

Narrating forest loss: Ecological violence and environmental silence in a comparative study of *Jejak Balak* and *Supernova: Partikel*

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ABSTRACT

This comparative study examines the representation of ecological violence and the function of environmental silence in *Jejak Balak* (*Traces of Logging*) by Ayu Welirang and *Supernova: Partikel* (*Supernova: Particle*) by Dee Lestari within Indonesia's structurally driven deforestation crisis. Literature not only reflects ecological degradation but also shapes its meaning through narratives that simultaneously expose and obscure violence against forests. Using an interpretive qualitative approach grounded in ecocriticism and informed by political ecology and the concept of slow violence, this study analyzes how ecological meaning is constructed in the two novels. The findings show that *Jejak Balak* depicts forest exploitation explicitly through socio-economic conflicts, while *Supernova: Partikel* renders ecological crises in a more reflective and spiritual mode. In both texts, the marginalization of forest voices and long-term ecological impacts reveals environmental silence as a key narrative mechanism. This study advances ecocritical scholarship by demonstrating that environmental silence is not merely an aesthetic absence but a structuring principle that shapes how ecological violence is perceived and potentially normalized. It concludes that contemporary Indonesian literature contributes to the formation of ecological ethics through both representation and silence.



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I. INTRODUCTION

The ecological crisis in Indonesia, manifested in deforestation, forest degradation, and environmental disasters, should not be understood as a purely natural phenomenon, but as

the outcome of structural processes shaped by power relations, economic interests, and development policies that position nature as an object of exploitation (Bebbington et al., 2018; Giljum et al., 2022). From a political ecology perspective, extractive practices such as logging, mining, and infrastructure expansion constitute forms of structural violence institutionalized through governance systems, making their impacts appear natural and inevitable (Galtung, 1990; Robbins, 2012). This process operates as slow violence (gradual, cumulative, and often unnoticed) obscuring its political roots and rendering ecological destruction as incidental rather than systemic (Nixon, 2014; Pain & Cahill, 2022).

Within this context, forests in Indonesia (particularly in regions such as Sumatra) become arenas of competing interests where ecological violence is legitimized through development discourse and technocratic environmental governance (Anheier & Juergensmeyer, 2012; Bebbington et al., 2018; Giljum et al., 2022). Literature plays a strategic role in this crisis by not only documenting environmental damage but also shaping how human–nature–power relations are understood (Garrard, 2004; Garrard, 2011; Buell et al., 2011). However, ecological violence in literary texts is often mediated indirectly through metaphor, displaced into personal narratives, or obscured through diffuse causality, rather than explicitly articulated (DeLoughrey, 2021; Lahtinen & Löytty, 2024).

This condition gives rise to what can be termed environmental silence (the absence or marginalization of forest voices, non-human agencies, and long-term ecological impacts in narrative representation) which functions not merely as an aesthetic gap but as a politics of representation that can normalize ecological violence (Stoler, 2014; Saeidi, 2017; Perkins, 2022). As a result, literary narratives not only reflect ecological crises but also shape how environmental destruction is interpreted, rationalized, and rendered acceptable. In this sense, narrative strategies are central to the formation of ecological awareness and public understanding of environmental change (Baiquni & Wiyatasari, 2023; Putri et al., 2025;).

Despite the growing body of ecocritical studies, research on Indonesian literature has largely focused on thematic representations of nature, identity, and moral values, without systematically examining ecological violence as a structural process or environmental silence as a narrative mechanism (Apriyani & Lixian, 2023; Richards et al., 2024; Maslikatin et al., 2025). This limitation is also evident in studies of *Jejak Balak (Traces of Logging)* by Ayu Welirang and *Supernova: Partikel (Supernova: Particle)* by Dee Lestari, which tend to emphasize ecological themes, moral values, or psychological and ideological dimensions, while overlooking how narrative strategies shape the visibility or invisibility of ecological violence (Uli et al., 2017; Tawaqal et al., 2020; Mawa et al., 2023; Qonitulhaq et al., 2024; Salsabila et al., 2025; Nisma, 2025).

