing that a sense of agency reduces the negative impact of *climate anxiety* on children, since concrete action can transform helplessness into hope (Ojala, 2012; Jackson et al., 2024).

Kampung Boy, in contrast, relies on nostalgia and domestic humor. The ecological threat is consistently balanced by the warmth of family life, the antics of the kampung children, and the closeness of everyday tradition and religious ritual. Such nostalgia functions as a cultural strategy for creating intimacy through shared memories of village

life (Rahman & Bahfen, 2014). Yet beneath it, anxiety over losing the kampung to mining persists in latent form and remains unresolved, reflecting management through acceptance and humble hope rather than active resolution.

Behind these differing strategies, both texts display one prominent shared tendency, namely an emphasis on local wisdom and communal relations as psychological support for children amid the pressures of the ecological crisis. In *Laskar Pelangi*, this wisdom is evident in the values of simplicity, mutual cooperation, and the strengthening of faith taught by the kampung school's teachers as a counterbalance to the inequality the children experience. In *Kampung Boy*, this wisdom is evident in the grandmother's advice to the main character to always remain humble and never forget his origins as he leaves the kampung for school in the city. In both cases, communal relations and local wisdom function as a form of social capital that helps the child characters cope with ecological uncertainty, consistent with findings from various ecocritical studies of Indonesian literature affirming the role of local environmental wisdom as a community's adaptive strategy against environmental pressure (Syarif et al., 2021; Apriliadi & Efendi, 2019).

Implications for the Development of Children's Reading Materials

These findings offer several implications for writers, educators, and publishers. First, environmentally themed reading for children should not stop at depicting damage and threat but should give child characters room for agency, as *Laskar Pelangi* does. Stories that offer hope tend to foster positive environmental attitudes more effectively than stories that emphasize fear, although both need to present the crisis honestly (Ojala, 2012; Sangervo et al., 2022).

Second, the nostalgia and domestic warmth of *Kampung Boy* remain valuable as an emotional counterbalance; leaving some anxiety open honestly acknowledges an unresolved crisis, provided that a caregiver or community accompanies the child, as the grandmother does. Third, local wisdom and communal relations can strengthen children's psychological resilience, so writers may draw on local values rather than solely adopting global frameworks. Fourth, since *Laskar Pelangi* is already widely used as teaching material (Maksum et al., 2020; Ridwan, 2021), teachers can use its ecocritical dimension to discuss environmental justice and the psychological impact of the crisis while cultivating hope and agency. Comparative literature classes that pair Indonesian and Malaysian works can likewise offer students a cross cultural view of a shared ecological crisis.

Comparison with Global Trends in Children's Climate Literature

Compared with global trends, the two texts display a distinctly Southeast Asian pattern. English language picture books about climate change generally present the crisis directly, through species extinction, forest fires, or rising sea levels, as future threats to be met by the collective action of young people. *Laskar Pelangi* and *Kampung Boy* instead present it through decades of extractive industry, so the anxiety is both a projection toward the future and a reflection on damage already done. Children's ecological experience in postcolonial regions with long histories of exploitation thus tends to be both retrospective and anticipatory, unlike the future oriented climate narratives of many developed countries (Ibarra-Rius & Pons, 2025).

Another distinctive feature apparent from this comparison is the minimal explicit reference to the term climate change itself in either text, even though both are replete with representations of environmental damage and the accompanying anxiety. The absence of such technical terminology is consistent with Ghosh's (2016) argument regarding the limitations of realist literature in naming the climate crisis directly, while simultaneously reinforcing Bould's (2021) thesis that sensitivity to the Anthropocene can still be found covertly through details of setting, the metaphor of the machine as monster, and the shifts in livelihood depicted in both novels. In other words, the absence of modern climate vocabulary does not signify an absence of ecological awareness, but rather shows that such awareness is expressed through local cultural idioms more familiar to Indonesian and Malaysian child readers, for example through the imagery of the mine, the sea, and the home village.

Humor and Religiosity as Mitigators of Anxiety

Humor and religiosity also mitigate anxiety in both texts. In *Laskar Pelangi*, the tension of school closure and the sea storm is interspersed with humor about the children's antics and balanced by surrender to God through prayer. This combination lowers negative emotion without erasing awareness of danger, so young readers face the crisis without being overwhelmed. *Kampung Boy* shows a similar pattern in comic scenes of circumcision, weddings, and Mat's mischief alongside the family's daily religious practice. Southeast Asian children's literature thus manages ecological anxiety through a cultural and spiritual framework rather than solely through narratives of environmental activism common in contemporary Western children's literature.

These findings regarding the role of humor and religiosity are also relevant to psychological research on children's coping strategies in facing *climate anxiety*, which emphasizes the importance of social support, the creation of safe spaces for expressing emotion, and the strengthening of life meaning as ways of managing psychological distress caused by the environmental crisis (Jackson et al., 2024; Sinan et al., 2025). In the Indonesian and Malaysian context, this social support largely stems from the institutions of family, religious schooling, and kampung community, which in both novels function as an emotional safety net for the child characters. Children's literature from both countries thus offers a model for managing ecological anxiety rooted in local social and spiritual structures, a model with the potential to enrich the global discourse on *eco anxiety*, which has so far remained dominated by secular Western perspectives (Niedzwiedz et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that *Laskar Pelangi* and *Kampung Boy* both represent the ecological crisis caused by tin mining and display textual markers of *eco anxiety*, both manifest, in explicit emotional lexicon, and latent, in personified mining machinery and contrasting socioecological landscapes. Both texts place local wisdom and communal relations as psychological support for children amid extractive pressures, but they differ in strategy: *Laskar Pelangi* manages anxiety through collective resilience and educational achievement with clear narrative resolution, while *Kampung Boy* relies on nostalgia, domestic humor, and a humble hope left open.

These findings contribute to comparative Southeast Asian ecocriticism by connecting the representation of ecological crisis with the affective dimension of ecological anxiety, which has rarely been addressed in studies of Indonesian and Malaysian children's literature. Because the corpus is limited to one work from each country, generalization to the wider children's literature of both countries should be made with caution. Future research should expand the corpus and examine the reception of child readers to test how textual representations of ecological anxiety shape children's perceptions of and attitudes toward the environmental crisis.

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