

# **ECOCRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON INTO THE BENEATH: GREG GARRARD'S FRAMEWORK IN DEPICTING MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES**

**(Perspektif Ekokritik dalam Novel *Into the Beneath*: Kerangka Kerja Greg Garrard dalam Menggambarkan Krisis Lingkungan Laut)**

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to explore ecological phenomena in Rifqi Farizi's novel *Into the Beneath* through the framework of Greg Garrard's ecocriticism. The research focuses on identifying and analyzing the representation of five key ecological categories: pollution, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, and earth. The objective is to reveal how the novel reflects contemporary ecological anxieties and provides critical perspectives on humanity's relationship with the ocean as a vital yet vulnerable ecosystem. A qualitative descriptive method was applied with textual data drawn from the novel. Data collection was carried out through careful reading and coding of textual segments, while data analysis employed an interactive model supported by software-based coding to ensure thematic consistency and systematic categorization. The findings show that pollution and earth appear as dominant ecological issues, highlighting the destruction of the sea through plastic, oil, and heavy metal contamination, as well as the symbolic representation of the ocean as part of the fragile balance of the earth. The category of animals reflects both the beauty of biodiversity and the vulnerability of marine life to pollution and experimentation. Apocalypse emphasizes pessimism and fear about the future of the ocean, while dwelling reveals ambivalent human attitudes toward the sea as both alien and essential. These results confirm literature's role as a medium for ecological critique and awareness building.*

**Keywords:** *Ecocriticism; Environmental Literature; Greg Garrard; *Into the Beneath*; Marine Pollution*

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Increasing environmental damage has become a global concern, especially the ocean as a vital ecosystem that supports life, but is now threatened by plastic, heavy metal, and oil pollution that impacts biodiversity and human health (Fatah, 2025). Literature, in this case Rifqi Farizi's novel *Into the Beneath*, serves not only as an aesthetic medium, but also as a space for ecological criticism that depicts the complexity of the relationship between humans and the ocean, from pollution and bioremediation experiments to the threat of fish mutations, reflecting contemporary ecological concerns. This relevance is connected to the challenge of character education, which aims to shape intelligent and moral individuals, where intelligence is relatively easy to achieve, but character building requires greater effort. Thus, ecological literacy through literary works can serve as a bridge to build moral awareness in maintaining a balance between life and the environment (Ramadhan et al., 2023). This idea is in line with the global discourse on bioinspiration, which emphasizes ethical responsibility and sustainability (Echeverri et al., 2018, p. 50), as well as the posthumanist perspective that rejects human

exceptionalism by affirming the interconnectedness of humans with non-human entities (Forte & Toohey, 2025, p. 1). At the same time, the ecolinguistic framework emphasizes the importance of viewing language and text as part of an integrated ecology (do Couto, 2014), while diaspora studies show how narratives of identity and resistance can be linked to broader ecological and social discourses (Raihanah et al., 2014, p. 371).

Previous studies on ecocriticism show that literary works play a strategic role in raising ecological awareness and criticizing environmental exploitation. Important themes such as climate change, deforestation, pollution, species extinction, and ecological rehabilitation are consistently present in modern literary works, which serve as a medium for critical reflection and environmental advocacy (Usman & Anis, 2025). Through characters and plots, nature is not merely a backdrop, but appears as an actor that influences social life while opening space for narratives of ecological justice (Meeran, 2025). The ecocritical approach also shows how poetry can present ecological symbolism relevant to contemporary socio-ecological crises, as seen in the work of Fadwa Tuqan, which articulates healing, ecological spirituality, and criticism of coastal exploitation (Malikh et al., 2025). In the Indonesian context, Ratna Indraswari Ibrahim's novel *Lemah Tanjung* emphasizes criticism of modernization and anthropocentrism that erodes urban green spaces, highlighting the importance of ecological and social justice (Indriyanto & Barus, 2025). Meanwhile, Jalu Kancana's novel *Kekal* shows Garrard's six aspects of ecocriticism with the issue of settlement as the highest priority, highlighting the urgency of environmental protection through literary narratives that can be used as a reference for ecological policies (Juanda & Afandi, 2024). These findings overall confirm that literature functions as a medium for environmental advocacy across contexts, both global and local.

Eco-criticism, as formulated by Greg Garrard, offers six main analytical categories, namely pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, and earth, which can be used to read environmental representations in literary works (Garrard, 2012). In the novel *Into the Beneath*, the category of pollution highlights marine pollution caused by plastic, oil, and heavy metals, which not only serves as the setting but also becomes the main conflict that drives the narrative, while criticizing humanity's failure to protect the marine ecosystem. This interpretation can be likened to how forests in Southeast Asian historical chronicles are not merely passive settings, but historiographical metaphors that mediate the past and present the complexity of human relations with nature (Tan, 2024, p. 1). Furthermore, this approach has pedagogical implications, as motivational regulation strategies in language learning can improve students' oral performance through contextual and adaptive instruction (Yan et al., 2024, p. 1), so that ecocriticism can be viewed not only as literary criticism but also as a means of ecological education. This perspective is also in line with the cultural geography of caves, which reveals emotions, relationships, and resistance to coloniality through underground spaces as both aesthetic and political arenas (Bosworth, 2024, p. 1). At the same time, the regularity and instability in the narrative structure, as revealed in the multifractal analysis of the novel, shows that the complexity of language and writing style reflects creative dynamics that are closely

related to the social and ecological context (Liu et al., 2024, p. 1). Thus, ecocriticism paves the way for a reading of literature that links ecological, educational, political, and aesthetic issues in the contemporary global landscape.

The apocalypse category in Garrard's theory opens up the reading of the novel *Into the Beneath* as an ecological narrative, where the polluted sea, full of trash and potentially giving birth to mutant fish, is represented as a threat of environmental destruction. This is in line with the tendency in contemporary literature to often depict the sea as a locus of fear and loss of the future, where apocalyptic narratives emphasize the tension between hope for the salvation of the sea and pessimism about its future, while also showing human ambivalence in facing the ecological crisis (Garrard, 2012). The importance of instilling character values, especially in high school students who are at an unstable age, is closely related to the influence of social environments that can weaken the internalization of moral values (Gumay et al., 2025; Juanda, 2018). Thus, ecological literacy through literature can serve a dual purpose: providing reflection on ecological threats while also serving as a means of fostering character education rooted in moral awareness to maintain environmental sustainability.

