



Ecofeminist Practices in the Novel *Batu Berkaki* by Chandra Bientang: An Analysis of Vandana Shiva

Lidiya Mushiyam Nurhidayah^{1*}, Abdul Kholiq²

^{1,2}Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Jawa Timur, Indonesia

*E-mail: lidiya.22020@mhs.unesa.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Grounded in Vandana Shiva's ecofeminism theory (*Staying Alive*), this study examines Chandra Bientang's novel *Batu Berkaki* to uncover the close link between the oppression of women and ecological destruction rooted in the patriarchal-capitalist system. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach, this research focuses on the mechanisms of women's marginalization and the vital role of female characters in defending the ecology and economy against the pressures of maldevelopment. The findings successfully identify 58 data points divided into two primary axes: oppression and resistance. Within the oppression axis, the study reveals that the environmental exploitation driven by the character Mugyono not only destroys the welfare of Ledok Awu's residents but also marginalizes women on multiple levels. The tragic death of Mbok Im symbolizes the destruction of the feminine principle, while the social exclusion of Turkiyem and Ruminem serves as a form of symbolic violence meant to silence their voices. Conversely, within the resistance axis, these female characters consistently actualize Shiva's feminine principle. They act as ecological guardians and pillars of the village's subsistence economy; Mbok Im establishes a communal learning space, Turkiyem consistently nurtures the land and passes down traditional herbal knowledge, while Lasmi and Kundari smuggle seeds to prevent the village's food sources from being entirely monopolized by corporations. This research is expected to contribute not only to Indonesian literary studies but also to environmental education practices.

Keywords: ecofeminism practices, novel, Vandana Shiva

Praktik Ekofeminisme dalam Novel *Batu Berkaki* Karya Chandra Bientang: Analisis Vandana Shiva

ABSTRAK

Berlandaskan teori ekofeminisme Vandana Shiva (*Staying Alive*), penelitian ini meneliti novel *Batu Berkaki* karya Chandra Bientang untuk mengungkap keterkaitan erat antara penindasan perempuan dan kerusakan ekologi yang berakar pada sistem patriarki-kapitalis. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini berfokus pada mekanisme marginalisasi perempuan serta peran tokoh perempuan dalam mempertahankan ekologi dan ekonomi dari tekanan maldevelopment. Hasil penelitian berhasil mengidentifikasi 58 data yang terbagi dalam dua poros utama, yaitu penindasan dan perlawanan. Dalam poros penindasan, ditemukan bahwa eksploitasi alam yang dilakukan oleh tokoh Mugyono tidak hanya merusak kesejahteraan warga Ledok Awu, tetapi juga memarginalkan perempuan secara berlapis. Kematian tragis Mbok Im menjadi simbol hancurnya prinsip feminin, sedangkan pengucilan terhadap Turkiyem dan Ruminem merupakan bentuk kekerasan simbolik untuk membungkam suara mereka. Sebaliknya, pada poros perlawanan, ketiga tokoh tersebut secara konsisten mengaktualisasikan prinsip feminin Shiva. Mereka bergerak sebagai penjaga ekologi dan penopang ekonomi subsisten desa. Mbok Im mendirikan tempat belajar bersama, Turkiyem konsisten merawat tanah dan mewariskan ilmu obat tradisional, sementara Lasmi dan Kundari menyelundupkan benih agar pangan desa tidak dikuasai sepenuhnya oleh korporasi. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan sumbangan tidak hanya bagi kajian sastra Indonesia, tetapi juga praktik pendidikan lingkungan melalui PBLHS

Kata kunci: praktik ekofeminisme, novel, Vandana Shiva

Submitted
23/06/2026

Accepted
27/06/2026

Published
30/06/2026

Citation	Nurhidayah, L. M., & Kholiq, A. (2026). Ecofeminist Practices in the Novel <i>Batu Berkaki</i> by Chandra Bientang: An Analysis of Vandana Shiva. <i>Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra, Volume 5, Nomor 3, Mei 2026, 2805-2812</i> . DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i3.1666
----------	---

