

# **REPRESENTATION OF NATURE IN THE ART OF “BELATIK” AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR LITERATURE LEARNING**

**(Representasi Alam dalam Kesenian “Belatik” serta Implikasinya terhadap Pembelajaran Sastra)**

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to explore the meaning of pantun in the “belatik” art of the Jerieng community in Bangka and connect it with the concept of ecocriticism. The focus is to identify representations of ecological concepts, including pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwellings, animals, and the earth. The research employed a qualitative approach with ecocritical analysis of data in the form of belatik lyrics, collected through observation and note-taking from live performances, as well as in-depth interviews with belatik artists. The findings reveal that belatik represent five main ecological concepts: pollution, wilderness, dwellings, animals, and the earth. These representations are conveyed through natural symbols, references to local flora and fauna, and depictions of the interconnectedness between humans and the environment. The art of belatik serves not only as a form of cultural expression but also as a medium for delivering ecological messages rich in local wisdom. This research underscores the potential of traditional arts as a medium for literary education capable of fostering ecological awareness in society.*

**Keywords:** *Belatik; Ecocriticism; Literature Learning; Representation of Nature*

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Environmental issues are a frequently discussed topic in literary works. Pamungkas et al. (2022) revealed an increase in interdisciplinary literary ecology studies within Indonesian research over the past few years. In the development of literary studies, this attention to environmental issues has given rise to a field of study called ecocriticism or literary ecocriticism (Karlina, 2025). The existence of literature with environmental themes has given rise to a variety of interpretations for literary connoisseurs. Furthermore, the existence of literature with environmental themes can provide reflection for society on how to utilize nature wisely (Sholihah et al., 2021). Literary works can be a medium for fostering ecological wisdom. Various studies show that ecological wisdom is contained not only in contemporary literature but also in ancient or oral literature (Hestiyana, 2021; Ramadhani et al., 2025; Rizal et al., 2022; Umsyani et al., 2021). This demonstrates that nature has long been a source of inspiration in the creative process of literary creation. This research offers novelty from the aspect of the object studied using ecocriticism, one of oral literature namely *belatik*.

Oral literature in Indonesia is very numerous and has developed in various types and forms, one of which is *belatik*. *Belatik* is one of the traditional arts of the Jerieng Bangka

community. However, there are very few *belatik* art enthusiasts, due to cultural shifts in Jerieng society (Mariyana, 2019). *Belatik* refers to a musical performance in the form of singing accompanied by violin, *redep*/drums, and *tawak-tawak*/gong. Singing or song lyrics in the arts *belatik*. It generally consists of pantuns that reflect the Jerieng people's expressions of their surroundings and daily lives (AntaraBabel, 2025). This art form is rooted in oral tradition or oral literature in the form of pantun. Therefore, a study using a literary approach can provide a new perspective on this traditional art form. In addition, a study of *belatik* needs to be done because it has not been discussed much from a literary perspective and there have not been any efforts to integrate this art as local learning content.

An ecocritical approach is used to study poems in *belatik* from a literary perspective. As an art form that developed in the Malay literary tradition, *belatik* is synonymous with nature. Ecocriticism is one of the interdisciplinary fields in literary studies that examines the relationship between literary works and the natural environment (Barry, 2020). Ecocriticism can also be defined as a field that explores how we imagine and depict the relationship between humans and the environment in all cultural contexts. According to Garrard (2004), concepts included in the study of literary ecocriticism can include 1) pollution, 2) wilderness, 3) apocalypse, 4) dwellings, 5) animals, and 6) the earth. Furthermore, Buell, quoted (Sukmawan, 2015), suggests four criteria for ecocriticism: 1) the environment is present to show that human history is implicated in natural history, 2) human interests are not understood as the only legitimate interests, 3) human accountability to the environment is part of the ethical orientation of the text, and 4) some understanding of the environment as a process, not a constant or a given that is at least implied in the text. This means that ecocriticism can be used to examine the ins and outs of environmental construction in literary works, including the representation of nature in literary works.

