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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **Ecological Literacy of Junior High School Students through Children's Literature**

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**| ABSTRACT**

Ecological literacy can be taught through the literature curriculum. Literacy among junior high school students is problematic. However, literature as an imaginary work has a special position to offer ecological messages through its storyline. This study aims to describe the ecological literacy of junior high school students through children's literature. This research utilizes qualitative methods with data collection techniques through observation, documentation, and interviews. The research instrument was developed from 4 indicators of Roth's ecological literacy, namely knowledge, affective tendency, behavior, and cognitive skills. This research involved four junior high schools in Majalengka. The results showed that students could describe aspects of knowledge about environmental issues and their relationship with social systems. In addition, students can reflect on environmental issues and describe aspects of behavior towards nature. Cognitive skills that appear in students are the ability to analyze and evaluate environmental issues accompanied by problem solving. However, there are still a number of students who have not been able to bring out the skills in analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating environmental issues. Based on these results, children's literature in schools with ecological themes can instill ecological literacy skills as well as a medium for campaigning for environmental issues.

**| KEYWORDS**

*Ecological literacy; Children's literature; literary learning*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The environment as a complex system is faced with various problems. Passmore [1] says that ecological problems are features of society that arise from transactions with nature, from the desire to free oneself, and are not considered an inevitable consequence of good things in a society. Damage to the water environment (hydrosphere) or physical environment will affect the damage to organisms in water. Damage to the air environment (atmosphere), such as oxygen depletion and the soil environment (lithosphere) in the form of declining soil fertility. These damages also affect the social environment (sociosphere) because humans and nature have relationships and interactions that affect each other [2].

Literature learning contributes to providing students with opportunities for moral reflection, examining what informs and guides them through life. Students in the adolescent phase need constructive contexts to talk about the lives of others - how to choose between conflicting desires and learn to act in accordance with ideals. Literature provides opportunities for students to gain insight into the moral journey. Authors of excellent literary works can describe the moral contours of life [3]. This means that insights and sensitivities can be formed, such as students' ecological intelligence which can be built through the internalization of values in literary texts.

Suwandi [4] stated that Indonesian language teachers have the same responsibility as other subject teachers in environmental conservation efforts, namely through knowledge about the environment and environmental wisdom by reading literary works. The selection of literary works with environmental themes has relevance to the vision of instilling a positive attitude towards nature. This is not only related to basic competencies regarding literary material, but also ecological values that can be applied in students' real lives. Literary works can be utilized to support the establishment of an environmentally-cultured school. Suwandi [5] in his research also said that the availability of teaching materials containing ecological literacy is needed. This is proven by the activity

of describing the value of ecological literacy in four Indonesian language textbooks in high school in the 2013 curriculum. Ecological knowledge, affective tendencies, behavior, and cognitive skills were found.

Literary works can present environmental issues by emphasizing the interaction between characters and nature. Children's literature is a microcosm of society's goals and values, i.e. what it can teach is an indication of how to view the world, a message about the relationship between humans and the environment that children inherit (Vikki [6]). The narratives that children learn help to shape their perception of the world. In terms of children's literature, Montgomery's novel represents a classic in the world of children's literature, specifically in the context of compelling fiction. It also shows that many works of children's literature are written with the theme of the relationship between humans and the environment (Catherine in [6]). Thus, the selection of nature or environmental themes has a certain vision and mission related to instilling ecological awareness in students.

There is the term children's literature, Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown limit children's literature based on the age range of infancy to adolescence. Furthermore, it suggests topics that are relevant and interesting to children at that age, through prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction [7]. There is a term for young adult literature (YAL) as literature written for readers between the ages of 12-20. Young adult literature has been taught in American schools since the 1970s and read by teenagers since the late 1960s [8]. Toha & Sarumpaet [9] explains that children's literature is the best literature read by children with characteristics of various varieties, themes, and formats. The work is created for children and basically under the guidance of adults. Life, reading and more are related to the child's cultural context. Children can understand, read, and judge using their own cultural context. A child is a person who needs all the facilities, attention, encouragement, and strength to grow up healthy, independent, and mature.