Publisher
Raja Zulkarnain Education Foundation

INTRODUCTION

According to Vandana Shiva's ecofeminist framework, environmental damage and gender oppression are rooted in the same ideology: patriarchy-capitalism. This system has given rise to what is known as maldevelopment, a masculine-reductionist development model that aggressively pursues economic profit by exploiting, controlling, and seizing the sovereignty of nature and domesticating women's roles. This ongoing development has given rise to stark ecological contradictions in Indonesia. Data from the Ministry of Forestry claims a 23.01% decrease in deforestation by the end of 2025. However, independent institutions like Auriga Nusantara have shown the opposite, reporting a surge in forest cover loss of up to 66%, equivalent to 433,751 hectares, due to regulatory easing for the benefit of national strategic projects, including the Food and Energy Sovereignty Plan. The friction in these claims underscores the logic of capitalist development that sacrifices the living space of local communities, with women disproportionately bearing the multiple burdens of water loss, food scarcity, and the collapse of the subsistence economy.

Various women's movements in Indonesia demonstrate that environmental damage is often felt first and borne hardest by women living close to natural resources. The struggle of the Mollo women, led by Mama Aleta Baun, to defend their customary forests, and the action of the Kendeng Mountains women farmers who cemented their feet in front of the State Palace, are proof that women are not only victims of ecological damage but also key actors in maintaining environmental sustainability. These phenomena demonstrate the link between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature, rooted in social structures that place both in vulnerable positions.

From Vandana Shiva's ecofeminist perspective, environmental damage and the marginalization of women are consequences of a patriarchal-capitalist system that views nature and women as objects to be exploited for economic

gain. Shiva calls this development model maldevelopment, namely development that claims to be progress, but actually destroys ecosystems, eliminates local knowledge, and marginalizes groups that have maintained the sustainability of natural resources. Ministry of Forestry data claims a 23.01% decrease in deforestation by the end of 2025. However, independent institutions such as Auriga Nusantara actually show the opposite, reporting a surge in forest cover loss of up to 66% or equivalent to 433,751 hectares due to regulatory relaxation for the benefit of national strategic projects, including the program Food and Energy Sovereignty Plan. This clash of claims underscores the logic of capitalist development that sacrifices the living space of local communities, with women disproportionately bearing the multiple burdens of water loss, food scarcity, and the collapse of the subsistence economy. Thus, the ecological crisis is not only an environmental issue, but also a social one related to power relations and gender inequality.

This situation remains relevant in the contemporary Indonesian context. Various environmental issues, such as deforestation, land conversion, and development expansion, demonstrate that economic orientation often takes precedence over ecological sustainability. The impacts of this situation are felt most by communities dependent on nature, particularly women who play a role in meeting water, food, and managing household resources. Therefore, the ecological crisis can be understood as both an environmental crisis and a gender crisis.

In literary studies, ecofeminism is a relevant approach to uncovering the relationship between the exploitation of nature and the marginalization of women. Chandra Bientang's novel *Batu Berkaki* presents a depiction of ecological, economic, and gender conflicts through the lives of the people of Ledok Awu Village. Through the character of Mugyono and his network of power, the novel depicts the practice of land grabbing, the exploitation of natural resources, and various forms



of marginalization of women. On the other hand, female characters such as Mbok Im, Turkiyem, and Ruminem are represented as those who maintain ecological relationships and subsistence economic practices amidst the pressures of the patriarchal-capitalist system. This representation makes the novel *Batu Berkaki* important to be studied through Vandana Shiva's ecofeminist perspective.