Comparative analyses further reveal that *Jejak Balak* is commonly read as an explicit ecological critique approached thematically, whereas *Supernova: Partikel* is more often interpreted through humanist, feminist, or psychological frameworks, with limited attention

to ecological dimensions. In both cases, ecological violence as a structural process and environmental silence as a narrative strategy remain underexplored. Consequently, forests are frequently treated as symbolic backdrops rather than as subjects experiencing violence, and comparative studies examining different modes of ecological representation remain limited.

Responding to this gap, this comparative study integrates the concepts of ecological violence and environmental silence into narrative analysis to examine how forest loss is represented and how silence operates through omission, displacement, and normalization. By analyzing *Jejak Balak* and *Supernova: Partikel*, this study aims to demonstrate how narrative strategies shape the perception of ecological crisis and to highlight the ambivalent role of literature as both a site of ecological critique and a medium that may reproduce the normalization of environmental violence.

II. METHOD

This study employs an interpretive qualitative approach that focuses on the analysis of literary texts to examine meaning, ideology, and representational strategies in human–environment relations (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The analysis is grounded in an ecocritical framework (Garrard, 2004; Garrard, 2011; Buell et al., 2011), enriched by a political ecology perspective (Robbins, 2012; Anheier & Juergensmeyer, 2012; Packard, 2018) and the concept of slow violence (Nixon, 2014; Pain & Cahill, 2022). This combined framework enables the reading of environmental degradation not only as a material and structural process but also as a narrative construction shaped through representation and omission. Through qualitative textual analysis, the research explores how lexical choices, narrative structures, and representational strategies shape cultural meaning, as demonstrated in prior studies of language and representation (Setyaningsih, 2020).

The primary data sources are *Jejak Balak* by Ayu Welirang and *Supernova: Partikel* by Dee Lestari, which were selected purposively due to their contrasting modes of representing human–forest relations. While *Jejak Balak* foregrounds socio-economic conflict and extractive practices, *Supernova: Partikel* emphasizes reflective and experiential engagement with nature. This contrast allows for a comparative analysis of how ecological violence and environmental silence are narratively constructed. The data consist of textual units, including narrative passages, descriptions, dialogues, metaphors, symbols, and absences of representation related to forest exploitation, power relations, and ecological meaning (DeLoughrey, 2021).

Data collection was conducted through intensive close reading combined with systematic textual annotation. Rather than treating the text as a whole, the analysis focused on segments that explicitly or implicitly represent environmental change, human–nature relations, and narrative omissions. These segments were recorded and organized into analytical units to enable consistent comparison across both novels.

The coding process was conducted using a deductive thematic approach derived from the theoretical framework. Three primary analytical categories were established: (1) representation of ecological violence, (2) power relations and mechanisms of exploitation, and (3) environmental silence. These categories were selected because they directly correspond to the study's conceptual focus and allow for the integration of ecocriticism, political ecology, and slow violence into textual analysis. Each category was operationalized through specific textual indicators. For instance, ecological violence was identified through representations of exploitation, environmental degradation, and normalization of damage; power relations were traced through the presence or absence of structural actors, institutions, and economic interests; and environmental silence was examined through omissions, marginalization of non-human voices, absence of long-term impacts, and the displacement of ecological conflict into personal or moral narratives.

The analysis proceeded in four stages. First, relevant textual segments were identified and coded based on the predefined categories. Second, recurring patterns of representation were grouped to identify dominant narrative strategies. Third, these patterns were interpreted critically using the concepts of structural violence and slow violence to reveal the systemic and temporal dimensions of ecological damage. Finally, a comparative reading was conducted to examine similarities and differences between the two novels in terms of narrative strategies and their ideological implications (Perkins, 2022). This step is essential in aligning the analysis with the study's focus as a comparative study.