Eco-criticism within Greg Garrard's framework not only highlights the category of pollution as the center of ecological conflict, but also includes dwelling, animals, and earth, which provide a broader reading of environmental representation in literature (Garrard, 2012). The category of dwelling shows how humans perceive the sea as an emotional home as well as a space of isolation, while animals emphasize the ambivalence of human relations with marine life, both as beautiful creatures, victims of pollution, and objects of mutation experiments. Meanwhile, the earth category positions the sea as a symbol of the earth's ecological balance that is constantly under threat, making the representation of nature an integral part of the narrative and not just a backdrop. This approach is similar to how the transformation of the identity of Russophone writers in Ukraine shows the close connection between cultural, political, and literary dynamics in shaping a new consciousness (Puleri, 2022, p. 71), or how 18th-century Russian novels function as epistemological models that connect non-literary and literary realities in shaping aesthetic identity (Lebedeva, 2015, p. 283). Furthermore, as the history of neurophysiology shows how marine animals played a role in the discovery of biological electricity (Finger, 2013) and gastronomic representations document cross-cultural culinary practices (Erşahin & Demirci, 2025, p. 1), ecocriticism presents literature as a medium that binds humans to ecology, revealing the complex intertwining of nature, culture, and survival.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the representation of ecological phenomena in Rifqi Farizi's novel *"Into the Beneath"* through Greg Garrard's ecocritical approach. The contribution of this research lies in four aspects: first, it provides a new understanding of the representation of the marine ecological crisis in contemporary Indonesian literature; second, it enriches ecocritical studies by placing the sea at the center of analysis; third, it

offers an interdisciplinary perspective that connects literature with global environmental issues; and fourth, it encourages ecological awareness through literary studies as part of environmental education.

## **B. METHODS**

The research data consists of text excerpts representing ecological phenomena (pollution, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, earth) in Rifqi Farizi's novel *Into the Beneath*. The primary data source is the novel, while secondary sources include books, journal articles, and relevant previous research. The data collection technique is carried out through close reading to mark and note parts of the text related to ecological phenomena, supplemented by supporting literature documentation studies. Data analysis uses the Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña Interactive Model which includes three main components, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. This process takes place cyclically and repeatedly, allowing researchers to interpret the data in depth. Greg Garrard's ecocritical categories (pollution, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, earth) are used as an analytical framework for coding the data. NVivo software is used to organize the data, facilitate the coding process according to ecocritical categories, and visualize the findings for a more systematic and measurable analysis.

## **C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Pollution**

The phenomenon of pollution in Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective refers to environmental pollution that has a direct impact on ecosystems and human life, whether in the form of air, soil, or water pollution, with the sea being one of the spaces most vulnerable to damage caused by modern human activities. Marine pollution not only affects water quality but also threatens human health, triggers mutations in organisms, and creates social conflicts that are reflected in literary narratives. In Rifqi Farizi's novel *Into the Beneath*, this phenomenon appears in various forms, ranging from plastic, oil, and heavy metal pollution to bioremediation experiments to representations of marine damage that cause human suffering. In more detail, the phenomenon of pollution is presented in the following data (1) to (25).

- (1) *“Sebuah proyek yang Profesor Nuka klaim dapat menjadi solusi utama dalam pencemaran laut.”* A project that Professor Nuka claims could be the ultimate solution to marine pollution” (Rifqi Fraizi, 2024:46).
- (2) *“Profesor menambahkan bahan cemaran ke dalam air tersebut untuk melihat sejauh mana kemampuan bioremediasi ikan-ikan tersebut.”* The professor added pollutants to the water to see how well the fish could bioremediate. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:73).

- (3) *“Dia memasukkan butiran mikroplastik, minyak, dan larutan dari berbagai logam berat.”* He added microplastic granules, oil, and solutions of various heavy metals. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:73).
- (4) *“Ikan tidak lagi membutuhkan nutrisi ataupun oksigen untuk bertahan hidup, melainkan bahan pencemaran.”* Fish no longer need nutrients or oxygen to survive, but rather pollutants. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:73).
- (5) *“Ikan memakan plastik, logam dan minyak. Memungkinkan kualitas air berada pada tahap paling stabil karena ketiadaan bahan pencemaran.”* Fish eat plastic, metal, and oil, allowing water quality to remain at its most stable level due to the absence of contaminants.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:73)
- (6) *“Larutan mengubah kondisi lingkungan sehingga memaksa ikan melakukan adaptasi tingkat tinggi hingga menyebabkan mutasi.”* “The solution changes environmental conditions, forcing the fish to undergo high levels of adaptation, causing mutations.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:72).
- (7) *“Larutan mengubah ikan menjadi agen bioremediasi yang membersihkan air dari bahan pencemaran.”* The solution turns fish into bioremediation agents that clean the water of pollutants” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:72).
- (8) *“Mereka akan melepaskan IPCL-220 ke laut, dan menyelesaikan proyek Profesor Nuka untuk menjernihkan air laut.”* They will release IPCL-220 into the sea, and complete Professor Nuka's project to purify seawater” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:179).
- (9) *“Kemudian mereka akan menenggelamkan benda itu ke laut. Begitu prototipe itu diaktifkan, benda itu akan menyebarkan cairan itu ke laut dengan jangkauan yang lebih luas.”* “Then they will sink the thing into the sea. Once the prototype is activated, it will spread the liquid into the sea with a wider range.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:180).

The phenomenon of pollution in the Contamination Experiments category in Rifqi Farizi's novel *Into the Beneath* depicts the sea as a testing ground for bioremediation that is fraught with paradoxes. Based on data (1), Professor Nuka claims that the project he is developing will be the main solution to marine pollution. To achieve this, he deliberately adds pollutants to the water, as shown in data (2), including microplastics, oil, and heavy metals, as shown in data (3). As a result of these experiments, the fish undergo extreme changes, such as no longer requiring nutrients or oxygen, but instead living on pollutants (data 4). They even consume plastics, metals, and oil, which actually makes the water appear stable because it is free of pollution (data 5). Furthermore, the solution forced the fish to adapt to the point of mutation (data 6) while also transforming them into bioremediation agents that cleaned the seawater (data 7). From this, a plan emerged to release IPCL-220 into the sea to purify the water (data 8), followed by the activation of a prototype to spread the cleaning fluid more widely (data 9). This series of data confirms that the ocean is positioned as an experimental laboratory for pollution, where efforts to find solutions actually present new ecological risks.

- (10) *“Adikku keracunan karena dulu ibuku banyak makan ikan yang mengandung timbal.”* My sister was poisoned because my mother used to eat a lot of fish that contained lead” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:65).
- (11) *“Seorang Profesor di bidang ekotoksikologi, yang sepanjang karirnya mempelajari pencemaran laut, memiliki seorang putra yang sakit akibat dampak pencemaran.”* A Professor of ecotoxicology, who has spent his career studying marine pollution, has a son who is sick from the effects of pollution” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:65).
- (12) *“Kenapa laut yang seharusnya memberi kehidupan justru menghancurkan kehidupanku?”* Why does the sea that should give life destroy my life?” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:66).