Children's literature was relatively neglected theoretically, movements such as new criticism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and historicism only taking hold in the academy in the second half of the 20th century (Clark [10]). Children's literature is characterized by its depth, an area of contestation with ongoing debates about its nature, purpose, boundaries, and audience. Children's literature includes a variety of genres, such as stories, poetry, pantomime, puppet shows, pop-up books, comics, etc. (Dena and Janet in [10]). The term "children's literature" refers to books and other literary materials that are generally assumed to be for children and young people (Dena and Janet [10]). Children's literature is writing specifically written for children or those children who have written it themselves (Harris & Hodges [11]). The importance of understanding the appropriateness of reading material is inseparable from the impact of the text read to students. Nikolajeva (Dena & Janet [10]) suggests that cognitive science has assessed the effects of reading fiction on adolescent development. Children's literature is assumed to carry the weight of pedagogical responsibility that distinguishes it from general literature (Dena and Janet [10]). This underpins the importance of preparing relevant reading materials for students.

Appleyard also suggests three main elements that determine adolescents' appreciation and level of engagement with novels. First, students' ability to identify with characters as models of someone who can live and set goals. Second, the student's ability to see the novel as a realistic life story, complete with suffering, setbacks, and moral complexity. Third, the success of a novel to make students think about life and ideals. Narrative literature encourages students to explore the range of lives and choices that give life shape; the practice of imagining and setting worthy life goals [3].

Literature learning is directed at the interaction of students and texts. In the content standards for junior high school, there are literary texts in the form of fantasy stories, folklore, poetry, drama, short stories, and fiction books. These texts have certain structures and linguistic characteristics that distinguish one text from another. Literature learning carries a vision related to aspects of attitude, knowledge, and skills. At the junior high school level itself, the knowledge gained must be related to the context of oneself, family, school, community, and the surrounding natural environment, nation, country, and region (Permendikbud Number 20 of 2016). This shows that learning is contextual. Based on the description above, literature material at the junior high school level contains various types of texts, in the form of poetry, prose, and drama.

The study of literature involving various disciplines shows that a multidisciplinary perspective helps readers to understand the use of literature and the influence of teaching literature on adolescents' minds, bodies, and emotions [8]. Adolescence according to Strauch is a time of extraordinary activity in the frontal lobe of the brain [8]. The teaching of literature may be the key to positive identity growth and development [8]. Bogdan studied the way literature has always been viewed by some as having a harmful influence on readers, especially young readers. In this case, young readers may more readily identify with characters and change behavior based on experiential narratives [8]. Literary works can produce emotions in readers, and some works have effects or impacts that trigger joy or sadness in readers [12]. This shows that it is important for every teacher to choose reading materials for students.

Teaching literature requires a variety of preparations, such as the formulation of goals and values, decisions about the types of texts chosen, techniques used to encourage student participation, applicable roles, criteria in evaluation, how to describe textual choices and curricular approaches to students, schools, parents, and oneself [13]. Young adult novels depict experiences and themes that are consistent with the thoughts and interests of early adolescents. Early adolescents are not so interested in complex

psychological character motivations, they are interested in exploring the world-reflected in their reading preference for story-based adventure, fantasy, mystery, or science fiction novels [13].

The main focus of socio-cultural teaching theory is not only on the teacher or the students, but also on the social activity or community where students acquire the various practices and tools that are part of literary learning. Student motivation and engagement with learning is no longer an individual matter, but a function of the quality of the activity or community created in the classroom. The transmission model of teaching literature focuses on conveying knowledge about literature to students. The student-centered model focuses on students' activities in response to literature related to their own interests and needs [13]. Multitext learning operates on two basic premises: first, using all texts, whether print (fiction and nonfiction), popular culture texts (magazines, television shows, graphic texts), or electronic texts (web searches, fan sites, blogs, wikis, and author pages). Second, using texts to help adolescents "read" texts critically from their own lives as adolescents in contemporary society [13]. To accommodate the differences of each student in learning activities, especially text selection, can consider aspects of reading ability and individual needs accommodation [13].