Through this procedure, the analysis moves systematically from close reading to conceptual interpretation, ensuring transparency in how textual evidence is transformed into analytical findings. While the analysis remains interpretive, it is guided by clearly defined categories and indicators, allowing for a more rigorous and traceable examination of how ecological violence and environmental silence are constructed within the texts.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results and discussion of the novel *Jejak Balak* works by Ayu Welirang and *Supernova: Partikel* Dee Lestari's work in this study is formulated into four aspects: the forest as an arena of ecological violence, narrative strategies in representing forest loss, environmental silences about what the text does not say, and literature, environmental ethics, and ecological awareness. A more complete discussion is outlined in the following sections.

Ecological Violence

In *Jejak Balak* and *Supernova: Partikel*, the forest is not represented as a neutral landscape but as an arena of economic and power struggles in which ecological violence unfolds systematically. In both novels, forest destruction is not incidental but emerges from structured relations of power, capital, and ideology that subordinate nature. This positioning aligns with

the concept of ecological violence as a structural process embedded in broader socio-economic systems (Galtung, 1990; Robbins, 2012; Saputra et al., 2025).

In *Jejak Balak*, ecological violence is represented explicitly through logging practices and the transformation of forests into economic commodities. The narrative repeatedly depicts extraction as routine and legitimate, marginalizing ecological sustainability and local community interests (Welirang, 2023). As a result, forest destruction appears normalized rather than crisis-driven. This normalization operates not only materially (through ongoing exploitation) but also discursively, where environmental damage is framed as a logical consequence of development. Furthermore, the novel portrays the erosion of the forest's cultural and ethical value, reducing the human-nature relationship to a utilitarian logic (Welirang, 2023), which constitutes a form of symbolic ecological violence.

In contrast, *Supernova: Partikel* presents ecological violence through experiential and reflective engagement with nature. The novel provides detailed ecological descriptions, such as the fragility of tropical forest ecosystems and the vulnerability of thin soil layers (Lestari, 2012), as well as the cascading impact of logging on biodiversity loss (Lestari, 2012). However, this ecological awareness is mediated through a narrative that emphasizes personal reflection and spiritual connection with nature, as seen in the depiction of the forest as a speaking entity that humans fail to "listen" to (Lestari, 2012). While this strategy reinforces ethical awareness, it simultaneously shifts attention away from structural conflict toward individual consciousness.

A comparative reading reveals that both novels represent ecological violence as structural, yet through contrasting narrative strategies. *Jejak Balak* foregrounds direct socio-economic conflict and positions ecological destruction as a political issue, whereas *Supernova: Partikel* sublimates structural violence into reflective and spiritual discourse. In both cases, the forest is ultimately reduced to a function within human-centered frameworks, either as an economic resource or as a medium of transcendental experience. This confirms that ecological violence in literary texts often operates not only through visible destruction but also through narrative mechanisms that obscure causality and diffuse responsibility (Wajiran & Septiani, 2023; Tur et al., 2023).

Thus, the forest in both novels functions as a central site of ecological violence, where material exploitation and narrative representation intersect. Ecological violence is enacted not only through physical degradation but also through discursive strategies that normalize environmental damage and displace structural accountability. This comparative analysis demonstrates that literature actively shapes how forest loss is interpreted and rationalized, reinforcing the need to examine narrative strategies alongside ecological themes.

To clarify the intersections and differences in how ecological violence is represented, Table 1 summarizes the key comparative dimensions.

Table 1. Comparison of forest representations as arenas of ecological violence

No.	Analysis Aspects	<i>Jejak Balak</i>	<i>Supernova: Partikel</i>
1.	Forest position	Systemically exploited material space	Ecological space experienced and reflected on personally
2.	The main forms of ecological violence	Logging and conversion of forests into economic commodities	Scientifically conscious, but spiritually mediated ecological exploitation
3.	Violent nature	Explicit, confrontational, and political	Implicit, reflective, and sublimated
4.	Power relations	Imbalance: state-owned companies vs local communities	Less directly presented; structural conflicts tend to linger.
5.	Structural mechanisms	Normalization of exploitation through economic and development logic	Diversion of conflict to the realm of individual consciousness and spirituality
6.	Ecological impact	Destruction of ecosystems and elimination of collective living spaces	Threats of species extinction and vulnerability of tropical ecosystems
7.	Symbolic impact	Forests lose cultural and ethical value	Forests are interpreted as living entities and "guru [teacher]" ecological
8.	Human position	Exploitation actors and victims of the system	A reflective subject who seeks the meaning of his relationship with nature.
9.	How violence is normalized	Through legitimized logging routines	Through spiritualization and silence of material conflict
10.	Effect on readers	Promoting critical awareness of structural inequalities	Encourages ethical reflection, but potentially stifles structural criticism.

