INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND DISASTER RESILIENCE FOR CHILDREN: READING *SMONG* IN SELECTED LITERACY CLOUD SHORT STORIES

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Abstract	Article Information
This study explores the integration of indigenous knowledge into children's literature as a means of promoting disaster resilience among young readers. Through the lens of ecocriticism and descriptive qualitative research methodology, the study investigates the portrayal of smong, *a form of indigenous knowledge from the Simeulue region of Indonesia, in two selected Literacy Cloud short stories: "Tsunami" by Yovita Siswanti and "Smong, the Dragon" by Maya Lestari. The analysis reveals how these stories effectively incorporate smong as a repository of local wisdom and resilience lessons in the face of natural disasters. Encouraging initiatives to incorporate more themes of indigenous knowledge into children's literature is crucial for promoting cultural preservation. In addition, integrating indigenous knowledge—particularly those with content related to disaster resilience—is valuable to empower children in disaster-prone areas. Overall, the study highlights the potential of children's literature and digital platforms for education in fostering a harmonious relationship between humanity and the natural world amidst the challenges of environmental sustainability and possibilities of natural disasters.*	

INTRODUCTION

Indigenous knowledge is rich and diverse, found in various places around the world. Indigenous knowledge is shared both formally and informally within family groups and broader communities through social interactions, storytelling, ceremonies, and daily practices. This knowledge encompasses stories that tell of human history, astronomical insights and ways of measuring time, symbolic forms of expression, agricultural methods, hunting

and gathering expertise, deep knowledge of local environments, and the creation of specific tools and technologies—such as making flint tools, processing animal hides, crafting pottery, and preparing herbal medicines. (Bruchac, 2014) For centuries, indigenous communities have developed local practices, beliefs, and skills in response to their environments. As a reaction to the challenges found in the local environment, the knowledge often emphasizes on the sustainability and harmony with the nature. (Gorjestani, 2001) It also functions as cultural identity for the indigenous population. Indigenous knowledge is an integral part of its communities; and considering this, the effort to preserve and integrate it into broader conversations has become increasingly important.

As mentioned, indigenous knowledge largely promotes the idea of sustainability and living in harmony with nature, including to provide perspectives on resilience. (Bohensky & Maru, 2011) Indigenous communities own a deep ecological knowledge about their natural environment. They understand the dynamics of their natural surroundings, climate patterns, natural hazards and warnings—all that needed to further inform them to form their sustainability strategies. When considering the resilience of indigenous communities, this knowledge encompasses various dimensions; including social, artistic, ecological, and spiritual aspects. Indeed, indigenous knowledge serves as strategies for community resilience in diverse ways (Bruchac, 2014), one of which is disaster resilience. From insightful approaches to practical strategies, indigenous knowledge manifests differently within local communities; encompassing warning systems, traditional ecological knowledge, and more. As a form of identity and cultural preservation, the indigenous knowledge can appear in different forms such as traditional practices, stories, rituals, oral traditions, songs, and others.

These days, traditional knowledge is facing decline due to modern science and globalization. In many ways, indigenous knowledge is under threat. However, simultaneously, due to its invaluable contributions to sustainable development efforts, there is a serious call to revitalize indigenous knowledge. Some contributions of indigenous knowledge to community resilience include its adaptability in assisting the community during disasters and its role in informing the community's recovery process from the negative and devastating impacts of disasters. (Chowdhoree, 2019) In addition, Indigenous knowledge systems play a crucial role in enhancing disaster resilience due to several key factors: (a) they can be shared and adapted across different communities; (b) they foster participation and empower communities impacted by disasters; (c) they enhance the tailoring of interventions to specific local contexts; and (d) they extend beyond the scope of formal education concerning environmental hazards. (Mavhura, Manyena, & Collins, 2013) The revitalization process involves its integration into modern knowledge and practices, making it possible to preserve and promote its wisdom for future generations. It is indeed a challenge and also an opportunity to acknowledge local wisdoms into modern sustainability strategies to disaster resilience efforts.