Imaginative literature can be important for children's future, with didactic messages as a foundation for children [14]. Adventure and historical themes animate most children [14]. A common concern of children's fiction is the growth of a child character towards adulthood or the significant steps taken towards independence [15]. Literature for children is rooted in didactic and pedagogic texts designed for learning to read and live according to moral codes, and in adult literature. Some texts written for adult readers, have appealed to and been taken over by children [15].

Hunt suggests that a book's quality is subjective, depending on each reader's expectations and what they get out of it. Tunnel & Jacobs themselves argue, a book can be said to be good when readers can respect the expertise of authors and illustrators who have created books that have value, there is respect for readers who are connected to books. A book is good when the reader feels and thinks along with it. Thomlinson & Lynch-Brown suggested that children's books should be interesting and relevant to children [7]. Hunt also emphasized that children's books are different from books for adults. They are written for different readers, different skills, different needs, different ways of reading [7].

Ecological literacy includes aspects of knowledge, affective tendency, behavior, and cognitive skills. In the knowledge aspect, students can explain general knowledge about the environment, such as how natural systems work and their relationship with social systems. In addition, social-political knowledge, which is an understanding of a political system's beliefs, ecological values from various cultures, and an understanding of cultural activities that have an influence on the environment in an ecological perspective. Another indicator is knowledge of environmental issues, knowledge of environmental issues. Another aspect is attitude tendency as the ability to reflect on environmental issues on an interpersonal basis. The behavioral aspect itself can be illustrated by the presence of additional determinants as a measure of behavior, responsible for the environment. Environmentally responsible behavior can take the form of response and active participation in solving environmental problems. Cognitive skills include skills in relation to environmental issues, such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating environmental issues based on evidence and personal values. Cognitive skills include the skills needed to select appropriate action strategies, evaluate, and implement plans [16]. Lenny, et al. [17] conducted research on the relationship between ecological literacy and the ability to solve environmental problems in schools. This study showed that the higher the ecological literacy, the better the ability to solve environmental problems of students. Therefore, schools need to conduct the Adiwiyata program to shape ecological literacy and the ability to solve environmental problems.

Diana, et al. [18] examined the relationship between environmental knowledge and the ability to solve environmental pollution problems in students of SMAN 6 Tangerang. There is a positive relationship between environmental knowledge and environmental pollution problem solving ability. Santoso, et al. [19] conducted an exploratory study of environmental literacy of junior high school students. The results of the study showed aspects of ecological knowledge by 8.71%, cognitive skills by 3.24%, environmentally conscious attitudes by 89.11%, and environmentally responsible behavior by 45.20%.

Based on the explanation above, choosing texts or reading materials for students requires various considerations, namely relevance for children. This includes aspects of reading ability and accommodation of individual needs. This is also in line with the opinion that the roots of texts for children are didactic and pedagogic texts. There is a content of moral values so that it has a positive impact on students as learning actors who utilize texts as a basis for learning literature.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative method with an analytic descriptive working mechanism. For data collection, the author utilizes note-taking, documentation, interview, and observation techniques. Mahsun [20] states that the note technique is a further technique that the author does when applying the listening method. Pohan [21] states that documentation review is a way of collecting information obtained through documents. Meanwhile, Taylor, et al. [22] revealed interviews as face-to-face activities between researchers and informants directed at the informants' perspectives. The list of questions was developed from various

indicators of ecological literacy [16]. Data sources were educators, namely G1N1 and G1N2 (SMP Negeri 1 Jatiwangi), G2N1 and G2N2 (SMP Negeri 2 Jatiwangi), G3N1 and G3N2 (SMP Negeri 3 Jatiwangi), and G4N1 and G4N2 (SMP Negeri 4 Jatiwangi). The student data sources consisted of 5 students from SMP Negeri 1 Jatiwangi, 5 students from SMP Negeri 2 Jatiwangi, 5 students from SMP Negeri 3 Jatiwangi, and 5 students from SMP Negeri 4 Jatiwangi. Thus, there were 8 educators and 20 students. The author also reviewed curriculum documents to find out the relevance of environmental-themed texts in Indonesian language learning, especially literature materials. The data analysis technique applied was the Miles and Huberman model. The Miles and Huberman model emphasizes qualitative data analysis activities that are carried out interactively and take place continuously until completion or until the data is saturated. The data analysis activities consist of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification [23].