Both *Jejak Balak* and *Supernova: Partikel* position the forest as an arena of ecological violence through distinct representational modes: the former exposes exploitation through explicit socio-political conflict, while the latter mediates it through reflective and spiritual narratives that may obscure structural dynamics. This contrast demonstrates that ecological violence is not only a matter of representation but also of narrative construction, shaping how forest loss is perceived, interpreted, and potentially normalized. This insight provides the basis for examining how narrative strategies, further structure ecological meaning in the following section.

Narrative Strategy

Loss of forests in *Jejak Balak* and *Supernova: Partikel* is not merely represented through events of exploitation or ecological description, but fundamentally constructed through narrative strategies that shape how ecological violence is perceived. Choices of perspective, metaphor, and symbolism determine whether forest loss appears as a structural conflict or is reframed as a reflective and potentially normalized experience. As discourse strategies in literary texts actively shape readers' judgments and attitudes (Elkholy & Ahsani, 2023; Apriyani & Lixian, 2023), narrative analysis must focus on how these representational mechanisms operate within the text.

In *Jejak Balak*, narrative strategy is grounded in a social-collective perspective that foregrounds conflict between communities and extractive forces. Repeated depictions of logging and its impact on communal living space position the forest as a material site of systematic exploitation (Welirang, 2023). This perspective consistently links ecological destruction to power relations and economic interests, making forest loss appear as a political and structural crisis rather than a neutral environmental change. Metaphorically, the forest is constructed as a living space that has lost its meaning, reducing human-nature relations to a utilitarian logic (Welirang, 2023). Through this combination of perspective and symbolism, the narrative reinforces ecological loss as both material destruction and symbolic erasure.

By contrast, *Supernova: Partikel* employs a reflective and individualized narrative strategy centered on the experiences of Zarah. The forest is represented through contemplative descriptions that combine ecological knowledge with spiritual awareness, such as the depiction of fragile tropical ecosystems and their vulnerability to disturbance (Lestari, 2012). Symbolically, the forest is framed as a communicative and living entity; "*seluruh alam ini senantiasa bicara kepada kita* [all of nature is always talking to us]" (Lestari, 2012); which constructs a dialogical human-nature relationship. While this strategy strengthens ecological ethics, it simultaneously shifts the focus from structural conflict to individual consciousness, transforming ecological violence into a matter of awareness rather than systemic inequality.

A comparative reading reveals that these narrative strategies produce distinct ideological effects. *Jejak Balak* externalizes ecological violence through confrontational and socially grounded narration, making structural exploitation visible and politically legible (Welirang, 2023). In contrast, *Supernova: Partikel* internalizes ecological crisis through symbolic and reflective narration, which, although ethically engaging, tends to sublimate material conflict into personal reflection (Lestari, 2012). In both cases, narrative strategy does not merely convey ecological content but actively structures the visibility (or invisibility) of ecological violence.

Thus, the representation of forest loss in both novels is inseparable from the narrative mechanisms that construct it. While *Jejak Balak* emphasizes structural crisis through social

perspective and material symbolism, *Supernova: Partikel* reframes ecological loss through spiritual and experiential narratives. This contrast demonstrates that narrative strategy is a key site where ecological meaning is produced, mediated, and potentially normalized, providing a crucial bridge toward understanding environmental silence in the following section.