This paper highlights indigenous knowledge from Indonesia, specifically from the Simeulue region within the Aceh province on the island of Sumatra. It discusses how this indigenous knowledge has been utilized for detecting and responding to natural disasters. The geographical context of this area has given birth to a local knowledge named *smong*, a

term used by the indigenous community to detect and respond to tsunamis by relying on the observation of their natural surroundings. As a form of indigenous knowledge, *smong* also originated from the locals' understanding of their natural surroundings, hazards and warnings. By the community, *smong* has been transmitted for generations through songs, short poems, lullabies and stories. (Suciani, Islami, Zainal, Sofiyan, & Bukhari, 2018) Simeulue region in Aceh is located in a coastal location and is also susceptible to tsunamis due to the region's proximity to the tectonic plate boundaries. Back in the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, *smong* has been recognized as the story that has protected the people (Gadeng, Maryani, & Rohmat, 2018); further proving just how local perceptions has shaped the indigenous knowledge and the development of disaster warning systems.

This paper aims to explore the integration of *smong* into contemporary and digital repository. As a warning system for the people of Simeulue, *smong* possesses a cultural and social significance for the community. Not only does it reflect their indigenous knowledge, it also shows the locals' effort of resilience and solidarity in the face of natural disaster. As mentioned previously as well, integration of local wisdom into modern knowledge and practices should make it possible to preserve and promote its insight for future generations.

For younger generations, particularly children, disaster resilience education is crucial. Children are a vulnerable group when disasters strike, so it is essential to prepare them and enhance adaptability in the face of mishaps. (Gangi & Barowsky, 2009) Various efforts should be made to integrate this wisdom into modern knowledge and educate children accordingly. One effective approach is by utilizing literary works as a tool to promote disaster resilience. Time and time again, stories have proven to be an effective media to transfer knowledge to children. (O'Sullivan, 2004) In this context, educating children about disaster resilience through stories enables them to cultivate vigilance and empathy simultaneously. These could involve enhancing children's comprehension of natural hazards, educating them about risk awareness and mitigation techniques, cultivating empathy towards communities affected by disasters, and encouraging proactive preparedness actions.

The objective of this paper is to examine the portrayal of *smong* in selected short stories published by Literacy Cloud. Literacy Cloud is a digital platform, or website, that publishes original and high-quality short stories for children. These short stories are categorized based on the young readers' age groups and are accessible for free. Among the existing short stories on the aforementioned platform, two stories specifically depict *smong*. These stories not only incorporate *smong* into the narrative, but they also align with the theme of disaster resilience in indigenous knowledge. One of the short stories is *"Itam dan U"* by Yovita Siswanti, titled "Tsunami" in English. The other one is *"Smong, si Raksasa Laut"* by Maya Lestari, titled "Smong, the Dragon" in English. This paper is expected to contribute to the dialogue of indigenous knowledge, disaster resilience and cultural representation specifically in children's literature. The portrayal of local wisdom in the short stories is also expected to contribute to the broader discussions of environmental consciousness, community-based responses to disasters, and the transmission of traditional knowledge through storytelling.

In analyzing the intricate representation of the natural environment, culture and literature, this paper uses ecocriticism perspective to examine the intersection between nature, culture and literature. In addition, this paper also focuses on ow cultural narratives help to shape the local knowledge about the environment and become the strategy of adaptation in the face of environmental challenges like natural disaster. More importantly, as the analysis focuses on a child-friendly material, the discussion is expected to empower and promote the safety and well being for children in disaster-prone areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ecocriticism and Culture

Within the study of literature, ecocriticism is used for the investigation of the natural environment and its connection with human and culture. Ecocriticism starts with the idea that literature and culture influence the natural environment, and they also are influenced by the natural environment. (Glotfelty, 1996) Ecocriticism, when applied to the examination of literature and culture, delves into how the analysis contributes to ecological understanding, environmental ethics, awareness of natural conservation, and related principles. (Dewi, 2016) Additionally, ecocriticism encourages its practitioners to adopt interdisciplinary approaches, particularly because literature inherently involves connections between various elements. Ecocriticism aims to broaden the understanding of these connections within both human and non-human contexts. (Love, 2003)