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The curriculum contains attitudinal aspects, namely spiritual and social attitudes. This is reflected in the primary and secondary school curriculum. The attitudinal aspects in junior high school (SMP) can be in the form of an attitude of faith and devotion to God Almighty; character, honesty, and caring; responsible; a true lifelong learner; and physically and mentally healthy in accordance with the development of children in the family environment, school, and the surrounding natural environment, nation, country, and regional area. This shows that the attitude aspect has a relationship with the context of the surrounding natural environment. This illustrates the importance of maintaining harmonization between humans and non-humans.

In language learning, text has a very important role for teaching, including the knowledge aspect. Based on this, children's literature, such as the novel series *Mata di Tanah Melus*, has relevance for students at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels because it contains a description of environmental problems and the relationship between characters and nature in the Indonesian setting. Children's literature, a novel genre that contains images of nature with different settings and conflicts, relates to factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge terms in the context of the surrounding natural environment, especially at the junior high school level.

Literary texts can display aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes at the same time. The study of literature by utilizing various approaches provides an opportunity for readers to explore more deeply so that the message conveyed by the author can be accepted by readers. In this case, material related to environmental issues, human behavior towards the environment can be described through characterization of characters with the plot created by the author so that the law of causality is illustrated, such as being positive towards nature can provide positive things for humanity. In relation to the novel text or literary genre of fiction books in the form of novels, there are several basic competencies that correspond or allow for the utilization of children's literature in Indonesian language learning, especially literary material and literacy material. Especially in junior high school, there are basic competencies of fiction books as follows.

**TABLE 1: Basic Competencies of Fiction Book Literature in Grade VII**

Kompetensi Dasar
Buku Fiksi
3.15 Menemukan unsur-unsur dari buku fiksi dan nonfiksi yang dibaca.
4.15 Membuat peta pikiran/rangkuman alur tentang isi buku onfiksi/buku fiksi yang dibaca.
3.16 Menelaah hubungan unsur-unsur dalam buku fiksi dan nonfiksi.
4.16 Menyajikan tanggapan terhadap isi buku fiksi dan nonfiksi yang dibaca.

The basic competencies in table 1, contain material on fiction and nonfiction books with operational verbs to find elements, make mind maps / plot summaries, examine the relationship between elements, and present responses to the contents of fiction and nonfiction books read. Based on the type, fiction books can be poetry anthologies, short story anthologies, and novels. This shows that children's literature that illustrates ecological intelligence can be utilized in these basic competencies. Students can provide responses to natural problems and interactions between characters and nature so that they correspond to critical character.

To know concretely the answer to the utilization of children's literature, data is needed regarding the utilization of children's literature in fulfilling the basic competencies of literacy. The following are the results of interviews with students and educators from SMP Negeri 1 Jatiwangi, SMP Negeri 2 Jatiwangi, SMP Negeri 3 Jatiwangi, and SMP Negeri 4 Jatiwangi regarding students' ecological intelligence.

#### **Ecological Literacy of Junior High School Students in Majalengka Regency through Children's Literature Knowledge**

A number of students in junior high school can explain environmental problems or issues. For example, the problem of flooding caused by dumping garbage into the river, burning garbage. There are students who explain the factors that cause environmental

damage. In addition, some of them can describe the existence of policies towards the surrounding environment, but there is still a lack of literacy so that problems still occur, such as littering.