There have been a number of previous studies on the representation of nature in literary works. The objects of study and the results obtained vary. For example, there are literary works of poetry *Aku, Hutan Jati, dan Indonesia* which reflects human love for nature through the choice of ecological diction (Darman, 2017). In addition, research on the story *Jagapati Bumi* also revealed that myths serve as a valuable medium for environmental conservation (Faizah, 2024). Chasanah's (2025) research on modern poetry also suggests that poetry serves as a medium for voicing environmental issues and inspiring environmental conservation actions in the modern era. There is also research on novels *Anak-Anak Pangaro* who found criticism of environmental concerns in the characters' dialogue (Helmiani et al., 2021). Other research on South Kalimantan folklore also revealed representations of nature in the form of river functions and positive human interactions with rivers (Oktaviana et al., 2025). Furthermore, there is also research that reveals ecological awareness through representations of nature in *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (Nakti & Wirawan, 2025). This research also illustrates the role of literary works in

learning to increase ecological awareness. Differentiating from these studies, this study focuses on exploring ecological concepts in *belatik* Jerieng Bangka community. This study aims to explore the meaning of pantuns in *belatik* and link it to the concept of ecocriticism based on Garrard's theory (2004) and explore its implications for literary learning.

## ***B. METHOD***

This study uses a literary ecocriticism perspective to identify ecological concepts in literary works. Ecocriticism here is defined as the study of responding to discourse, culture, artifacts, forms and genres, and environmental exploration in literary works (Endraswara, 2016). The data used in this study are song lyrics in *belatik* in the form of *pantun*. The data were collected using a listening and note-taking technique from live performances *belatik* artist from Sanggar Lembah Sunyi, Peraceh, Air Menduyung Village, Simpang Teritip District. The majority of data comes from the *pantun belatik* entitled *Kapal Keruk* and *Nasi Dingin* because it contains many natural symbols. The meaning of pantun and the story behind *belatik* was also obtained through in-depth interviews with practitioners of this traditional art. Therefore, this research also involved a qualitative study that emphasized individual interpretations of a social phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Furthermore, the collected data was processed and analyzed based on Garrard's (2004) ecocritical theory, and conclusions were drawn to identify the environmental critique contained in *belatik*. Then, from the results obtained, the author attempts to provide an overview of the integration *belatik* in Indonesian language and literature learning materials.

## ***C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION***

### **1. Representation of Nature in *Belatik***

Based on the results of interviews (August 2023) and an in-depth study of the content and meaning of pantun in art*belatik*, There are a number of important things expressed through this art related to literature and its relationship with nature. Referring to the concept of nature put forward by Garrard (2004) in literary works, namely pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwellings, animals, and earth, in *belatik*, there are five concepts represented, namely pollution, wilderness, dwellings, animals, and earth. The following is an explanation of the representation of these concepts.*belatik*.

### **2. Representation of Pollution in *Belatik***

Pollution in the concept of ecocriticism refers to environmental problems that can impact human health (Arum & Endraswara, 2023). According to Setiaji (2020), environmental pollution is a source of problems that are increasingly important to resolve because they concern human safety, health, and life. In the arts *belatik*, pollution is implicitly expressed through the choice of diction in the pantun, as in the following stanza.

**Tabel 1. First Stanza of *Belatik Umbut (Kapal Keruk)***

th row	Original Lyrics	Translation in Indonesian
1	<i>Kapal keruok dibikin baru</i>	Kapal keruk dibikin baru
2	<i>Kapten dateng dari Pelimbang</i>	Kapten datang dari Palembang
3	<i>Apan be punggok dudok melangu</i>	Kenapa punggok duduk termangu
4	<i>Menangis bulen dipager bintang</i>	Menangis bulan dipagar bintang

The lyrics *Kapal Keruk* (Dredging Vessel), the use of phrases "Kapal keruk dibikin baru" in the first line can be symbolically interpreted as a human activity that has the potential to alter the ecosystem, such as mining or dredging in the sea/river. Dredgers, in an ecological context, are often associated with the exploitation of natural resources. This activity has the potential to cause water pollution and damage the habitat of river or marine biota. Moreover, in the environmental context of Bangka, dredgers are usually used to exploit tin in mining activities. Mining at sea using dredgers or suction vessels has the potential to damage the marine ecosystem in Bangka (Ibrahim, 2015). The impact of dredging activities can be felt for the next decade, especially the marine environment in Bangka Belitung will experience damage and there will be a lack of tin supplies (Manik, 2014). Although this is not an explicit reprimand, its presence in the pantun is a reminder of human activities that can affect the balance of nature, especially the cause of environmental pollution.