In its practice, ecocriticism seeks to explore how humanity and the natural world are interconnected. It proposes a mutually beneficial relationship between the two domains. Humans and their physical environment are linked and reliant to one another. The fundamental objective is to foster a harmonious and non-oppressive relationship between humanity and nature. In its endeavor to cultivate a more favorable relationship between the two domains, ecocriticism also investigates the role of traditional cultures in actively preserving the natural environment. It suggests that by incorporating local knowledge and values, humans can effectively pursue their primary environmental objective, which is to safeguard the future of the planet. (Endraswara, 2016)

At its core, ecocriticism emphasizes on the connection between environmental concerns and cultural practices, beliefs, identities and representations. While our perception of the world is influenced by culture and shaped by human interpretation, it is important to recognize that culture is ultimately rooted in nature. Human culture is just one form of culture among many that exist within the natural world. (Feder, 2014) Throughout history, nature has often been misappropriated as a tool for ideology and as a means of exerting power and control—such as in justifying perceived "natural" hierarchies based on gender, class, race, ethnicity, and more. This underscores the importance of thoroughly examining the significance and potential interpretations of the concept of 'nature' within cultural contexts, using informed and nuanced approaches. (Gersdorf & Mayer, 2006) Ultimately, such endeavors

can pave the way for a more sustainable and equitable future for all; especially for the indigenous communities—places where traditional knowledge and perspective about the nature comes from.

As previously mentioned, including local perspective has become one of the central concerns in the study of the nature. Different cultures and literary traditions represent nature, landscapes and their ecosystems differently—giving an endless potential of development for ecocritical frameworks. Ecocriticism is expected to foster dialogue between diverse cultural perspectives, fosters empathy, and promotes mutual understanding in environmental discourses. From this viewpoint, it's evident that ecocriticism must not solely focus on the symbolic representations of nature or their ethical and social implications; (Hoving, 2017) it also needs to delve into the material realities and ecological impacts associated with human interactions with the natural world.

Ecocriticism works as a vital framework to explore the relationship between humanity and the natural world. It delves into the link between literature, culture and the physical environment. At the practice, it sheds light on the ways in which human societies shape and are shaped by the nature. It embraces diverse cultural perspectives by the incorporation of indigenous knowledge, for such wisdom are oftentimes the direct reaction to the local environment. It is through the interdisciplinary lens of ecocriticism that the profound interconnectedness of all life on Earth can be truly appreciated.

On Children's Literature, Nature, and Indigenous Knowledge Preservation

In the examination of the connections among culture, literature, and the natural world, the focus is now shifted to the distinct realm of children's literature. In various shapes and forms, children's literature has explored different representation of nature, ecology and environmental themes. This fact is even more apparent in the last decade, considering the scarcity of children's literature containing "nature", despite the increasing urgency to preserve it. (Latumeten & Pelupessy, 2022, p. 232) The call for children's books to depict the natural landscapes, wildlife, and ecosystems is expected to foster environmental awareness and appreciation for the natural world.

Children's literature is one of the mediums that can be utilized by the younger generation to develop cognitively, socially, and morally. Therefore, the process of interaction between children and the works they read should also ideally serve as a means of educating them. (Sarumpaet, 2010) To incorporate ecocriticism into the discussion, the teaching of literature or the content of literary texts for children should serve as a means of imparting values that encourage a more empathetic perspective towards all living beings in the natural world. (Garrard, 2012) Certainly, the ability to develop sensitivity towards various issues, including environmental issues, will be greatly supported by the fact that childhood is a time when children have the need to acquire, nurture, and develop various aspects of their lives. (Nurgiyantoro, 2004)

A shift towards a friendlier and more inclusive perspective on the natural world is imperative. Recognizing the significance of cultural diversity and representation, particularly in relation to nature, is crucial. (Flegar & Miskec, 2024) This includes exploring the portrayal

of indigenous knowledge and traditional environmental practices in children's literature. By adopting a more inclusive approach, children's literature can foster a deeper understanding of diverse cultures, including the readers' own, while also promoting respect and appreciation for both culture and the natural world in all its diversity. It is essential for children's literature to inspire young readers to take action, effect positive change, and contribute to environmental conservation and the preservation of indigenous knowledge.