#### **Affective Tendency**

Students have been able to provide an emotive attitude towards natural problems, the lack of human awareness of the potential of nature and dependence on nature. Students also provide critical responses to the struggle for natural resources, as depicted in the novel by Okky Madasari, which corresponds to human behavior that only wants to make profits without paying attention to the impact of natural damage. In addition, three students were able to provide views as alternative solutions such as strengthening the enforcement of rules through laws and creating special waste disposal areas.

#### **Behavior**

One of the students gave his views on development that makes the environment unattractive, but he could not do much about it. The conversion of green land into factories is inevitable due to various interests and needs of society. The students are aware of their role by practicing small behaviors that have a good impact on nature, such as minimizing the use of plastics and disposable items, throwing garbage in its place, maintaining plants, and saving water and electricity.

#### **Cognitive Skills**

Students' cognitive skills are shown by providing arguments about the novel's attractiveness as well as the importance of protecting natural ecosystems. They considered the main story of the novel good because it can be an example and lesson as well as a reminder that humans need nature. In addition, three students gave a broad opinion by describing the existence of the novel character's point of view which was related to the environment so that it could motivate readers to care for the environment. Okky Madasari's novel also has elements of science and history that strengthen the meaning to make readers realize to care more about nature.

### **Educators' Perspectives on Ecological Literacy of Junior High School Students through Literary Works**

#### **Knowledge**

Texts containing environmental crises are very positive in understanding the importance of the environment to all student activities or activities. Students' enthusiasm also arises when given the stimulus of environmental crises that are contextual and close to the students' environment. Furthermore, the text needs to be presented with the concept of causality so that the environmental crisis is more meaningful and remembered by students. Although many students are happy with the environmental theme, it is difficult to capture the message so it is necessary to convey the essence that is easier to understand and needs to be supported by visualization or learning media. In addition, many teachers also direct critical response texts specifically about environmental impacts from all aspects.

#### **Affective Tendency**

Environmental awareness at SMPN 1 is still lacking and has not realized the importance of protecting the environment such as still throwing garbage in its place and the rampant use of plastic. This is indicated by the introduction of environmental hygiene habituation starting from class pickets which are still not optimal. Meanwhile, awareness of the environment is around 85% in SMPN 2 Jatiwangi due to the ongoing program on *adiwiyata*. Whereas in SMPN 3 Jatiwangi it was only 50% because there were still many who kept garbage under the table and did not care about the plants at school. The same thing was also found in SMPN 4 Jatiwangi which was still low, although punishment efforts were still being carried out for students who littered so that they were still less aware.

#### **Behaviour**

Behavior formation can be pursued with the implementation of contextual learning so as to clarify the pattern of human relations with nature imaged in the novel. This effort is very relevant to touch environmental awareness through appreciation of novel literary works. In addition, the content of historical aspects can increase knowledge and good behavior of characters that can be emulated by students. Thus, the novel can be used as a model to instill concern for the environment because it contains wisdom to maintain traditions and environmental ecosystems. However, it needs to be adjusted to the competencies in literature learning.

#### **Cognitive Skills**

Students' cognitive skills can be instilled through the novel because the content is appropriate for the age level of students. In addition, environmental issues in fictional works can be absorbed by students. The fictional work becomes a trigger to preserve the environment by linking natural disasters that occur around students due to human actions. The level of relevance is quite high, especially in the Jatiwangi area which began to face developments, especially factories that have the potential to damage the environment so that students can be more critical of this. In addition, students can also be fostered explicitly to love animals and stop logging or poaching as a form of concern for the ecosystem.

**TABLE 2. Relevance of Environmental Themed Literary Works for Basic Literacy Competencies**

Karya Sastra Bertema Lingkungan Relevan untuk Kompetensi Dasar Literasi	Tanggapan Pendidik				
	SMP 1	SMP 2	SMP 3	SMP 4	Total
<b>Relevan</b>	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	8 (100%)
<b>Tidak Relevan</b>					

One of the materials in the curriculum document for Indonesian language learning is literacy of fiction and nonfiction books. The material is found in grades VII, VIII, and IX. By understanding the opinions of the eight informants in Table 2, children's literature with environmental themes can be used in literature learning to fulfill the basic competencies of literacy in fiction books. Children's literature with environmental themes can also be utilized in school literacy movement activities. The school itself has a geulis tree that is used to foster interest in literacy. In addition to achieving basic competencies and improving literacy skills, students can find certain messages or values that can be applied in everyday life. Children's literature that contains ecological insights can support the adiwiyata program, which creates an environmentally cultured school.