Previous studies have discussed the ecological aspects of this novel and the application of Vandana Shiva's theory to different objects. Sampurno et al. (2025) showed the practice of ecological neocolonialism and domination over natural resources in the novel *Batu Berkaki*, but did not explain the relationship between ecological exploitation and the marginalisation of women. Meanwhile, research by Tanebeth (2022) and Roisiah et al. (2025) proved that Vandana Shiva's ecofeminist theory was able to reveal the relationship between environmental damage and the marginalization of women, but had not been applied in depth to the novel *Batu Berkaki*. Thus, there is still room for research to examine how ecological exploitation in the novel occurs simultaneously with the marginalization of women through Vandana Shiva's ecofeminist perspective. Based on this research gap, this study aims to describe the mechanism of women's marginalization and its impact on women's existence, as well as explain women's roles in maintaining ecology and implementing subsistence economic practices in Chandra Bientang's novel *Batu Berkaki*.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a textual analysis method to examine the practice of ecofeminism in the novel *Batu Berkaki* by Chandra Bientang through Vandana Shiva's perspective. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the social and cultural phenomena represented in literary texts through narrative data (Creswell, 2018). The research object is a novel *Batu Berkaki* published by Noura

Books in 2024. The novel was chosen because it contains representations of women's marginalization, ecological damage, subsistence economic practices, and patriarchal power relations that are relevant to ecofeminist studies. The research data consists of textual units including words, phrases, clauses, sentences, dialogues, and narratives that represent forms of women's marginalization, their impact on women's existence, and women's roles as guardians of ecology and actors in the subsistence economy. Data collection was conducted through intensive listening, reading, and note-taking techniques for the entire novel. This technique was used to identify data related to the research focus, then recorded in a data tabulation table based on Vandana Shiva's ecofeminist parameters. As stated by Sugiyono (2020), data collection techniques are a crucial step in obtaining valid and relevant data for the research objectives.

Data analysis was conducted descriptively and qualitatively through the stages of identification, reduction, classification, interpretation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data interpretation focused on the main concepts of Vandana Shiva's ecofeminism, including maldevelopment, feminine principles, monoculture of thought, and subsistence economy. Through these stages, the research seeks to uncover the mechanisms of marginalization experienced by female characters, their impact on women's existence, and the forms of resistance manifested through environmental preservation practices and local knowledge. To ensure data validity, this research applies theoretical triangulation by validating textual findings using Vandana Shiva's primary works. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Survival in India* (1988) and various relevant scientific references.

RESULT

1. Marginalization of Women and Its Impact on Women's Existence

The results of the study show that the marginalization of women in the novel *Batu*

Berkaki. This occurs through various mechanisms, including control of economic resources, domestic abuse, stigmatisation of local knowledge, silencing of women's voices, and social exclusion. These various mechanisms result in women's loss of access to resources, weakened social positions, and limited participation in community life.

Marginalization begins with the control of economic resources, targeting vulnerable groups, including women. This practice is evident in Belot's actions in persuading landowners to relinquish the land that has been their source of livelihood.

"However, when it comes to the land behind the limestone hill that once belonged to his parents, who lived alone, or the rice fields of a woman widowed after her husband's mysterious death by the river, or the cassava plantation that has been owned by the family of the former Belot village head for generations, he isn't afraid to sell them. He persuades these people to sell their own land."

The data demonstrates land acquisition efforts targeting vulnerable groups, resulting in their loss of control over resources that sustain family and community life. Beyond land acquisition, marginalization is also manifested through the blaming of women in the domestic sphere. When infant mortality occurs, women are positioned as responsible for the death.

"Ah. Why should I be suspicious? Babies are naturally vulnerable, sir. It's just the mother's fault for being incompetent."

The quote demonstrates the practice of blaming women, ignoring the various social and environmental factors underlying the incident. Further marginalization is evident in the stigmatization of women with local knowledge. Turkiyem and Ruminem are positioned as distinct individuals and perceived as connected to the various negative events that occurred in the village.

"Not just a shaman, sir! Mbah Tur and Mbah Rum are said to have possessed strange knowledge since they were young. There were rumors back then. They said the babies died because of him!"

The data demonstrates the negative labeling that causes women to lose social legitimacy and raises suspicion about their existence. This stigmatization then develops into an attempt to silence women who try to maintain the situation around them. This is evident in Maya's experience, where her doubts about the cause of her baby's death were perceived as a threat that must be stopped.

"Don't get yourself into trouble, Maya. Think about your husband. What will people think?"