Studies on Literacy Cloud Short Stories

In Indonesia, Literacy Cloud—also known as Room to Read—works with the support of IKEA foundation in the national literacy movement of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Empowering hundreds of local writers and illustrators in Indonesia, they have created hundreds of thousands of culturally-relevant children's books to be distributed to schools across the country. (Room to Read, n.d.) Their stories are also available to be read for free online from their site roomtoread.org.

In recent years, some research has been conducted on stories provided by Literacy Cloud to promote free access to literacy for children. These studies have highlighted the significant role that Literacy Cloud plays in enhancing educational opportunities, particularly in underprivileged communities where access to physical books and learning materials is limited. One study was specifically conducted with sixth-grade students at State Elementary School No. 22 Dauh Puri in Indonesia. It focused on observing students' reading motivation and comprehension with the help of stories provided by Literacy Cloud. By using interesting and culturally relevant stories for children, this research has shown a significant increase in the levels of reading motivation and comprehension. Implemented over about four months, the use of Literacy Cloud stories increased students' reading motivation and comprehension by approximately 81.74%. (Suba, 2022)

In an almost similar type of study, another research has been done to fourth-grade students, specifically in introducing Literacy Cloud as an educational media to increase students' reading motivation and comprehension. The choice to integrate this digital platform into classroom learning is forward-thinking and reflects an understanding of the need for digital literacy in contemporary education. The outcomes are also quite impressive, with a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension and an overwhelming majority able to achieve the set learning objectives. The mention of a 90% success rate among students indicates a high level of efficacy for the methods employed. Additionally, the benefits extended to teachers, through easily accessible and engaging teaching materials, and to students, through enhanced reading interest and diversity of reading materials, underscore the multi-faceted success of this initiative. (Ernawati, et al., 2022)

Focusing on the Literacy Cloud as a case study for the harmonization of the use of digital media to enhance digital literacy, another study has also shown the platform's significance as a learning resource that offers a variety of benefits. Literacy Cloud is portrayed as an innovative tool for English learning, offering flexibility, a wide selection of learning materials, and engaging reading resources. The discussion claims that this platform is presented as a superior alternative to traditional teaching media, aligning with the needs of 21st-century

education and serving as a valuable resource for students, particularly in learning English. (Rifai, 2023)

A study on character education through digital children's stories in Literacy Cloud presents an innovative approach to embedding character values in educational media for children. The research identified nine key character values—friendliness, social care, rewarding achievements, hard work, independence, creativity, curiosity, responsibility, and honesty—within digitally presented stories. These findings highlight the potential of digital stories as effective mediums for character education, offering a diverse and engaging platform for instilling essential moral values in young learners. The study suggests that Literacy Cloud can serve as a valuable resource for character education, emphasizing the need for further research to explore the effectiveness of digital story media in shaping children's character development. (Sayekti, Sujarwo, & Chang, 2022)