Table 2. Comparison of narrative strategies for forest loss

No.	Analysis Aspects	<i>Jejak Balak</i>	<i>Supernova: Partikel</i>
1.	Viewpoint	Social-collective, close to social conflict	Individual, focused on Zarah's experience
2.	Textual basis	Narrative of logging and living space conflict	Ecological description and personal reflection
3.	Forest metaphor	Living space is taken away and loses meaning	Living entities and the space of enlightenment
4.	Symbolism	Forests as victims of structural exploitation	Forest as "guru [teacher]" ecological awareness
5.	Representation effect	Presenting the ecological crisis as a political conflict	Sublimating the crisis into the ethical-spiritual realm

The comparison in Table 2 confirms that narrative strategy functions as a decisive mechanism in shaping ecological meaning. While *Jejak Balak* makes structural violence visible through collective and material narration, *Supernova: Partikel* reconfigures it through reflective and symbolic discourse that may obscure its systemic dimensions. This divergence highlights that ecological violence in literature is not only represented but narratively constructed, directing attention, limiting interpretation, and opening space for environmental silence as a central analytical concern in the next section.

Environmental Silence

Environmental silence in *Jejak Balak* and *Supernova: Partikel* does not merely indicate the absence of ecological representation, but functions as a narrative mechanism through which ecological violence is obscured, displaced, and potentially normalized. In literary and cultural studies, silence operates as a politics of representation, shaping meaning not only through what is articulated but through what is systematically omitted (Sari & Tur, 2019). Within the framework of *slow violence* (Nixon, 2014), such absences are particularly significant, as ecological destruction unfolds gradually and often escapes narrative attention.

In *Jejak Balak*, environmental silence emerges despite the novel's explicit depiction of logging and forest exploitation. While the narrative foregrounds social and economic conflicts, it offers limited elaboration on long-term ecological consequences such as land degradation, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem transformation (Welirang, 2023). As a result, ecological destruction is framed primarily through its immediate social impact rather than as a cumulative and temporal process. A similar pattern appears in the representation of local

communities: although conflict over living space is depicted, the narrative rarely extends to how these communities endure and adapt to degraded ecological conditions (Welirang, 2023). This produces a paradox in which the text simultaneously critiques exploitation while leaving its long-term ecological implications underarticulated.

In contrast, environmental silence in *Supernova: Partikel* operates through narrative displacement rather than omission alone. The novel presents ecological knowledge, such as the cascading effects of deforestation on species extinction (Lestari, 2012), but situates this knowledge within moments of personal reflection and ethical awareness. Consequently, ecological destruction is framed as an experiential and contemplative phenomenon rather than a historically and structurally grounded process. This displacement is reinforced by the absence of clearly defined structural actors: environmental damage is rarely linked to specific institutions, policies, or economic systems, but instead attributed to a generalized human failure to “*mendengarkan* [listen]” nature (Lestari, 2012). While this strategy universalizes ecological responsibility, it simultaneously obscures the power relations that sustain environmental exploitation.

A comparative reading highlights that environmental silence in both novels operates through different but related mechanisms. *Jejak Balak* tends to silence the temporal dimension of ecological violence, limiting the visibility of its long-term impacts, whereas *Supernova: Partikel* silences its structural dimension by displacing responsibility into the realm of individual consciousness. In both cases, silence functions not simply as absence but as a structuring force that shapes how ecological violence is perceived, either as an immediate social conflict or as a diffuse ethical concern.

From the perspective of *slow violence*, these narrative silences are critical because they limit the representation of ecological harm as a cumulative and systemic process (Nixon, 2014). When temporal continuity and structural causality are underrepresented, ecological crises risk being perceived as abstract, inevitable, or detached from everyday life. At the same time, silence also carries an aesthetic function: the absence of explicit articulation can open interpretive space and invite reflection on the limits of language in representing complex ecological realities (Perkins, 2022). However, this aesthetic potential is inseparable from its ideological risk. When silence obscures structural causation or long-term impact, it may contribute to the normalization of ecological violence by rendering it less visible and less contestable (Pain & Cahill, 2022).