Based on data (10), marine pollution has a direct impact on human health when a child experiences poisoning because their mother consumes a lot of fish containing lead. A similar impact is also seen in data (11), where an ecotoxicology professor who spent his entire career researching marine pollution had a son who fell ill due to this pollution, confirming that even knowledge cannot protect someone from the threat of pollution. The irony is even stronger in data (12), where the figure questions why the sea, which should be a source of life, has instead become the cause of suffering and destruction in his life.

- (13) *“Orang-orang ini tidak ada yang benar-benar berusaha melindungi laut, mereka hanya pura-pura peduli pada lingkungan.”* These people are not really trying to protect the ocean, they just pretend to care about the environment.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:174)
- (14) *“Namun, area wisata baru ramai pada sore hari, orang-orang ke sana datang untuk melihat suasana matahari senja atau memancing, atau berenang meskipun area itu dipenuhi air laut yang keruh.”* However, the new tourist area becomes crowded in the afternoon, people come there to see the sunset or fish, or swim even though the area is filled with murky sea water.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:183).
- (15) *“Ini bukan pertama kali Rami berenang di laut yang tercemar. Laut kotor di sini seperti tidak ada apa-apanya. Dia pernah melakukan yang lebih berbahaya, seperti menyelam di gua bawah laut.”* This isn't Rami's first time swimming in polluted water. The filth here is nothing like it. He's done far more dangerous things, like diving in underwater caves. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:183).
- (16) *“Rami tahu berenang di laut kotor punya risikonya sendiri, karena itu Rami berjanji ingin segera mandi dan menggosok tubuhnya berkali-kali setelah ini semua selesai.”* Rami knows that swimming in dirty seas has its own risks, so Rami promises to immediately take a shower and scrub his body many times after this is all over.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:183).

Based on data (13), there is social criticism that people are not really trying to protect the sea, but are only pretending to care about the environment. This contrasts with data (14), which shows that people continue to engage in activities in tourist areas, such as fishing or swimming, even though the seawater is murky due to pollution. Data (15) tells us that

Rami is used to dealing with polluted seas, so that dirty conditions are no longer unusual for him, even compared to the more dangerous experience of diving in underwater caves. However, awareness of the dangers still emerges in data (16), when Rami realizes the health risks of swimming in dirty seas and promises to clean himself up immediately afterwards. These four data points confirm that marine pollution is not only an ecological problem, but also affects human behavior, habits, and social attitudes.

- (17) *“Perairan di laut itu benar-benar terbebas dari beban cemaran. Minyak, plastik padatan tersuspensi, tetapi beginilah akibatnya. Dan ikan ini bukan satu-satunya.”* The waters of the sea are completely free from pollution. Oil, plastic, and suspended solids, but this is the result. And this fish isn't the only one (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:48).
- (18) *“Laut sudah sangat rusak, sangat kotor karena penuh sampah. Bukan lagi biru, jernih, dan layak untuk dihidupi. Kau tahu betapa hancurnya diriku saat kita berdiri di dermaga dan menyaksikan air laut hitam dan pekat seperti itu?”* The sea is so damaged, so dirty, it's full of trash. It's no longer blue, clear, and livable. Do you know how devastated I was when we stood on the pier and saw that black, thick seawater? (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:132)
- (19) *“Mungkin saja dia suah berhasil menyukkseskan penelitian ayahnya, dan mengontaminasi laut denga cairan itu”.* It's possible that he has succeeded in his father's research, and contaminated the sea with that liquid." (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:148)
- (20) *“Ugh... apa laut di sini memang sekotor itu?” keluh Tim. Padahal sebelum sepuluh menit mereka menginjakkan kaki di atasa dermaga, Rami dan Rio hanya mengangkat bahu.* Ugh... is the sea here really that dirty?" complained Tim. Even though ten minutes before they set foot on the pier, Rami and Rio just shrugged. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:167).
- (21) *“Harap maklum, negara ini menyumbang sampah plastik terebsar kedua di dunia,”tambah Rami.* "Please understand, this country contributes the second largest amount of plastic waste in the world," added Rami (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:168).
- (22) *“Kakinya kini hanya berjarak satu langkah dengan laut. Air laut yang hitam menyambutnya di depan. Yunita benar, air laut di sini sangat kotor, bahkan Hank meagukan ada ikan yang hidup di bawah sana.”* His feet were now only a step away from the sea. Black water greeted him. Yunita was right, the seawater here was very dirty. Even Hank doubted there were fish living down there. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:181).
- (23) *“Setelah menghela napas berat, Hank memasang mouth piece-nya, lalu melompat ke lautan berwarna hitam itu, dan mulai menyelam.”* After taking a deep breath, Hank put on his mouthpiece, then jumped into the black ocean, and began to dive. ” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:181).
- (24) *“Dia sudah berenang sejauh kurang lebih empat puluh meter dari dermaga, tetapi airnya masih keruh sehingga menyulitkannya melihat ke dalam air.”* He had already swum about forty meters from the pier, but the water was still murky, making it difficult for him to see into the water.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:184)

- (25) *“Airnya masih keruh, berwarna agak kecoklatan. Baunya juga masih menyengat. Apa alat itu butuh waktu untuk bekerja?”* The water is still cloudy, slightly brownish. The smell is still strong. Does the device need time to work? (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:193)

Based on data (17), marine pollution is described as waters that are free of oil, plastic, and suspended solids, but which cause anomalies in the fish that live in them. The damage is further clarified in data (18), where the sea, which used to be blue and clear, has now turned dirty, full of trash, and pitch black, making it uninhabitable. This condition is exacerbated by the possibility of contamination from research fluids being dispersed into the sea, as shown in data (19). The social response to this condition is illustrated in data (20) and (21), where figures complain about the extremely dirty sea and mention the fact that the country is the second largest contributor of plastic waste in the world. The pollution situation becomes more concrete in data (22) to (25), which show black and murky seawater, making it difficult for divers to see into the water, and even emitting a pungent odor, raising questions about the effectiveness of sea cleaning equipment. All of this data confirms that the sea in the novel is described as a space that has been severely polluted, becoming a symbol of the ecological crisis caused by human actions.

## 2. Apocalypse

The phenomenon of apocalypse in Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective refers to the depiction of ecological destruction and collective human anxiety about the future of the threatened environment. In the context of the sea, apocalypse is present through the representation of dirty, smelly, and dangerous waters that are no longer a source of life but a threat to human survival. This narrative of ecological doom reflects a loss of hope, ethical conflicts over how to repair the damage, and pessimism that humans will continue to destroy the ocean without concern. Rifqi Farizi's novel *Into the Beneath* articulates this tension by presenting the ocean as a locus of destruction and an ideological battle between salvation and destruction. Specifically, this apocalyptic phenomenon is presented in the following data (26) to (30).