Junior high school students must be introduced to the environment in order to love and preserve it. This can start from the home, school, and surrounding environment. The concept is also related to the adiwiyata program (G1N1-1). The same thing was also conveyed by other informants, the selection of environmental-themed texts is appropriate because it is relevant to the curriculum (G2N4-1). The age of junior high school students is an impressionable age, including influence in efforts to instill a caring attitude towards the environment. therefore, environmental-themed texts are relevant for students, especially at the junior high school level.

The presence of children's literature has received a positive response from educators. Here is one teacher's response to the novel series. *"Saya kira jelas sekali sangat mendukung sekali dan insyaallah nanti saya akan usulkan di sekolah ini kepada Bapak Kepala Sekolah untuk memperbanyak pengadaan buku-buku novel anak, bukan hanya cerita lebih kepada novel. Ya, mungkin kami sebagai guru bahasa Indonesia akan mencari rujukan novel apa saja yang wajib dibaca, yang ada di perpustakaan, yang ada pengadaan. (G4N7-6)".*

One of the problems in literacy activities at SMP Negeri 4 Jatiwangi is the availability of children's novels. Novels that describe the character of children's characters with environmental themes are still limited in number so it is expected to get attention. As a form of appreciation for the presence of children's literature, educators can submit proposals for the procurement of children's novels.

*"Ada di setiap tingkatan. Ada di tiga tingkatan di kelas VIII, XI, dan VII mengenai lingkungan hidup, kondisi sosial, dan keragaman budaya. Berarti cocok atau sesuai. (G3N5-11)".*

Children's literature can be used to fulfill basic competencies, both fiction and nonfiction texts. Literacy materials for fiction books are found in grades VII, VIII and IX. In addition, there is fantasy story text material that can also utilize children's literature. The fantasy story text material is in grade VII. In grade VIII, there is also review text material, students can be directed to review literary works from an ecological perspective. In grade IX, students can also utilize children's literature for critical response text material. Students are encouraged to criticize environmental issues in literary texts and relate them to real situations in the surrounding environment.

In addition to teachers, there were interviews with a number of students. Literary works that raise environmental or natural themes have relevance to everyday life because they contain certain lessons that can motivate readers. Readers can love the environment more and be willing to have a positive attitude towards nature (S3N8-5). This opinion is also supported by a resource person from SMP Negeri 2 Jatiwangi, namely literary works with environmental themes are relevant to students' daily lives. This is because natural problems are also found in the environment where they live (S2N10-5).

Literary works that feature nature/environmental issues are the right choice because they are related to problems that occur in real life (S1N4-6). Another interviewee also stated that literary works with nature issues can be a lesson for people who have committed acts that damage the environment, such as littering (S3N13-6). These literary works can be used to motivate readers to care more about nature by improving themselves, such as changing their littering habits (S2N7-6).

Regarding the pattern of interaction between humans and nature in a literary work, one of the interviewees explained that the analysis presents two characters, namely antagonists and protagonists in relation to nature. The characters depict human needs that can be fulfilled by nature in two different views. The attitude reflected in the protagonist character is to protect nature because of the awareness of this need. The antagonist commits acts of environmental pollution. This becomes interesting with an interesting way of writing, which also contains elements of history and science (S2N6-7). Another interviewee also explained that the

relationship between characters and nature can educate readers (S3N9-7). Children's literature can broaden readers' horizons (S1N2-8). A variety of settings can provide insight into the environment. Readers can learn about these places and the problems described (S4N4-8).

Educators also responded to children's literature and its relevance for increasing awareness and sensitivity to the environment. The following is a recapitulation table.