This paper differs from the existing studies on Literacy Cloud for it delves specifically into the integration of *smong* into the short stories. Serving as a warning system for the people of Simeulue, *smong* holds profound cultural and social significance within the community. Beyond its function as a mere warning mechanism, *smong* embodies the indigenous knowledge of the locals and highlights their resilience and solidarity in coping with natural disasters. Moreover, the integration of this local wisdom into modern knowledge and practices offers an opportunity to preserve and propagate its invaluable insights for future generations. This exploration not only sheds light on the historical and cultural significance of *smong* but also underscores its relevance in the modern era.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive qualitative research, focuses on a close reading of two selected children's short stories published online by Literacy Cloud. The selected stories are *"Itam dan U"* by Yovita Siswanti (titled "Tsunami" in English) and *"Smong, si Raksasa Laut"* by Maya Lestari (titled "Smong, the Dragon" in English). These stories are selected because they are not only incorporate the Simeuleue's indigenous knowledge *smong* into the narrative, but they also parallel with the theme of disaster resilience for a specific local community. In addition to the descriptive qualitative approach adopted in this study, ecocriticism serves as a guiding framework to explore the intricate connection between nature, culture, and literature within the short stories. Ecocriticism, as an interdisciplinary field, allows for a nuanced analysis of how the representation of nature in literature reflects and shapes cultural attitudes, values, and perceptions. Furthermore, ecocriticism enables the analysis to delve into the portrayal of *smong* as a manifestation of indigenous ecological knowledge and its role in fostering resilience and sustainability within the local Simeulue community.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

For the people of Simeulue, *smong* is a concept that is passed down from one generation to another through oral tradition. Dating back to the tsunami and earthquake in the

region in 1907, the story of *smong* has become a treasured wisdom for the community. (Karokaro, 2014) One of the most well-known verses about *smong* sounds goes:

> *Enggel mon sao curito* (Listen to a tale unfold)
> *Inang maso semonan* (From times of old)
> *Manoknop sao fano* (A village engulfed by the sea)
> *Uwi lah da sesewan* (That is how the story goes, you see)
> *Unen ne alek linon* (It began with a mighty quake)
> *Fesang bakat ne mali* (Followed by waves that did shake)
> *Manoknop sao hampong* (Engulfing the land, so vast)
> *Tibo-tibo mawi* (Suddenly, all was submerged, so fast)
> *Anga linon ne mali* (When the quake is strong)
> *Uwek suruik sahuli* (Followed by receding waters)
> *Maheya mihawali* (Go and find quickly)
> *Fano me singa tenggi* (Seek higher ground, with speed)
> *Ede smong kahanne* (That is *smong*, they say)
> *Turiang da nenekta* (Our ancestors' history at play)
> *Miredem teher ere* (Remember this, heed it well)
> *Pesan dan navi da* (Their message and advice to tell)

In the Simeulue community, the term *smong* holds deep cultural significance to describe the phenomena of tsunamis. Embedded within the rich tapestry of Simeulue's indigenous culture, *smong* is transmitted across generations through an array of oral traditions such as songs, short poems, lullabies, and stories. Remarkably, during the devastating earthquake and tsunami that struck Aceh on December 26, 2004, Simeulue, with its population of approximately 86,735, witnessed a miraculously low casualty figure of only seven people. (Suciani, Islami, Zainal, Sofiyan, & Bukhari, 2018) This is largely attributed to the widespread understanding and prompt response to the smong warning, leading to a swift and massive evacuation of the coastal areas.

Research highlights how *smong* serves as a traditional early warning system, effectively implemented through cultural practices like *manafi-nafi* (folklore), *mananga-nanga* (lullabies), and *nandong* (humming). (Gadeng, Maryani, & Rohmat, 2018) Smong story has a crucial role in disseminating simple yet lifesaving tsunami risk messages, enabling the Simeulue community to make informed decisions, take appropriate actions, and save countless lives during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The narrative encapsulates not only direct warnings about the imminent risk but also conveys broader messages regarding community attitudes, responses, and strategies for risk management, thereby significantly enhancing community preparedness and resilience to disasters. (Rahman & Munadi, 2019)

In the aftermath of the tsunami, the people of Simeulue expressed their gratitude for the national reconstruction efforts and harbored a profound desire to elevate *smong* from a local to a national level of recognition. They envisaged *smong* as a gift to the Indonesian nation, aiming to share this invaluable wisdom and integrate it into the broader fabric of Indonesia's disaster preparedness and resilience culture. (Rahman, Sakurai, Sutton, Syahbandir, & Nofriadi, 2022) Through this act of sharing, the Simeulue community seeks

not only to honor their heritage but also to contribute a vital component to the national dialogue on disaster awareness and response.