The Jerieng people in Bangka have responded to this potential environmental pollution with ecological awareness. This is evident in their efforts to resist marine exploitation in their area. According to sources, the community has repeatedly opposed the entry of marine mining. The village government has been urged to deny permits to companies seeking to exploit the Kundi Sea, a key source of livelihood for the Jerieng people. According to sources, the environment is a source of life that must be protected, and this is internalized in the choice of words closely related to environmental issues.

*Belatik* poems is not an explicit reprimand, but the existence dredger in the imaginary space, pantun hints at changes in the natural landscape and the potential threat of ecological pollution that must be monitored. This is evident in the third and fourth lines, which describe *Punggok* longing for the moon. This symbolic meaning represents the longing that can arise for something that cannot be returned to its original state. This implicit message is important because, in oral traditions, environmental criticism is often couched in symbols to maintain politeness and social acceptance.

### **3. Representation of Wilderness in *Belatik***

The concept of a wilderness in ecocriticism is all plants in the form of trees that are still preserved and have not been contaminated by humans. (Arum & Endraswara, 2023). In

this concept, wilderness also encompass controlled plants, trees, and have environmental conditions that differ from those outside the forest (Setiaji, 2020). The concept of wilderness appears in *belatik*, but it does not appear to fully refer to the wilderness referred to in ecocriticism. Consider the following stanza.

**Tabel 2. The Second Stanza of *Belatik Umbut (Kapal Keruk)***

th row	Original Lyrics	Translation in Indonesian
1	<i>Kayeu ara di rimbak Menggel</i>	Pohon Ara di rimba Menggal
2	<i>Bateng garu tumboh di tanah</i>	Pohon Gaharu tumbuh di tanah
3	<i>Budaya lama jangan ditinggal</i>	Budaya lama jangan ditinggal
4	<i>Budaya baru bakal gek nambah</i>	Budaya baru akan bertambah

The word “*rimba*” appears very clearly in the first and second lines, namely *Kayeu ara di rimbak Menggel / Bateng garu tumboh di tanah*. *Ara* is a tree that is a food source for many wild animals, while *gaharu* is known to have high economic and cultural value. By mentioning these two species, *belatik* represents the rich biodiversity of tropical forests that are still preserved. Next, in the third and fourth rows, namely “*Budaya lama jangan ditinggal / Budaya baru bakal gek nambah*” emphasizes the close relationship between forest conservation and cultural sustainability. In many traditional societies, forests are seen not only as a source of wood or food, but also as a spiritual space, a place where myths, taboos, and rituals live (Manuaba et al., 2012). The loss of forests means the loss of collective memory and local knowledge systems that have maintained ecosystems for decades, even hundreds of years (Ulfah et al., 2017). This clearly demonstrates that forests are a crucial part of community life, especially in traditional communities.

In the context of Jerieng community life, forests are known to play a role and are revered. According to sources, the Jerieng community still believes in mythologies related to forests. Several forests are considered sacred, including: *Rimba Temenggong, Rimba Pinang, Rimba Kelapak, Rimba Perpat, Rimba Asem, Rimba Tanjung Tadah, Rimba Batu Putih, Rimba Kundi, Rimba Gue, Rimba Pelangger, Rimba Tenem, Rimba Lelap Tengkorak, dan Rimba Uret*. The jungle is still well preserved. Meanwhile, in *belatik*, *Rimba Menggel* refers to a forest that has been untouched by human activity, such as plantations. This forest is also used by the community to harvest various natural resources, such as wood, mushrooms, and so on. Hence the emergence of the name *Rimba Menggel* in this stanza, it should be a reminder for humans to always protect the forest and not be greedy in taking natural resources.

If we trace its origins, this art form is actually closely related to nature. According to informants, *belatik* comes from the story of a man who was exploring a river in the forest while fishing to find a singing voice which turned out to come from *Putih Anak* (Kuntilanak)—a kind of ghost in Indonesian mythology. Then, the young man tried to find the notation of the song which later became known as sitting down or *belatik*.