- (26) *“Saat masih kecil aku kemari bersama ayah dan kakakku. Kami berdua ingin berenang di sini, orang-orang bilang di sini tempat yang bagus untuk berenang, tetapi ayahku melarangnya. Katanya tempat ini sangat kotor dan bau. Akan membuat kami sakit. Tempat yang jahat.”* When I was little, I came here with my dad and my brother. We both wanted to swim here. People said it was a good place, but my dad told us not to. He said it was dirty and smelly. It would make us sick. It was a bad place. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:189).
- (27) *“Laut memang kotor, Yunita. Tempat ini juga sangat menjijikkan, tapi kau tidak bisa mengubah itu dengan instan. Tidak dengan penelitian ayahmu!”* The sea is dirty, Yunita. This place is disgusting too, but you can't change that instantly. Not with your father's research! (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:190)

- (28) *“Kau tahu kan laut kotor karena ulah manusia! Ayahku berusaha untuk membersihkannya! Aku yang akan menyelesaikan apa yang ayahku inginkan. “You know the sea is dirty because of human activity! My father is trying to clean it up! I will be the one to complete what my father wants. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:190).*
- (29) *“Tidak dengan cara ini! Semuanya memang ulah manusia, tapi masih ada orang lain yang akan memperbaikinya dengan cara yang benar, bukan dengan penelitian ayahmy. Itu justru malah semakin merusak semuanya.” Not this way! It's all human work, but there are still other people who will fix it the right way, not with my father's research. That would just ruin everything even more. ( Rifqi Farizi, 2024:190).*
- (30) *“Kita tidak bisa! Orang-orang akan terus mengotorinya! Mereka tidak peduli pada laut! Mereka menganggap laut sebagai tempat sampah!” We can't! People will continue to pollute it! They don't care about the sea! They consider the sea a trash can!”. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:194).*

Based on data (26), the dirty, smelly sea, considered an “evil place,” reinforces the image of an environment that has lost its original function as a source of life and has become a threat to humans. This image continues in data (27), where the disgusting sea is seen as impossible to repair instantly, even through research. The awareness that the destruction of the sea is entirely caused by human actions is confirmed in data (28), although there is still enthusiasm to repair it through the continuation of the protagonist's father's research. However, a debate arises in data (29), which shows the view that instant methods actually exacerbate the damage, creating tension between rescue efforts and the risk of destruction. Finally, data (30) depicts deep pessimism when humans are considered indifferent and continue to treat the ocean as a dumping ground. All of this data creates an apocalyptic atmosphere, namely the shadow of ecological destruction and despair for the future of the ocean.

### 3. Dwelling

The phenomenon of dwelling in Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective relates to how humans interpret, occupy, and establish relationships with the environment as a living space. The sea is not only viewed as a foreign place that is not a natural habitat for humans, but also as a source of life that needs to be preserved, an ethical space where humans affirm their ecological commitment, and a coastal area that is a socio-economic space. This concept emphasizes the ambivalent relationship between humans and nature: on the one hand, the sea presents alienation and threats, but on the other hand, it is also a place of emotional, ethical, and functional attachment. This phenomenon of dwelling is presented in the following data (31) to (34).

- (31) *“Dulu instruktur selamnya pernah berkata: “laut bukan habitat manusia, kita asing di dalam sana.” The diving instructor once said: “The sea is not a human habitat, we are strangers in there.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:113)*

- (32) *“Laut adalah kehidupan. Menghancurkan laut artinya menghancurkan kehidupan. Aku punya seorang anak perempuan, dan kupastikan dia bangga karena amemiliki seorang ayah yang menyerahkan hidupnya pada bumi”* The ocean is life. Destroying the ocean means destroying life. I have a daughter, and I'm sure she's proud to have a father who gave his life to the earth." (Rifqi Fraizi, 2024:165).
- (33) *“Rio tersenyum tipis, karena dirinya tidak merasa sedang berusaha menjaga laut seperti Rami. Semuanya murni karena Rio mengetahui dirinya terlibat dengan semua ini. Dia teringat pada Profesor Nuka. Pada dasarnya beliau memiliki tekad yang sama dengan Rami, meski caranya salah.”* Rio smiled faintly, because he didn't feel like he was trying to protect the sea like Rami. It was all purely because Rio knew he was involved in all of this. He remembered Professor Nuka. Basically, he had the same determination as Rami, even though his method was wrong.” (Rifqi Fraizi, 2024:166)
- (34) *“Pelabuhan ini terbagi menjadi tiga area, yaitu area kapal berlabuh dan bersandar, area pasar ikan, dan area wisata.”* This port is divided into three areas, namely the area for ships to anchor and dock, the fish market area, and the tourist area." (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:183)

Based on data (31), the sea is described as a foreign space that is not a human habitat, so that human presence in it always carries the risk of alienation that could potentially lead to destruction. This view is reinforced in data (32), when the character realizes that destroying the sea is tantamount to destroying life, conjuring up apocalyptic images of the loss of the future for generations to come. Moral tension also arises in data (33), where the determination to protect the sea is confronted with choices that are wrong and have the potential to worsen the damage, revealing the dilemma between salvation and destruction. Meanwhile, data (34) shows the irony of coastal areas filled with human activities such as ports, fish markets, and tourism, which, on the one hand, are centers of life, but on the other hand, pose a threat to the ecological sustainability of the sea. These four data points present an apocalyptic nuance through the depiction of the sea as a space of alienation, threat, ethical dilemma, and a point vulnerable to damage due to human activity.

#### 4. Animals

The phenomenon of animals in Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective emphasizes the ambivalent relationship between humans and animals, which are often positioned as both beautiful creatures that inspire awe and victims of pollution and experiments that threaten their survival. The presence of animals in literary texts not only affirms biodiversity but also reflects ecological vulnerability and criticism of human exploitation of nature. In Rifqi Farizi's novel *Into the Beneath*, marine animals, especially fish, are depicted as an important part of the ecosystem, as well as indicators of environmental damage and manipulation. This animal phenomenon is presented in the following data (35) to (38).