Diving in to the short story "Tsunami" by Yovita Siswati (2021)—this story narrates the tale of Itam, a child character who loses his family, home, and best friend Micel in a tsunami. He becomes one of the survivors due to a warning from an elderly fisherman and by climbing a tall coconut tree. As he awaits his family with other survivors, Itam learns to accept help from others and they collectively navigate their grief over losing family members as a supportive community.

In the short story, it is Cik Lam, the elderly fisherman who first sings the lyrics about *smong*. As he does so, suddenly an earthquake happens and soon, all the natural signs from the verse can be seen.

> *"Ede smong kahane, turiang da nenekta,"* sang the old fisherman Cik Lam.
> … "This song is important," Cik Lam began, but before he could explain, the Earth started shaking, hard.
> … Suddenly, the sea receded from the shore, leaving many fish on the beach. There were dozens of villagers nearby, and they rushed toward the fish. "We're going to feast!" they cried.
> "That's SMONG! Smoooong! We have to run!" Cik Lam screamed, but the people just laughed and ignored him. (Siswati, 2021, pp. 5-6)

As Itam slowly navigates through his grief, he also soon learns about how Cik Lam knows about *smong*. The old fisherman then tells Itam about how the knowledge of *smong* has been familiar to the people of Simeulue, his village, for almost a hundred years.

Picture 1. Illustration of Cik Lam's story of *smong*

Cik Lam seemed pleased to hear Itam's question. "It's about a big disaster that occurred almost one hundred years ago on Simeulue Island, where my family lived. Here is the story."
…"Since then, our parents have always warned us: when a strong earthquake is followed by receding sea water, we must run to higher ground as fast as we can." (Siswati, 2021, pp. 20-24)

Cik Lam also mentions how the knowledge about *smong* needs to be passed down and how it should function as an alert for the community. He is reminded of the time when he lost his mother, grandfather, uncle, aunt, and some of his cousins to the disaster—creating a sense of similarity of experience for Itam. (Siswati, 2021, p. 26) The knowledge about *smong* works not only as a disaster warning, but also as an alert for the community; this knowledge is to be disseminated so that more people could be rescued if similar incidents were to occur.

As the narrative continues, the story focuses more on how Itam and the people around him, those who survived the tsunami, move on with their lives. They learn to help each other, and Itam, in particular, learns to accept help. Though they have lost people and homes because of the disaster, they now have renewed hope in their community. As for Itam, together with Cik Lam at the end, they continue living, going fishing, and singing the lyrics about smong, clearly showing that they will pass down this wisdom for generations to come.

Picture 2. Itam and Cik Lam sing about *smong*
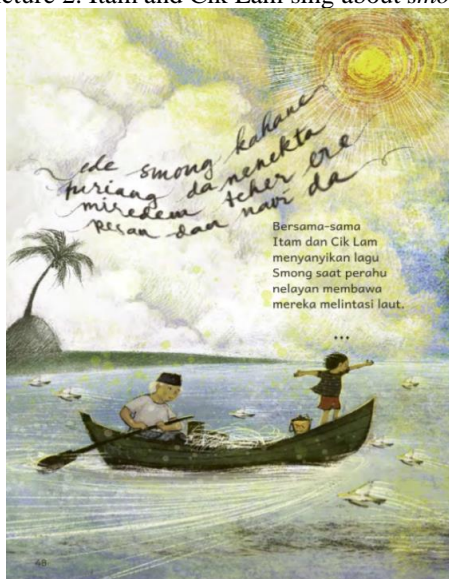
Together, Itam and Cik Lam sang the Smong song as the fisherman's boat carried them across the sea. (Siswati, 2021, p. 25)

Meanwhile, the short story "Smong, the Dragon" by Maya Lestari (2023) takes a different approach to the portrayal of *smong*. The story tells of Smong the Dragon who awakens from the seabed. As he emerges, he creates such a massive wave that it shocks the entire

village, prompting them to flee to higher ground, the hill. The main character, Banta, confronts Smong with the assistance of the Big Eagle and succeeds in returning the mighty being to its slumber.