This song is usually played after finishing field activities at night. People will gather to listen to the *belatik* while chatting, telling stories about the fields, the seasons, the animals that disturb their crops and the women or men they like (Mariyana, 2019). This shows *belatik* indeed represents life in nature that is close to society.

#### 4. Representation of Dwelling in *Belatik*

In ecocriticism, the concept of a dwelling is not merely a place of dwelling, but also the entire human habitation, which is a source of life for all living things (Arum & Endraswara, 2023). In this concept, a dwelling or residence should also be equipped with infrastructure, namely basic environmental amenities (Setiaji, 2020). This concept is represented in the first stanza of the *Belatik Umbut* (Table 1). In the second line, “*Kapten datang dari Pelimbang*” indicates the existence of a region of origin or place of residence. If linked to the social context, Palembang refers to the name of a place in South Sumatra, not far from Bangka Island. Palembang is known as an urban area with a more modern lifestyle compared to the rural communities where the arts originate *belatik*. This represents a comparison of an area with a modern urban culture with a rural area as the landscape in this story. Furthermore, the representation of a rural residence that is still pristine in relation to nature is depicted in the following stanza.

**Tabel 4. The Second Stanza of *Belatik Nasi Dingin***

th row	Original Lyrics	Translation in Indonesian
1	<i>Sayang perepat di lahan Kundi</i>	Sayang bakau di lahan Kundi
2	<i>Laleu leman Kek Gedeng ulu mangas</i>	Lalu leman Kek Gedeng ulu mangas
3	<i>Kalau dak dapet dunia di dalem duni</i>	Kalau tidak dapat dunia dalam duni
4	<i>Bier terjun duluan ke laot luas</i>	Biar terjun duluan ke laut luas

In ecocriticism, dwellings include ecological spaces that sustain life. There is the phrase “*Sayang perepat di lahan Kundi*” in the lyrics. If interpreted ecologically, quarter, a type of mangrove, is an important part of coastal ecosystems. Mangrove roots have various benefits, such as retaining silt, preventing abrasion, providing habitat for various biota, and providing medicinal benefits (Diba et al., 2024). By placing the *perepat* in the center of the *pantun*, the community seems to remind them that human homes cannot be separated from the larger ecological home. For coastal communities, mangrove destruction means the loss of a natural barrier against waves. In this case, *belatik* demonstrates ecological awareness that dwelling is not only represented in the form of buildings or land, but also encompasses all life-supporting elements around it.

#### 5. Representation of Animals in *Belatik*

In the concept of ecocriticism, animals are considered living creatures that play a vital role in balancing the environment (Arum & Endraswara, 2023). Animals refer to living creatures that can move and react to stimuli, but lack reason, such as buffalo, chickens,

and so on (Setiaji, 2020). In the *belatik*, the most frequently encountered representation of the existence of animals is birds. For example, in the lyrics of *belatik Kapal Keruk*, a representation of hummingbird appears in the fourth line of the first stanza (see Table 1). *Pungguk* is known to be a large-sized owl whose face is heart-shaped or disc-shaped, dark in color with a pattern similar to a scallion. In addition, in other lyrics, the existence of *punai* birds was found. Pay attention to the *belatik* part *Nasi Dingin* following.

**Tabel 5. Bait Ketiga Belatik Nasi Dingin**

th row	Original Lyrics	Translation in Indonesian
1	<i>Pulau Nangka di payung jangan</i>	Pulau Nangka di payung jangan
2	<i>Biar lemayu punai setanjung punai</i>	Biar lemayu punai setanjung punai
3	<i>Laen mata jangan dikandeng jangan</i>	Air mata jangan ditahan jangan
4	<i>Biar menjadi laot sungai dan sungai</i>	Biar menjadi laut sungai dan sungai

*Punai* or the pigeon is a forest animal that helps disperse seeds and maintain plant regeneration. In ecocritical cosmology, animals are not merely inhabitants of nature, but active agents in maintaining ecosystem balance. The pigeon's presence in pantun also has an emotional dimension. The pigeon is often associated with loyalty and the beauty of nature. This demonstrates that the human relationship with fauna is not only practical (ecological) but also aesthetic and symbolic.