- (35) *“Ikan-ikan kecil yang cantik dan menggemaskan, dengan warna-warna cerah dan corak indah di tubuh mereka, membuat Rio ingin berlama-lama menikmati pemandangan yang memukau itu.” “The beautiful and adorable little fish, with bright colors and beautiful patterns on their bodies, made Rio want to linger and enjoy the stunning view.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:16).*
- (36) *“Keduanya adalah foto ikan berwarna hijau toska dengan rona bintik jingga gelap.” Both are photos of turquoise fish with dark orange spots.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:47).*
- (37) *“Di foto pertama ikan itu sedang berenang bebas di dekat terumbu karang.” “In the first photo the fish is swimming freely near the coral reef.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:48)*
- (38) *“Di antara puluhan ikan yang berenang di sekitarnya, ada satu ekor ikan yang mencolok. Warnanya biru agak terang, memiliki corak ungu kecil, dan tubuh agak pipih.” Among the dozens of fish swimming around, one stood out. It was a bright blue with small purple markings and a slightly flattened body. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:118).*

Based on data (35), marine animals are depicted as aesthetic creatures when small fish with bright colors and beautiful patterns present a stunning sight for Rio. This representation of beauty is also seen in data (36) and (37), where turquoise fish with dark orange spots are photographed swimming freely near coral reefs, emphasizing the role of fish as part of a harmonious marine ecosystem. Furthermore, data (38) highlights a blue fish with striking purple patterns among dozens of other fish, showing marine biodiversity that is not only visually appealing but also symbolizes ecological richness that must be preserved. These four pieces of data show that marine animals in the novel are positioned as symbols of natural beauty as well as markers of the importance of ecosystem sustainability.

- (39) *“Tentu saja ini bukan perihal hewan-hewan buas seperti hiu atau gurita raksasa yang akan menerakam para penyelam.” Of course, this is not about ferocious animals like sharks or giant octopuses that will pounce on divers.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:108)*

Based on the data (39), marine animals are depicted through images of ferocious animals such as sharks and giant octopuses, which are usually considered dangerous to divers. This reference emphasizes the human stereotype of marine animals as a threat, when in fact their existence is a natural part of a balanced ecosystem. This representation shows how animals are often placed in an antagonistic position in human narratives, as if they were predators that threaten life, when in fact the main threat often comes from human activities that destroy the ocean. Thus, animals in this context serve as symbols of fear as well as reminders of the problematic relationship between humans and sea creatures.

- (40) *“Di foto berikutnya adalah mayat ikan itu setelah dibawa ke daratan. Rio langsung berfikir keduanya adalah foto yang sudah diedit.”* “In the next photo is the fish's corpse after it was brought to land. Rio immediately thought that both of them were edited photos.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:48).
- (41) *“Namun, ikan-ikan itu pada akhirnya mati setelah hampir satu bulan hidup, tetapi Profesor menemukan ada hal menarik dari air akuarium tersebut.”* “However, the fish eventually died after almost a month of living, but the Professor discovered something interesting about the aquarium water.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:72).
- (42) *“Segalanya remang. Tidak ada lagi cahaya matahari yang tersisa. Jadi Rio menyalakan senternya. Tidak ada ikan, atau apa pun yang dapat menemaninya saat ini.”* “Everything was dim. There was no more sunlight left. So Rio turned on his flashlight. There were no fish, or anything else to keep him company now.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:116).

Based on data (40), fish are shown as victims of pollution when their bodies are found dead and photographed after being brought ashore, creating an ironic impression because they were previously seen living freely. A similar point is made in data (41), when fish that had survived in unnatural conditions eventually died after nearly a month, demonstrating the limited vitality of animals in the face of experiments and polluted environments. Meanwhile, data (42) shows a quiet sea without the presence of fish, signifying the loss of biotic life that is usually an integral part of the ecosystem. All of this data describes marine animals as indicators of ecological damage, as well as symbols of the loss of natural balance due to human intervention and pollution.

- (43) *“Profesor berfikir ikan-ikan di dalam sana akan mati, tapi keesokan paginya dia justru menemukan mereka masih berenang dalam kondisi yang tidak lazim.”* “The professor thought the fish in there would die, but the next morning he found them still swimming in an unusual condition.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:71).
- (44) *“Profesor menuliskan bahwa insang ikan-ikan itu sama sekali tidak bergerak, artinya mereka tidak membutuhkan oksigen.”* “The professor wrote that the gills of the fish did not move at all, meaning they did not need oxygen.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:71).
- (45) *“Hingga berhari-hari berikutnya ikan-ikan bertahan hidup tanpa memakan apapun.”* For the next few days the fish survived without eating anything.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:71).
- (46) *“Ikan tidak lagi membutuhkan nutrien atau oksigen untuk bertahan hidup, melainkan bahan cemaran.”* Fish no longer need nutrients or oxygen to survive, but rather pollutants.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:73).

Based on data (43), the experiment showed an anomaly when fish that were expected to die remained alive, albeit in unnatural conditions. This phenomenon became even more apparent in data (44), when the fish's gills did not move at all, meaning they no longer needed oxygen to survive. This strange condition continued in data (45), where the fish

were able to survive for days without eating anything. Finally, data (46) showed an extreme change in which the fish no longer needed nutrients or oxygen, but instead depended on pollutants for their survival. These four data points paint a picture of marine animals as experimental subjects experiencing biological abnormalities, reflecting both ecological damage and the absurdity of the relationship between humans and nature.

- (47) *“Ikan-ikan mutan itu, semuanya adalah ikan karang. Kalau kalian mengatakan benda itu berada di dalam laut, jadi kemungkinan benda itu diselipkan di antara susunan karang.”* Those mutant fish, they are all coral fish. If you say the object is in the sea, then it is likely that the object is tucked away among the coral formations.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:105)
- (48) *“Ikan itu menatapnya, seketika Rio terkesiap. Tubuhnya sempat kehilangan keseimbangan beberapa saat.”* “The fish stared at him, and Rio gasped. His body lost balance for a moment.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:118)
- (49) *“Pada awalnya kasus itu hanya sebatas penelitian yang mengubah hewan-hewan laut menjadi mutan dan OSSA memaksa Profesor Nuka untuk menghentikan penelitiannya, dan penelitian itu dihentikan.”* “At first the case was only limited to research that turned marine animals into mutants and OSSA forced Professor Nuka to stop his research, and the research was stopped. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:150).

Based on data (47), mutated reef fish are shown to be the result of human intervention, even linked to the presence of foreign objects inserted between the coral formations, indicating a connection between the experiment and the natural ecosystem. In data (48), a fish is depicted staring at Rio, causing him to gasp and lose his balance, as if the animal had a new consciousness that disrupted the normal boundaries between humans and animals. Furthermore, data (49) confirms that research that turns marine animals into mutants is not just a scientific experiment, but has become such a serious problem that it has forced the OSSA agency to stop it. These three pieces of data show marine animals as creatures distorted by pollution and manipulation, transformed from natural organisms into symbols of fear and warnings about the dangers of ecological exploitation.

- (50) *“Hanya karang dan bulu babi yang hinggap di atasnya. Matanya sontak memelotot begitu sadar. Tidak seharusnya bulu babi ada di kedalaman ini.”* “Only coral and sea urchins were perched on it. His eyes suddenly widened in realization. Sea urchins shouldn't be at this depth.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024: 119)

Based on data (50), marine animals are described through the presence of sea urchins appearing at depths where they do not normally occur. The presence of sea urchins in these unfamiliar places indicates an ecological imbalance that disrupts the natural order of the marine habitat. Animals that normally live in shallow waters are now appearing at greater depths, signaling environmental changes that are forcing them to move from their natural habitats. This phenomenon confirms that marine animals are not only victims of

pollution and ecosystem change, but also indicators of ecological imbalance caused by human intervention and marine damage.