**TABLE 3: Responses: Children's Literature to Increase Awareness and Sensitivity to the Environment**

Tanggapan: Karya Sastra Anak untuk Menambah Kesadaran dan Kepekaan terhadap Lingkungan	Tanggapan Pendidik				Total
	SMP 1	SMP 2	SMP 3	SMP 4	
Dapat menambah kesadaran dan kepekaan.	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	8 (100%)
Tidak dapat menambah kesadaran dan kepekaan.					

Based on table 3, it is known that educators respond to children's literature to increase awareness and sensitivity to the environment. This corresponds to the condition of natural problems around the students' residence, namely Jatiwangi Subdistrict which has environmental changes and natural problems. Awareness of the impact of human actions on nature needs to be understood in an effort to reduce environmental problems. Literary works can be used as a medium for delivering ecological messages.

The results of document analysis and interviews with experts, educators, and students show that there is a need in the field related to the existence of children's novels to fulfill the basic competencies of literary texts, including literacy texts in fiction books. Environmental-themed texts can be utilized as teaching resources, both in grades VII, VIII, and IX. The utilization can be adjusted with certain presentations and techniques to encourage students to be fully and meaningfully involved in learning activities. The utilization of ecocritical research results in literature learning can be related to the selection of contextual learning models. Students can relate the issues and interactions of the characters in the novel to real situations, namely around where students live.

The mid-nineteenth century (1860s) is known as the golden age of children's literature in England, which was no longer always didactic, but favored fantasy literature that appealed to children's imagination in order to provide entertainment (Norton [9]). In Indonesia, in 1998, the focus was still on teaching. By understanding this, childhood is a time to fill and a time to invest, for example in the context of instilling morals and knowledge because children are considered to be plain paper, as stated by Locke. The underlying theory of knowledge to recognize children's cognitive, social, and moral development is necessary to understand children, their behavior, and their needs. This includes assessing, selecting, and appreciating literary works written and given to them. Such theories can be Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, Erikson's psychosocial development, and Lawrence's theory of moral value development [9].

The variety of children's literature in terms of theme has many varieties because the variety is related to the variety of life problems themselves. In addition, in terms of the purpose of writing, children's literature has various purposes, such as education, teaching, character, environment, culture, independent children, and others [9]. The trilogy of novels *Mata di Tanah Melus* by Okky Madasari-as one of the series of children's novels-alone displays aspects of education, culture, environment, and independence. As for this research, the author focuses on environmental themes with the aim of writing related to ecological awareness.

Bernadetta [24] conducted green literature research on children's literature learning with the subject of XII grade high school students as an alternative to the ecological movement in poetry. One of the principles used is the basic concept of cognitive psychology education and constructivism which encourages students to actively construct their own knowledge gained through their own experiences. The model used is the environmental learning model, namely the learning materials developed provide great opportunities for students to be active and independent so that linguistic competence, literature, and can contribute to increasing student awareness and participation in environmental conservation.

The results of the interviews showed a positive response from both teachers and students regarding the utilization of children's literature in an effort to explore the ecological awareness of junior high school students. The utilization can also be done by choosing the right technique or style because the implementation in the field is faced with the fact of students' lack of interest in reading so that they have limitations to understand the contents of a text. Afry [25] conducted ecocritical research on recent Indonesian short stories which showed that the style or way/technique of storytelling and moral messages raised in several short stories with environmental themes are increasingly varied. Literary works can contribute to saving the environment as well as the literary works themselves.

Ecocritical research on the short story "Will Our House Sink" by Anas S. Malo by focusing on student responses shows that literary works can be used to instill the value of environmental education. Students can understand their responsibility through the behavior of the characters in literary works [26]. In addition, ecocritical research on the short story "Daring" using student responses

shows that literary works are relevant to be used as teaching materials for students of Indonesian language and literature education [27]. Meanwhile, based on the results of interviews with a number of teachers in Majalengka, especially at the junior high school level, it is known that there is a positive response regarding the utilization of children's literature with ecological literacy. The relevance of environmental-themed literary works is known through the responses of the eight interviewees, such as being able to be used as teaching resources or student reading materials. Understanding and applying ecological values need to be pursued in order to face challenges in the era of technology and information. Therefore, students can utilize children's literature texts that review environmental crises. This is mainly because where students live, there are problems related to environmental awareness. Ecological literacy is an effort to instill an attitude of responsibility towards nature.