The presence of animals in *belatik*, namely the *Pungguk* and *Punai*, demonstrates the ecological richness of the natural environment. This also serves as a reminder that the preservation of nature and its beauty, including the animals within it, must be protected by humans. It is truly regrettable that so many animals are lost or extinct. The extinction of animals or other living creatures means the loss of a vital part of the landscape of sounds, colors, and balance within the ecosystem.

## 6. Representation of Earth in *Belatik*

In ecocriticism, the Earth encompasses all its contents, including humans, animals, and plants, as well as conservation efforts to protect the Earth itself (Arum & Endraswara, 2023). Saving the Earth means preserving its contents, including animals and plants (Setiaji, 2020). The Earth comprises elements that are interconnected. The concept of the Earth exists as a unity that encompasses all elements, including water, soil, plants, animals, and humans. In *belatik*, this representation can be seen in the lyrics in the *belatik Nasi Dingin*, third stanza, fourth line (see Table 5).

Array "*Biar menjadi laot sungai dan sungai*" describes the connection between freshwater (river) and saltwater (sea) ecosystems. In an ecocritical perspective, this is an acknowledgment of the continuous cycle of nature. Rivers flow into the sea and the sea evaporates water which becomes rain, then rain fills the rivers. This balance is the essence of preserving the earth. If one part is damaged, for example river pollution, the sea will

be affected and vice versa. This pantun subtly instills an awareness that the earth is a network of reciprocal relationships that must not be broken.

As a human habitat, the earth should be properly cared for. The sustainability of life depends heavily on human behavior towards the earth itself. By recognizing that the earth is an integral part of the life of humans within it, damage that occurs on the earth's surface can be addressed and prevented by humans themselves. This principle is also part of the life of the Jerieng indigenous community. In interviews conducted, it was revealed that the sustainability of nature for the lives of the descendants of the Jerieng community is an important issue that is continuously fought for by communities concerned with the environment. This is realized through the community's attitude of rejecting various forms of natural exploitation that have the potential to damage the local community's environment, such as logging protected forests for industrial plantations, land clearing for oil palm plantations, sea dredging for mining, and the conversion of coastal land into industrial shrimp ponds. Subhan (2023) stated that these social movements are manifested in society to safeguard common interests.

## **7. Implications *Belatik* in Literature Learning**

Literary works are closely related to ecology. There are at least three types of relationships between literature and ecology: literature and nature conservation, literature and lifeblood, literature and customs, beliefs, or cultural myths, and cultural ecology (Sihombing, 2024). Therefore, literary works sometimes convey ethical principles concerning nature, including respect for nature, responsibility, solidarity, compassion and care, living simply and in harmony with nature, not harming nature, and being fair to nature (Latifah & Supriadi, 2023). This is important for humans to understand. Understanding these concepts can be achieved through formal education, namely through learning.

Quality literature learning, with consideration of teaching materials, understanding of the subject matter, and selecting appropriate learning strategies, can be a means of character building in children from an early age (Hafizah et al., 2022). Literature teaching must be made as engaging as possible to foster students' interest in appreciating literary works (Purwaningsih et al., 2023). One effort in this regard is to teach literature containing local wisdom, such as oral literature, in a fun way (Ibda & Wijayanti, 2023). This strategy of integrating local wisdom can be developed in literature learning by incorporating local literature such as *belatik*.

*Belatik* is a work of art and literature that contains high local wisdom values. Based on the analysis that has been carried out, *belatik* represents the concept of nature in the Jerieng Bangka community's outlook on life. This literary work, in the form of Malay pantun, contains many symbols that represent nature and its relationship to the critique of nature itself in the social context of society. This supports research findings showing that Malay

pantun is synonymous with depictions of nature or the environment (Man & Jalaluddin, 2022; Mustado et al., 2023; Resman & Rumadi, 2022). As stated earlier, literary learning also touches on other disciplines, including environmental science. It is important to note that literary ecology or ecocriticism can be a means to foster students' ecological literacy. This demonstrates that *belatik* as a literary work in the form of a pantun can be used as a source or teaching material for ecologically charged literature in schools.