This quote demonstrates the social pressures that limit women's ability to express their opinions and question conditions deemed unnatural. These various forms of marginalization ultimately lead to social exclusion for women. This impact is evident in the experiences of Turkiyem and Ruminem, who are no longer accepted in society. *"The people in this village don't want us to enter their houses."*

The data shows that women perceived as different or not aligned with the interests of the dominant group experience alienation within their own communities. This exclusion not only limits social relationships but also creates feelings of insecurity and fear.

"People don't like us. I'm afraid someone will hurt Rum!"

This situation shows that marginalization impacts not only women's social position but also their sense of security and survival in society. In contrast to their position as a marginalized group, women in the novel *Batu Berkaki* are also represented as actors who play a vital role in maintaining the sustainability of life. This role is manifested through land management, preservation of local knowledge, traditional health practices, and protection of local food sources. Women's role as environmental guardians is evident in the character of Turkiyem, who cares for the land and passes on farming knowledge to the next generation.

The sandy, loose soil of the backyard, the result of Turkiyem's lifelong care about managing the soil for sweet potatoes"



The data shows that women not only utilize nature to meet their needs but also maintain the sustainability of these resources through the transmission of ecological knowledge. In addition to protecting the land, women also play a role in maintaining traditional health knowledge passed down from generation to generation.

“Perhaps Turkiyem needs to go somewhere, to meet secretly with someone who needs medicine. It’s always been like that.”

Quote: This demonstrates that women are the guardians of local knowledge, which continues to be practiced to meet community needs. Women’s role in ensuring sustainability is also evident in their efforts to preserve local food sources. By storing and protecting local plant seeds, women strive to ensure food availability while maintaining the ecological sustainability of the village.

Thus, the results of the study show that women in the novel *Batu Berkaki*. Quote: This not only represented as a marginalized group, but also as actors who play an active role in protecting the environment, preserving local knowledge, and maintaining the community’s subsistence economic practices.

2. The Role of Women in Maintaining Ecology and Implementing Subsistence Economic Practices

Quote: This demonstrates that women are the guardians of local knowledge, which continues to be practiced to meet community needs. Women’s role in ensuring sustainability is also evident in their efforts to preserve local food sources. By storing and protecting local plant seeds, women strive to ensure food availability while maintaining the ecological sustainability of the village.

Thus, the results of the study show that women in the novel *Batu Berkaki* are not only represented as a marginalized group, but also as actors who play an active role in protecting the environment, preserving local knowledge, and maintaining the community’s subsistence economic practices.

In contrast to their position as a marginalized group, women in the novel *Batu Berkaki* are also represented as actors who play a vital role in maintaining the sustainability of life. This role is manifested through land management, preservation of local knowledge, traditional health practices, and protection of local food sources. Women’s role as environmental guardians is evident in the character of Turkiyem, who cares for the land and passes on farming knowledge to the next generation.

“The backyard soil is sandy and loose, the result of Turkiyem’s lifelong care... about managing the soil for sweet potatoes”

The data shows that women not only utilize nature to meet their needs but also maintain the sustainability of these resources through the transmission of ecological knowledge. In addition to protecting the land, women also play a role in maintaining traditional health knowledge passed down from generation to generation.

“Perhaps Turkiyem needs to go somewhere, to meet secretly with someone who needs medicine. It’s always been like that.”

This quote demonstrates that women are the guardians of local knowledge, which is still practiced to meet community needs. Women’s role in ensuring the sustainability of life is also evident in their efforts to preserve local food sources. By storing and protecting local plant seeds, women strive to ensure food availability while maintaining the ecological sustainability of the village.

Thus, the results of the study show that women in the novel *Batu Berkaki* are not only represented as a marginalized group but also as actors who play an active role in protecting the environment, preserving local knowledge, and maintaining the community’s subsistence economic practices.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the marginalization of women in the novel *Batu Berkaki* is a consequence of the practice of maldevelopment. As stated by Vandana Shiva, through the characters of Mugyono and Belot, the

novel demonstrates how development and economic interests are placed above ecological sustainability and the lives of local communities. Land acquisition by residents is carried out by exploiting the community's economic vulnerability, so that land is no longer viewed as a living space, but rather as a commodity to be bought and sold for profit. In this situation, women are the most impacted group, having lost access to the resources that have supported their lives. These findings indicate that maldevelopment not only in the form of environmental exploitation, but also creates social inequality that weakens the position of women in the structure of society.