## 5. Earth

The phenomenon of the earth in Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective emphasizes the earth as a single interconnected and fragile ecosystem, in which the sea plays an important role as a sustainer of life and a space that must be protected from human exploitation. Representations of the earth in literature often present ethical and emotional dimensions, both through human commitment to protecting nature and through personal attachment to specific ecological spaces. In Rifqi Farizi's novel *Into the Beneath*, the sea is positioned not only as a setting, but also as a symbol of the earth's balance that must be preserved and passed on, reflected in the individual's determination to protect the sea and the emotional reasons for choosing a particular ecological space. This phenomenon of Earth is presented in the following data (51) and (52).

- (51) *“Dia sudah tiba di bagian Slope laut yang dihidupi oleh ribuan karang dari berbagai bentuk dan warna.”* He had arrived at the part of the sea slope that was inhabited by thousands of corals of various shapes and colors.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:117)
- (52) *“Dia menyusuri gugusan karang yang berada di bawahnya. Tidak ada tabung kaca, atau apa pun yang sejenisnya.”* He traced the coral reef beneath him. There were no glass tubes or anything like that. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:119)

Based on data (51), the sea is described as a part of the earth that is rich in life, marked by thousands of corals of various shapes and colors that show biodiversity as the foundation of the marine ecosystem. This description is further emphasized in data (52), when the character explores a natural coral reef without glass tubes or artificial barriers, emphasizing the impression of purity and authenticity of nature. These two pieces of data reflect the earth as a whole and a harmonious ecological space, a place where coral plays an important role in maintaining the balance of marine life and symbolizes the connection between humans and the earth that must be preserved.

- (53) *“Jika penelitian Profesor Nuka berhasil dilepaskan, pikirkan apa yang akan terjadi pada lautan di seluruh dunia.”* If Professor Nuka's research is released, think what will happen to the oceans around the world.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:155).
- (54) *“Laut dalam ancaman besar, dan bayangkan apa yang akan terjadi jika orang-orang mulai menemukan ikan-ikan mutan di bawah sana?”* “The ocean is under great threat, and imagine what would happen if people started finding mutant fish down there?” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:159).
- (55) *“Aku tidak akan memaafkan diriku sendiri. Aku bekerja untuk organisasi yang melindungi lautan, jadi akan kupastikan laut tidak akan dirusak oleh manusia”.* I

will never forgive myself. I work for an organization that protects the oceans, so I will make sure they are not destroyed by humans.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:165).

- (56) “*Dengan kau berada di sini, itu sudah menunjukkan kau juga bersedia untuk menjaga laut*”. By you being here, it shows that you are also willing to protect the sea.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:165).
- (57) “*Sekarang aku berhasil menjadi bagian dari organisasi laut dunia, dan semuanya berkat usahaku sendiri, dan akan kubuktikan kalau laut adalah tempat yang indah*”. “Now I have succeeded in becoming part of the world ocean organization, and it is all thanks to my own efforts, and I will prove that the ocean is a beautiful place.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:174).

Based on data (53), there is great concern that Professor Nuka's research released into the sea could have a global impact, threatening the sustainability of marine ecosystems around the world. This concern is reinforced in data (54), where the threat of the sea producing mutant fish becomes a symbol of serious ecological damage. However, amid these threats, there is also a human commitment to preserving the earth, as shown in data (55), where figures affirm their determination not to allow the ocean to be destroyed by humans. Moral support is shown in data (56), where the presence of a person is considered a form of willingness to protect the ocean, marking the importance of collective action. Finally, data (57) displays pride in being part of a global ocean organization and the belief that the ocean is a beautiful space whose sustainability must be proven. All of this data shows the earth as a global ecological entity that is threatened but still holds hope through humanity's commitment to protecting the ocean as a symbol of the earth's beauty.

- (58) “*Akhirnya hanya Rio yang melompat sendirian ke laut, sementara Yunita mengawasi di tempatnya.*” “In the end, only Rio jumped into the sea alone, while Yunita watched from her place.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:136)
- (59) “*Air laut menggelap, tidak ada cahaya sedikit pun. Di punggungnya terdapat tabung oksigen yang terhubung dengan mouth piece.*” The sea water was dark, devoid of any light. On his back was an oxygen tube connected to a mouthpiece. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:136).
- (60) “*Tanpa dia sadari seseorang tiba-tiba menerjang tubuh Rio hingga terbentur ke batu karang di bawah.*” “Without him realizing, someone suddenly lunged at Rio's body, causing him to hit the rocks below. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:137)
- (61) “*Wanita itu mengkhianatinya. Dia membawa kabur IPCL-220 yang sudah susah payah diambil Rio di bawah laut dan kemudian meninggalkannya terkunci di bangunan ini.*” That woman betrayed him. “He took away the IPCL-220 that Rio had worked so hard to retrieve under the sea and then left it locked in this building.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:137)
- (62) “*Ternyata Grace berhasil menemukan keberadaan mereka. Di pelabuhan yang sama tempat Rio berangkat ke pulau itu. Rio pun mengerti alasan Yunita memilih lautan di sini.*” It turns out Grace managed to find their whereabouts. At the same

port where Rio left for the island. Rio also understood why Yunita chose the ocean here." (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:181)

- (63) *"Kau tetap di sini, Rio. Kau sudah cukup membantu kami, dan sekarang kau tidak perlu melakukan apa-apa."* Tan pa ragu Rami melompat turun, dan mulai menyelam ke bawah air. You stay here, Rio. You've helped us enough, and now you don't have to do anything." Without hesitation, Rami jumped down and began diving underwater. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:182)
- (64) *"Tidak!"*teriak Rio saat Yunita melemparkan benda itu ke dalam laut dan mulai tenggelam perlahan-lahan. No!" Rio shouted as Yunita threw the object into the sea and it began to sink slowly. (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:190)
- (65) *"Tim menatap Rami dengan serius. "Dia bilang buku Profesor hilang di laut saat dia berusaha menyelamatkan Yunita yang melompat ke dalam air."* "Tim looked at Rami seriously. "He said the Professor's book was lost at sea when he tried to save Yunita who jumped into the water." (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:205)

Based on data (58), the sea is depicted as a natural space where humans interact directly when Rio jumps into it alone, while in data (59), the dark atmosphere without light emphasizes the mysterious and dangerous side of the marine ecosystem. The threat becomes even more apparent in data (60) when Rio's body is hit and crashes into the coral, marking the fragility of humans in the face of the forces of nature. Human conflict with one another in relation to the sea is evident in data (61), when IPCL-220 is seized and Rio is left behind, showing the sea as a battleground for technology that has the potential to destroy the earth. Furthermore, data (62) and (63) show the sea as both a space of choice and challenge, both for Yunita, who chooses a specific location, and Rami, who bravely dives. A dramatic climax occurs in data (64) when Yunita throws a dangerous object into the sea, symbolizing a new threat to the ecosystem. Finally, data (65) connects the sea with loss, namely the loss of the Professor's book during Yunita's rescue attempt, showing how the sea is not only an ecological space but also a symbol of the fragility of the relationship between humans and the earth. All of this data confirms the sea as a representation of the earth, a place where beauty, threats, conflict, and hope intertwine.