Children's literature can support the fulfillment of the basic competencies of literary texts, especially novels. Literary works that describe environmental or natural problems can be utilized in literature learning, especially in fulfilling the basic competencies of literacy, both in grades VII, VIII, and IX. The description of the pattern of the relationship between humans and nature in children's literature allows it to be used as a model in instilling an attitude of environmental care. The use of children's literature is relevant to dealing with environmental/ecological crises, especially those occurring in Majalengka. Students may be motivated to recognize the problems around them after reading children's literature. The diversity of settings presented in literary works has relevance for the fulfillment of indicators of environmental care attitudes in accordance with the attitudinal aspects contained in the graduate competency standards.

Literary works can be utilized to fulfill the basic competencies of literacy. The ecological principles or ethics depicted in the literary works correspond to the age development of students, especially for students in grade IX. The utilization of literary works is in line with the development of children's cognition, namely related to educational values and environmental care characters. The results of the study also have relevance to answer the challenges in the 21st century, namely critical thinking, creative and innovative, collaborative, and communicative. Abbas [28] examined ecological literacy and the wisdom of Aboriginal people to maintain the symbiotic mutualism between humans and nature reflected in nonfiction books. Australian Aboriginal people have a lot of knowledge about ecoliteracy that they apply in their daily lives to maintain the sustainability of the ecosystem. In addition, they also have local wisdom that they believe will bring goodness to their lives in terms of protecting the natural environment. Another study conducted research on ecological literacy and critical thinking skills in university students [18]. The results showed a moderate level of ecological literacy, while creative thinking skills were in the good category. There is a positive relationship between ecological literacy and critical thinking skills.

Nurhidayah Kurniasih [29] shows that literary works not only reveal natural problems, but also present various solutions in dealing with these conditions, such as in the short story "Palak" which offers solutions from the spiritual side by praying istiqah and the action side by making fire shields and reducing walking and outdoor activities. The short story "Tambun" provides awareness to keep the river environment clean. The short story "Tulak Bala" contains a message to realize the importance of having a sense of care for the environment by holding a ceremony using red and white porridge, praying hajat, parading books and improving social environmental conditions. The role of the physical setting depicts nature in Hatmiati's short stories as a person whose existence must be respected in order for life to continue in harmony. Such messages relate to the function of literature to educate readers and entertain them. In this case, literary works are used to present natural issues that are packaged seriously and interestingly so that they can be accepted by readers.

Ecological literacy through children's literature received positive responses, both from experts, educators/teachers, and students in grades VII, VIII, and IX. In addition, the selection of environmental themes is relevant to the natural conditions that occur, especially in Indonesia and around where students live, namely Majalengka Regency, Jatiwangi District. There were floods and landslides that caused the speakers to believe that environmental-themed texts are relevant to be presented in Indonesian language learning, especially literature learning. Literary texts can be used to internalize ecological values to their readers.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Ecological literacy of junior high school students through children's literature can be done in literature learning. This is because there are learning outcomes of literature material. Based on the results of document analysis and interviews with experts, educators, and students, students' ecological literacy can be taught through children's literature, namely in literary learning of literacy material for fiction books and fantasy story texts. The results show that students can describe aspects of knowledge about environmental issues and their relationship with social systems. In addition, students can reflect on environmental issues and describe aspects of behavior towards nature. Cognitive skills that appear in students are the ability to analyze and evaluate environmental issues accompanied by problem solving. However, there are still some students who have not been able to bring up skills in analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating environmental issues. Based on these results, children's literature in schools with ecological themes can instill ecological literacy skills as well as a medium for campaigning for environmental issues.



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