Thus, environmental silence in *Jejak Balak* and *Supernova: Partikel* operates at the intersection of aesthetics and ideology. It simultaneously enables reflection and reproduces conditions for normalization, demonstrating that what is not narrated is as consequential as what is explicitly represented. This dual function positions environmental silence as a key analytical category in understanding how literature mediates ecological crisis, providing a foundation for examining its implications for environmental ethics and ecological awareness.

Table 3. Comparison of environmental silence

No.	Analysis Aspects	<i>Jejak Balak</i>	<i>Supernova: Partikel</i>
1.	Form of silence	Lack of elaboration of long-term ecological impacts	The absence of structural actors and political conflict
2.	Sound of the forest	Implicitly present, rarely as an autonomous subject	Symbolic presence as a spiritual entity
3.	Representation of affected communities	Focus on initial conflict, limited subsequent impact	Hardly socially visible
4.	Hardness scale	Local and material	Global and reflective
5.	Aesthetic function	Emphasizing direct social trauma	Strengthening individual ethical reflection
6.	Risk of normalization	Ecological damage is considered an economic consequence	Ecological damage is considered a failure of consciousness
7.	In relation to <i>slow violence</i>	Ecological impacts hidden in time	Sublimated structural violence

The comparison in Table 3 confirms that environmental silence is not merely a gap in representation but a structuring principle that shapes ecological meaning. By selectively limiting the visibility of temporal and structural dimensions of ecological violence, both novels demonstrate how narrative silence can simultaneously enable ethical reflection and normalize environmental crisis. This ambivalence underscores the need to read literary texts not only for what they reveal about ecological destruction, but for how they regulate its visibility, forming the basis for understanding literature's role in shaping environmental ethics.

Literature and Ecological Awareness

The representation of forests, narrative strategies, and environmental silence in *Jejak Balak* and *Supernova: Partikel* demonstrates that literature functions as an ideological arena in which environmental ethics and ecological awareness are actively constructed rather than passively reflected. Ethical meaning in narrative emerges from how subjects are positioned in relation to nature, power, and responsibility (Ahdiani & Maulana, 2023). From a materialist ecofeminist perspective, ecological crisis cannot be separated from structures of exploitation and inequality, making literary representation a site where ecological values are negotiated alongside dominant development discourses (Maslikatin et al., 2025; Saputra et al., 2025).

A comparative reading reveals contrasting ethical orientations shaped by different narrative strategies. *Jejak Balak* constructs environmental ethics through the representation of material and political conflict, framing forest exploitation as structural injustice that disrupts both ecological systems and social life (Welirang, 2023). This produces a collective and contextual ethical perspective grounded in community relations with the forest. In contrast, *Supernova: Partikel* develops ecological awareness through personal and spiritual reflection,

where Zarah's encounters with nature; supported by ecological knowledge such as the link between logging and species extinction (Lestari, 2012); encourage an individualized and universal ethical stance centered on moral responsibility to "*mendengarkan* [listen]" nature (Lestari, 2012).

These differing orientations generate distinct ideological effects. *Jejak Balak* positions literature as a relatively explicit medium of ecological critique that challenges extractivist logic and exposes structural inequality, whereas *Supernova: Partikel* reconfigures ecological crisis as an ethical and existential issue, which, while deepening personal awareness, risks displacing attention from systemic causes. This divergence confirms that literature does not simply communicate ecological values but organizes how responsibility is assigned, either structurally or individually.

Within the framework of *slow violence* (Nixon, 2014), this distinction becomes crucial. Literature has the capacity to render gradual and often invisible ecological damage ethically perceptible; however, when narrative strategies (particularly environmental silence) obscure structural actors or long-term impacts, they may simultaneously weaken critical engagement. As shown in both novels, environmental ethics is inseparable from representational choices: whether ecological violence is exposed as a systemic problem or reframed as a matter of personal awareness depends on how narrative directs and limits attention.