- (66) *"Hingga pada akhirnya, suasana laut laut mulai memberinya rasa lelah. Begitu matahari mulai turun dari titik tertingginya, mata Rio pun mulai terpejam dan terlelap begitu saja."* "Until finally, the atmosphere of the sea began to make him feel tired. As soon as the sun began to descend from its highest point, Rio's eyes began to close and he simply fell asleep." (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:112)
- (67) *"Matahari bersinar terik, dengan embusan angin dan bau laut yang menenangkan. Rio duduk di tepi dermaga sambil menutup mata, coba menyatukan dirinya dengan alam."* The sun was shining brightly, with a gentle breeze and the calming smell of the sea. Rio sat on the edge of the pier, closing his eyes, trying to unite himself with nature." (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:135).
- (68) *"Satu-satunya yang dia ketahui adalah dirinya berada di dalam sebuah kamar, terdapat jendela yang menampilkan pemandangan laut dan sinar matahari sore*

*yang terpantul antara riak lautan.*” “The only thing he knew was that he was in a room, there was a window that displayed a view of the sea and the afternoon sun reflecting between the ripples of the ocean.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:155).

- (69) “*Embusan angin menerpa buritan yacht yang lebih besar dan megah, Rio berdiri sendirian di sana.*” A gust of wind hit the stern of the larger and more magnificent yacht, Rio stood alone there.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:163).
- (70) “*Begitu tiba, dia menemukan Yunita benar-benar ada di sana. Berdiri menghadap laut sendirian di ujung dermaga kayu*”. “As soon as he arrived, he found Yunita really there. Standing facing the sea alone at the end of the wooden pier.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:189).
- (71) “*Tangis Yunita memelan, tetapi dia tidak berusaha menyeka air matanya.*” *Aku selalu berpikir kalau laut adalah tempat yang indah.*” Yunita's tears slowed down, but she didn't try to wipe her tears.” I always thought the sea was a beautiful place.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:194).
- (72) “*Tiba-tiba saja Rami membayangkan wajah pemuda itu dengan kedua tangan menggenggam teralis kapal sembari memperhatikan laut di bawahnya.*” “Suddenly Rami imagined the young man's face with both hands gripping the ship's railing while watching the sea below.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:204).

Based on data (66), the sea is depicted as a space that brings tranquility, making Rio feel tired and fall asleep, showing the intimate relationship between humans and nature. This description continues in data (67), when the sun, the breeze, and the scent of the sea calm Rio as he tries to unite himself with nature, emphasizing the function of the sea as a medium for contemplation. In data (68), the sea is even present in a closed space through a bedroom window that displays a view of the ocean ripples illuminated by the afternoon sun, showing the connection between humans and the earth, albeit indirectly. Data (69) adds a sense of silence and contemplation, as Rio stands alone at the stern of the yacht, while data (70) presents Yunita standing facing the sea, a symbol of emotional attachment to the ecological space. Personal reflection emerges in data (71) when Yunita affirms her belief that the sea is a beautiful place, even though she is crying, showing the duality of the sea as a source of both sadness and beauty. Finally, data (72) shows the sea as a backdrop for inner reflection, as Rami imagines someone's face while staring at the ocean. All of this data shows the earth as a space that not only supports physical life, but also binds humans emotionally and spiritually through experiences with the sea.

- (73) “*Begitu Profesor melakukan pengujian, dia menemukan air itu memiliki kualitas yang sangat sempurna.*” “Once the Professor had done the test, he found the water to be of the very best quality.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:72).
- (74) “*Sementara air di akurium campuran Profesor memiliki air yang benar-benar bersih, seperti akurium baru tanpa setitik debu yang hinggap di atasnya.*” “Meanwhile the water in the Professor's mixed aquarium has absolutely clean water, like a new aquarium without a speck of dust settling on it.” (Rifqi Farizi, 2024:72).

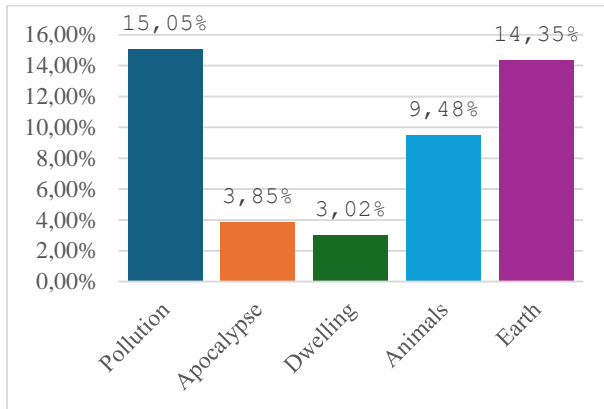
Based on data (73), the water quality found by the professor is described as perfect, reflecting the ideal image of a clean earth free from pollution. This is reinforced by data (74), where the water in the experimental aquarium is described as completely clear without a speck of dust, resembling pure natural conditions. These two pieces of data present the earth as a symbol of purity and ecological balance, while also emphasizing the hope that the earth will return to its ideal condition, even if this is achieved through human intervention in the form of experiments.

Table 1. and Figure 1. show the distribution of ecological phenomena in the novel *Into the Beneath* based on Greg Garrard's ecocritical perspective. The table shows that the phenomenon of pollution occupies the highest percentage at 15.05%, followed by earth at 14.35%, then animals at 9.48%, while apocalypse (3.85%) and dwelling (3.02%) occupy the lowest positions. This pattern shows that the novel's narrative predominantly highlights marine pollution, the sustainability of the earth, and the relationship between humans and marine animals as the main issues, while the dimensions of ecological destruction (apocalypse) and the relationship between humans and their living space (dwelling) receive less attention.

**Table 1. *Percentage Coverage Environmental Fenomenon in Into the Beneath***

Coding	Percentage coverage
Pollution	15,05%
Apocalypse	3,85%
Dwelling	3,02%
Animals	9,48%
Earth	14,35%

The visualization in Figure 1 reinforces the findings from the table by showing a comparison of percentages between categories of phenomena. The dominance of pollution and earth indicates the novel's main focus on marine pollution and the overall ecological interconnectedness of the earth, while animals are an intermediate category that shows the importance of marine biodiversity. The low proportion of apocalypse and dwelling indicates that although there is awareness of the threat of destruction and the ethical relationship between humans and the sea, these issues are more of a backdrop than the center of the narrative. Thus, both the table and the graph confirm that *Into the Beneath* presents the sea as a locus of destruction and rescue efforts focused on pollution, the earth, and marine animals.