This marginalization occurs not only through economic control but also through symbolic violence and the silencing of local knowledge. The stigmatization experienced by Turkiyem and Ruminem demonstrates that women who possess traditional knowledge are positioned as deviant and a threat to social order. From Shiva's ecofeminist perspective, this condition reflects the delegitimization of local knowledge systems that have long supported community survival. Women's knowledge is not recognized because it is deemed incompatible with the logic of profit-oriented development. Thus, maldevelopment not only destroys the physical environment but also destroys the knowledge systems that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Furthermore, marginalization is also evident through domestic blaming practices and the silencing of women's voices. Maya's case demonstrates how the patriarchal system shifts responsibility for structural issues to women. Maya was blamed for her baby's death, even though the root of the problem is related to environmental damage and poor sanitation conditions stemming from the practice of maldevelopment. When Maya attempted to question this situation, her voice was silenced by social and moral pressure. This situation demonstrates that women are not only deprived of access to resources but also of the space to share their own experiences and knowledge.

These various forms of marginalization ultimately impact women's existence. The exclusion experienced by Turkiyem and Ruminem demonstrates that women lose social recognition, participation, and legitimacy for their knowledge. In this context, women's existence is not only related to their physical presence but also to the recognition of their identity, experiences, and contributions to community life. When women are excluded from their communities and their voices are no longer heard, they experience marginalization that threatens their existence as social subjects. These findings demonstrate that ecological exploitation and women's marginalization are two interrelated forms of domination that operate through the same mechanisms.

The findings of this study are in line with the research of Sampurno et al. (2025), which shows the exploitation of natural resources in the novel *Batu Berkaki*. However, this study expands on these findings by showing that ecological exploitation not only results in environmental damage but is also accompanied by the marginalization of women through land acquisition, stigmatization, silencing, and social exclusion. Thus, environmental exploitation in the novel cannot be understood solely as an ecological issue, but also as a gender issue.

Amidst these various forms of marginalization, the novel *Batu Berkaki* presents women not as passive victims, but as agents who maintain the sustainability of life through ecological practices. Turkiyem's role in caring for the land and passing on agricultural knowledge demonstrates the actualization of feminine principles that place nature as a source of life that must be preserved. The relationship between women and nature in this novel is not exploitative, but rather based on maintenance, sustainability, and responsibility towards the next generation. This finding aligns with Vandana Shiva's concept of feminine principles, which views women as guardians of life through their ecological knowledge and experience.



The actualization of feminine principles is also evident in Turkiyem's traditional healing practices. Her herbal knowledge is a form of local wisdom that persists despite the pressures of patriarchal power. This knowledge not only serves as an alternative public health service but also demonstrates the existence of a local knowledge system independent of market mechanisms. Through these practices, women play a role in maintaining the continuity of life while preserving the heritage of knowledge that is part of the community's identity.

Resistance against the patriarchal-capitalist system is also evident in women's actions in preserving local seeds and community food sources. These efforts constitute a form of subsistence economic practice oriented towards fulfilling life's needs and ecological sustainability. In Shiva's view, a subsistence economy is not a form of backwardness, but rather an economic system that prioritizes survival. Through the storage and preservation of local seeds, women strive to maintain food sovereignty while reducing community dependence on exploitative economic systems. These findings reinforce research by Tanebeth (2022) and Roisiah et al. (2025), which demonstrates that women play a crucial role in maintaining environmental sustainability through local knowledge and daily life practices.