So far, the integration of *belatik* in literature learning has the potential to be included as teaching material in seventh-grade junior high schools. In the Independent Curriculum, specifically in the first semester of seventh-grade, there are learning outcomes that focus on introducing folk poetry, including pantun. According to Tanduk (2024), folk poetry learning must be adapted to the cultural context, student characteristics, and current developments. Based on observations, *belatik* has not been introduced to the younger generation through learning. In fact, based on the results of the study of this literary work, pantun is one of the elements *belatik* has great potential to be used as local content in learning. This indicates that special efforts are needed to integrate *belatik* in learning.

In Indonesian language learning, local content provides a wealth of material for learning that is more relevant to students, including in literature. Students' low awareness of the value system of life encourages the need for learning designs based on local wisdom (Utami, 2024). Local wisdom-based learning teaches students to always be close to, maintain, preserve, and apply local cultural values in society (Ernalida, 2024). Furthermore, learning literature with local content is known to bring positive changes to learning activities (Darihastining et al., 2023). Therefore, local content can be integrated to encourage learning that is more relevant to students.

Integration *belatik* in incorporating local content into literature learning is one way to incorporate local content. Developing local materials can take the form of teaching materials or other projects that can encourage local wisdom-based literary appreciation in schools. Integrating materials into learning that incorporate moral values, local wisdom, and interactive technology such as multimedia modules can increase the effectiveness of literature learning (Meidiani et al., 2025). Furthermore, learning that highlights local cultural richness can increase students' interest in learning and strengthen their identity and character (Hatima et al., 2025). Therefore, developing teaching materials based on arts and culture is crucial. *Belatik* could be an opportunity for further innovation.

*Belatik* known as a local art form of the Jerieng Malay community, the form of which can be identified as a type of literary work, namely pantun. This art form is inseparable from natural symbols. The representation of nature contained in *belatik* shows the relationship between society and nature in literary works was very close. Malay society possesses a variety of local knowledge related to nature (Safitri et al., 2025). In this case, *belatik* demonstrates that Malay society possesses local knowledge, manifested in the arts and literary works of pantun. Yusari (2021) also argues that pantun, as an expressive tradition

of Malay society, is capable of shaping the laws of balance between nature and human life within its communities.

In *belatik*, the concept of nature is represented through the choice of diction, symbols, and the social context of people's lives. Literature can be a medium for voicing environmental issues and inspiring environmental conservation in the digital age (Chasanah, 2025), including through pantun, a type of ancient poetry. Concepts in local literature can be explored to convey messages of greater sensitivity and concern for the surrounding environment. As Faizah (2024) points out, local literature can be an effective means of educating and fostering ecological awareness in adolescents. Therefore, *belatik* as local literature can be used in learning.

Learning Indonesian language and literature has great potential for implementing local wisdom as a means of character education. This implementation can be achieved by delving deeper into the subject, integrating it significantly into the curriculum, conducting teacher training, and designing creative and culturally relevant learning strategies (Widiastuti et al., 2024). Furthermore, Arianti (2021) also outlined the implications of local wisdom for Indonesian language learning, including using local wisdom as teaching materials. This demonstrates the diverse ways in which local wisdom can be implemented in learning.

*Belatik*, as a literary work containing local wisdom, can be developed in literature learning in junior high schools, or possibly also at other levels of education. Specific material can be included in folk poetry learning, particularly pantun. With the help of digital technology, innovative teaching materials can be developed for this topic. This is also supported by various research and development projects that have produced effective digital products for pantun learning (Putri et al., 2024; Setyadiharja & Setyadiharja, 2024; Yakob et al., 2023). Therefore, further efforts are needed to address this potential.

#### ***D. CONCLUSION***

*Belatik* represents nature within a social context encompassing five natural concepts in literary works: pollution, wilderness, dwellings, animals, and the earth. These concepts are represented through the use of diction and can be interpreted as forms of wealth, harmony, and even environmental damage. As an art form in the form of pantun, it is rich in natural symbols. *Belatik* has great potential to be integrated into Indonesian language and literature learning. This research is still limited to the study of the concept of nature in *belatik* and depicting its implications for learning. Furthermore, in-depth studies can be conducted using different theories or developing *belatik* as local teaching materials to foster ecological awareness among students at school.

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