**Figure 1. Percentage Coverage Comparison**

Rifqi Farizi's novel *Into the Beneath* presents ecological issues that align with Greg Garrard's six main categories of ecocriticism, with a predominance in the categories of pollution, earth, and animals (Garrard, 2012). Marine pollution is depicted through bioremediation experiments, ecosystem damage, human health impacts, and social criticism of public indifference, while the earth category presents the sea as a symbol of fragile global ecological interconnectedness, a place of conflict and human emotional reflection. The animals category presents ambivalence: the sea is filled with beauty and biodiversity, but at the same time presents fish and marine animals as victims of pollution and mutation experiments. This description is in line with previous studies that emphasize the function of literature as a medium for critical reflection and environmental advocacy, with dominant themes of climate change, deforestation, pollution, and species extinction (Meeran, 2025; Usman & Anis, 2025). More contextually, ecocriticism is also present in Fadwa Tuqan's poetry, which articulates ecological spirituality and resistance to coastal exploitation (Malikh et al., 2025), the novel *Lemah Tanjung*, which criticizes modernization and anthropocentrism (Indriyanto & Barus, 2025), and *Kekal*, which emphasizes the issue of settlement (Juanda & Afandi, 2024). Through Garrard's framework, Farizi's work not only places nature as a backdrop, but also makes it an ecological actor that interacts with humans, just as forests in Southeast Asian chronicles function as historiographical metaphors (Tan, 2024, p. 1), or the Russian and Ukrainian literary identities formed from the interaction between social and aesthetic realities (Lebedeva, 2015; Puleri, 2022). Thus, ecocriticism allows literature to be read as a bridge between ecological issues, character education (Gumay et al., 2025; Juanda, 2018), adaptive pedagogy (Yan et al., 2024, p. 1), and global cultural and aesthetic politics (Bosworth, 2024; Liu et al., 2024), thereby affirming that literature plays a dual role as a reflection of ecological threats and a means of universal moral-ecological education.

The novel *Into the Beneath* asserts that the sea is not merely a backdrop to the story, but rather a critical representation of the relationship between humans and nature through Greg Garrard's categories of ecocriticism, which include pollution, earth, animals, apocalypse, and dwelling (Garrard, 2012). Marine pollution is at the center of the conflict, depicted through plastic, oil, and heavy metal contamination, as well as bioremediation

experiments that have ecological and social impacts. The phenomenon of Earth presents the sea as a symbol of global ecological interconnectedness, while animals reveal ambivalence between the beauty of biodiversity and the threat of mutations that disrupt the balance of the ecosystem. The apocalypse creates a shadow of ecological destruction through a polluted and dangerous sea, while dwelling highlights the ambivalence of humans who see the sea as both a foreign space and a source of life and ethics. These findings are in line with previous studies showing that literature plays a strategic role in raising ecological awareness and criticizing environmental exploitation, whether through the themes of climate change, deforestation, or species extinction (Meeran, 2025; Usman & Anis, 2025). In fact, Fadwa Tuqan's poetry emphasizes ecological symbolism related to the socio-ecological crisis (Malikh et al., 2025), Lemah Tanjung's novel criticizes modernization that destroys green spaces (Indriyanto & Barus, 2025), and Kekal presents Garrard's six categories with a focus on settlement issues (Juanda & Afandi, 2024). Thus, Farizi's work expands the global discourse that literature can be a medium for ecological and character education (Gumay et al., 2025; Juanda, 2018), while connecting environmental issues with cultural, political, and aesthetic dynamics as seen in the chronicles of Southeast Asian forests (Tan, 2024, p. 1), Russian literature -Ukrainian literature (Lebedeva, 2015; Puleri, 2022), and cross-cultural gastronomic representations (Erşahin & Demirci, 2025).

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Rifqi Farizi's novel *Into the Beneath* depicts the sea as a complex ecological space, where pollution is a dominant issue that not only damages the ecosystem but also affects health, triggers organism mutations, and gives rise to social criticism of human indifference. The sea is depicted as a symbol of a fragile yet beautiful earth, a space for contemplation and conflict, and a sign of global interconnectedness whose sustainability must be maintained. Marine animals are presented as aesthetic creatures that enrich biodiversity, but they are also victims of experiments and pollution that threaten their survival. Meanwhile, the shadow of ecological destruction is reflected in depictions of the sea as disgusting and threatening, as well as humanity's ambivalence in interpreting the sea as a foreign space that nevertheless remains a source of life. All of these representations reveal the paradox between destruction and hope, while emphasizing the importance of human ethical awareness in maintaining ecological balance.

The contribution of this research is to provide an understanding that literary works can be utilized globally as a strategic medium to foster ecological awareness that is relevant to education, policy, and the wider community. In the field of education, the results of this analysis can be used as a model for integrating environmental literacy into the curriculum, so that literary learning also becomes a vehicle for instilling values of sustainability and ecological ethics. From a policy perspective, ecological narratives in literature can be used as persuasive public advocacy instruments, helping governments and international organizations convey messages of sustainability in a more humanistic and emotional way.

Meanwhile, at the global community level, this research affirms the potential of literature in building ecological solidarity and raising collective awareness of the importance of protecting the oceans and the earth, in line with global sustainability agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Future research could be directed toward a broader exploration of other Indonesian literary works that raise ecological issues, whether in the form of novels, short stories, or poetry, to compare representations of ecological phenomena across texts and periods. Subsequent research can also utilize multidisciplinary approaches, such as combining ecocriticism with sociological studies of literature or cultural studies, to examine how literary works influence public environmental awareness. In addition, it is important to expand the scope of study to include digital or popular literature in order to understand how environmental issues are constructed in the contemporary cultural sphere and to what extent they can promote ecological literacy among a wider readership.

#### **E. *ACKNOWLEDGEMENT***

The author would like to express his deepest gratitude to the Association of Indonesian Literature Scholars (HISKI) for providing a platform for this seminar and the publication of this article. He also thanks Makassar State University, particularly the Language Education Study Program and the Indonesian Language and Literature Study Program, for providing academic support and facilities throughout the research and writing process. He sincerely thanks the reviewers and peer reviewers for their valuable input into improving this manuscript. He also extends his deepest appreciation to his family, colleagues, and all parties who directly or indirectly assisted in the completion of this research and writing of this article. May all forms of support and assistance received be a valuable act of kindness in the sight of God Almighty.

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