The findings of this study indicate that when subsistence space is seized through land acquisition and natural resource exploitation, women experience two forms of poverty simultaneously: material poverty and ecological poverty. Material poverty arises from the loss of access to livelihoods, while ecological poverty occurs due to the damaged relationship between humans and nature that has supported community life. However, women in the novel *Batu Berkaki* are not only represented as victims of ecological exploitation, but also as subjects who present sustainable alternatives through feminine principles, local knowledge, and subsistence economic practices. Thus, this study contributes to ecofeminist studies by showing that women's

marginalization is not merely a side effect of ecological exploitation, but rather part of the mechanism that enables such exploitation to occur. The novelty of this study lies in revealing the relationship between maldevelopment, marginalization of women, women's existence, feminine principles, and subsistence economy within the framework of Vandana Shiva's ecofeminist analysis of the novel *Batu Berkaki*.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the novel *Batu Berkaki* Chandra Bientang's work represents the relationship between ecological damage and women's marginalization through Vandana Shiva's ecofeminist perspective. Women's marginalization in Ledok Awu Village occurs through control of economic resources, domestic abuse, stigmatization of local knowledge, silencing of women's voices, and social exclusion. These various forms of marginalization result in women's loss of access to resources, weakened social positions, and threatened existence as subjects possessing knowledge, experience, and important roles in community life. The research findings indicate that these practices are manifestations of maldevelopment, namely a development model that prioritizes economic interests at the expense of ecological sustainability and social justice.

Amidst these conditions, female characters such as Turkiyem, Ruminem, Lasmi, Kundari, and Mbok Im emerge as agents who maintain the sustainability of life through land management, preservation of local knowledge, traditional health practices, and protection of local food sources. These roles demonstrate the actualization of feminine principles and subsistence economic practices that serve as a form of resistance against patriarchal-capitalist domination. Thus, the novel *Batu Berkaki* not only represents women as victims of ecological exploitation but also as subjects who present sustainable alternatives through harmonious relations between humans, nature, and communities.

As a practical implication, the results of this study can be used as teaching materials for environmental-based literature, particularly in schools implementing the PBLHS (Environmental Care and Culture in Schools) program. Through literary learning that integrates environmental and gender issues, students can develop critical awareness of the importance of ecological sustainability, gender equity, and respect for local knowledge as part of efforts to maintain sustainable living.

REFERENCES

- Andayani, A., & Suyitno. (2019). Cultural Issues in Indonesian Language Learning for Foreign Speakers. *International Journal of Educational Research Review*, 4(3), 454 – 460. <https://doi.org/10.24331/ijere.573951>
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). California: SAGE Publications.
- Damayanti, R. (2018). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Prasetya, R. A., & Yulianto, A. (2018). Analysis of Factors Affecting the Disclosure of Corporate Carbon Emission In Indonesia. *Jurnal Dinamika Akuntansi*, 10(1), 71–81.
- Razak, A. (2017). *Metode Riset: Menggapai Mixed Methods Bidang Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia*. Pekanbaru: Ababil Press.
- Roisiah, R., & Khasanah, K. (2025). Perempuan dan Alam dalam Novel Anak Mata di Tanah Melus Karya Okky Madasari: Kajian Ekofeminisme. *PEDAGOGI: Jurnal Anak Usia Dini dan Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 11, 1–11. <https://journal.um-surabaya.ac.id/Pedagogi/article/view/25774>
- Sampurno, N. H., Wardani, R. E. N. E., & Suryanto, E. (2025). Neokolonialisme Ekologis dalam Novel Batu Berkaki: Kajian Ekokritik. *SeBaSa*, 8(2), 603–616. <https://doi.org/10.29408/sbs.v8i2.31137>
- Shiva, V. (1988). *Staying alive: Women, ecology, and development*. South End Press.
- Shiva, V. (1988b). *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India*. Zed Books.
- Shiva, V., & Mies, M. (1993). *Ecofeminism*. Zed Books.
- Sugiyono, S. (2020). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: untuk Penelitian yang Bersifat Eksploratif, Enterpretatif, Interaktif, dan Konstruktif*.
- Tanebeth, A. S. E. (2022). Relasi Perempuan dan Alam: Analisis Kerusakan Ekologi di NTT dalam Perspektif Ekofeminisme Vandana Shiva. Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana. <https://repository.ukdw.ac.id/eprint/6767>