In this story, even though Smong is manifested in the form of a dragon, readers can still clearly discern the portrayal of its natural signs. The text simply mentions that it is first signaled by the earthquake and then by the receding sea water.

Picture 3. Natural signs of *smong* in "Smong, the Dragon"

Suddenly, everything starts to shake. EARTHQUAKE!
The water recedes. Smong the Dragon has woken up!
A tsunami is coming! Everyone must run up the hill as fast as they can.
(Lestari, 2023, pp. 4-7)

As the story progresses and Smong the Dragon becomes calmer, with the huge waves slowly disappearing, it also serves as an alert for the readers. This signifies the vigilance of the community and the wisdom passed down that just because *smong* is calm now, it does not mean it will not return someday. Therefore, everyone should remain cautious and prepared. It emphasizes disaster awareness and the importance of passing it down to the next generation.

Picture 4. Community alert of *smong* message in "Smong, the Dragon"

Smong starts to calm down. The big waves slowly disappear.

Big Eagle reminds Banta to be careful. The earth might shake again. (Lestari, 2023, pp. 22-25)

Similar to "Tsunami," "Smong, the Dragon" also concludes with the community coming together to rebuild their lives after the disaster. Despite facing challenges, they maintain a sense of hope while remaining watchful. The significance of the knowledge about *smong* is evident throughout, enhancing their awareness and resilience in the face of future disasters.

Picture 5. The community working hand in hand after the disaster
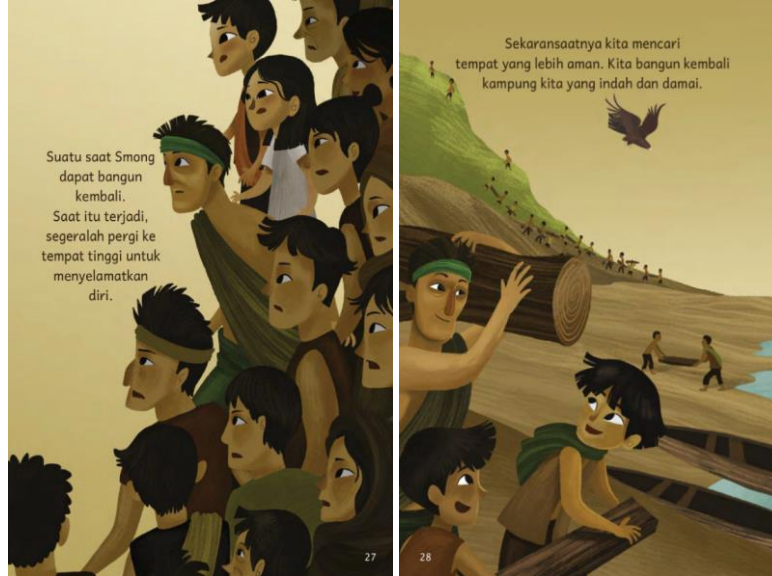
Banta tells the village that one day Smong may wake up again. They should rebuild in a higher place to keep everyone safe. Together, they can do it. (Siswati, 2021, pp. 27-28)

From the two stories, it is obvious that the concept of *smong* is deeply ingrained in the culture of Simeulue and is passed down through oral tradition from one generation to another. Originating from the devastating tsunami and earthquake from the past, the verses about this natural disaster hold a cherished place in the community's collective memory, serving as a warning system and a repository of ancestral wisdom. It evokes the community's historical resilience in the face of natural disasters and emphasize the importance of heeding ancestral advice for survival.