In the Indonesian context, where deforestation, land conflict, and extractivism remain ongoing structural issues, this ambivalence has significant implications. Contemporary Indonesian literature, including *Jejak Balak* and *Supernova: Partikel*, participates in shaping public consciousness by both challenging and reproducing dominant discourses on development and environmental crisis (Pain & Cahill, 2022; Putri et al., 2025). Literature thus operates not as a neutral reflection but as an active mediator of ecological meaning and ethical orientation.

Therefore, literature must be understood as a contested ethical space. It can sharpen critical ecological awareness by exposing structural violence, but it can also normalize environmental crisis through narrative silence and symbolic displacement. Recognizing this dual function shifts literary analysis beyond thematic interpretation toward an examination of how texts construct, direct, and constrain ecological understanding, reinforcing the central argument of this study that ecological meaning is produced not only through representation but through its limits.

Table 4. Literature and ecological awareness

No.	Analysis Aspects	<i>Jejak Balak</i>	<i>Supernova: Partikel</i>
1.	Environmental ethics orientation	Collective, contextual, social conflict-based	Individual, universal, based on personal reflection
2.	Focus of criticism	Forest exploitation and structural inequality	Ecological awareness and moral responsibility
3.	Literary position	A relatively explicit medium of ecological critique	A medium of ambivalent ethical reflection
4.	Ideological risks	Reducing ecological complexity in local conflicts	Normalizing the crisis through spiritualization
5.	Impact on readers	Raising political-ecological awareness	Encourages ethical reflection, but is less political
6.	Relevance to the Indonesian context	Challenging extractivism and deforestation	Universalizing the ecological crisis

The comparison in Table 4 confirms that ecological awareness in literature is shaped through a dynamic interplay between representation, narrative strategy, and environmental silence. By structuring how ecological violence is framed (whether as structural injustice or personal responsibility) both novels demonstrate that literature not only reflects ecological crisis but actively mediates its ethical interpretation. This reinforces the need to read literary texts critically, not only for their explicit messages but for the narrative mechanisms that shape, limit, and potentially normalize ecological understanding.

IV. CONCLUSION

This comparative study demonstrates that *Jejak Balak* and *Supernova: Partikel* both represent the forest as a victim of ecological violence, yet through contrasting narrative strategies that produce different ethical orientations. *Jejak Balak* foregrounds ecological violence as a structural and political process embedded in economic power relations, whereas *Supernova: Partikel* reframes the ecological crisis through reflective and spiritual narratives that emphasize individual awareness. This distinction confirms that literature not only reflects environmental crisis but actively organizes how ecological violence is perceived, interpreted, and potentially normalized.

The central contribution of this study lies in conceptualizing environmental silence as a key narrative mechanism that shapes ecological meaning. By analyzing what is not narrated (such as the absence of forest voices, structural actors, and long-term ecological impacts) this study shifts ecocritical analysis from a thematic focus on “nature” toward an examination of representational limits and the politics of narrative. This reconceptualization advances Indonesian ecocritical studies by demonstrating that ecological understanding is produced

not only through presence but through structured absence, thereby repositioning silence as an analytical category rather than a mere gap.

Theoretically, this study contributes to ecocriticism by integrating environmental silence with the framework of *slow violence*, offering a more nuanced approach to reading gradual and obscured ecological harm in literary texts. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of critically engaging literary narratives in Indonesia, where ecological crises (such as deforestation and extractivism) are ongoing structural issues. Literature can foster ecological awareness, but it may also unintentionally normalize environmental violence when structural causality is obscured.

This study is limited to two contemporary Indonesian novels and focuses on textual analysis, which may not fully capture reader reception or broader cultural circulation. Future research could expand this approach by examining other genres (such as film or digital narratives), incorporating reader-response studies, or exploring how environmental silence operates across different cultural and media contexts. Ultimately, this study affirms that literature functions as a contested ethical space: it can both sharpen critical ecological awareness and reproduce dominant discourses through narrative silence. Recognizing this dual role is essential for developing a more critical and reflexive ecocriticism that engages with the cultural dimensions of ecological crisis.

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