The stories of "Tsunami" and "Smong, the Dragon" should definitely serve as powerful contributions to children's understanding of natural disasters and the importance of preparedness in the face of disaster. In "Tsunami", children are exposed to the traumatic experience of Itam as he struggles through the loss of his home and family members as the aftermath of the disaster. The chaos and devastation of that are caused by the natural disaster show the readers the urgency of being prepared and understanding how to respond in the face of similar situations. Similarly, "Smong, the Dragon" takes the approach of introducing *smong*

as a mythical creature—yet still emphasizes the same message: to always be alert of the natural signs and to anticipate the potential danger of natural disasters. Both stories provide children with valuable knowledge about natural catastrophes in a way that is accessible and age-appropriate. The stories empower children to understand the importance of being informed in the face of emergencies.

The inclusion of cultural representation in children's short stories like "Tsunami" and "Smong, the Dragon" plays a crucial role in communicating wisdom, particularly indigenous knowledge, to young readers. These stories should serve as important vehicles for preserving and sharing cultural heritage. In "Tsunami," the incorporation of *smong*, a traditional warning system used by the people of Simeulue, reflects the deep-rooted cultural knowledge of the community. Through the character of Cik Lam and his recitation of the *smong* lyrics, readers are exposed to the oral traditions and folklore passed down through generations. This representation not only educates children about the specific cultural practices of the Simeulue people but also fosters an appreciation for the diversity of cultures and traditions around the world. Similarly, in "Smong, the Dragon," the portrayal of *smong* as a mythical creature draws upon indigenous beliefs and legends, enriching the narrative with cultural significance. The author preserves and celebrates the cultural heritage of the local community while simultaneously imparting valuable lessons about disaster preparedness. Therefore, the value of cultural representation in these lworks extends beyond mere storytelling; it serves as a means of empowerment and identity affirmation for indigenous communities.

Incorporating indigenous knowledge to stories, especially to those stories for children presents a great opportunity. For instance, in the case of presenting local wisdom like *smong*, stories can function as a way of knowledge transfer from the previous generations in terms of ways to respond to natural disasters. By including indigenous perspectives on disaster resilience, such as traditional warning systems like *smong*, stories can provide valuable insights into alternative approaches to mitigating and responding to natural disasters. This not only enriches children's understanding of different cultures but also promotes cross-cultural learning and appreciation. Through immersive storytelling, children can develop a deeper appreciation for the experiences and challenges faced by indigenous communities living in disaster-prone areas. This empathy-building aspect is crucial for nurturing a sense of solidarity and collective responsibility toward vulnerable populations. Ultimately, this contributes to the creation of a more inclusive and compassionate society. By authentically representing indigenous perspectives on disaster resilience, stories have the potential to empower young readers with valuable insights and inspire positive action toward building more resilient and compassionate communities.

CONCLUSION

Incorporating indigenous knowledge into children's literature offers profound insight into the complex relationship between culture, nature, and humanity. Through the lens of ecocriticism and descriptive qualitative research methodology, this study investigates the portrayal of *smong* in two selected Literacy Cloud short stories, entitled "Tsunami" and "Smong, the

Dragon". Both stories effectively include *smong* as indigenous knowledge, serving as a repository of local wisdom and lessons of resilience in the face of natural disasters. These short stories present the possibility of effectively integrating indigenous knowledge, particularly those with content related to disaster resilience, to empower children in disaster-prone areas and foster empathy for communities going through the aftermath of disasters. Encouraging initiatives to integrate more themes like these is crucial, as they can demonstrate the potential of children's literature to contribute to cultural preservation. In conclusion, the integration of indigenous knowledge into children's literature, coupled with the utilization of digital platforms for education, presents a promising avenue for promoting environmental awareness, cultural diversity, and resilience among young readers. As we navigate the challenges of environmental sustainability and cultural preservation in the 21st century, initiatives like Literacy Cloud's and studies like this one contribute to fostering a more harmonious relationship between humanity and the natural world.

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