



ECOLOGICAL DEGRADATION AND OLIGARCHIC NETWORKS IN INDONESIAN NOVELS

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Abstract

The exploitation of nature has led to an ecological crisis that is not only a local threat but has expanded as a global catastrophe. Literature represents the degradation of nature as well as the power relations among the oligarchic networks operating around it to build ecological awareness for the community. This descriptive-qualitative research design aims to describe the form of ecological degradation and the role of oligarchic power networks that appear in Indonesian novels. The data sources were purposively selected from Indonesian novels with ecoliteracy insights, including *Api Awan Asap* by Korrie Layun Rampan (2015), *Jemangilak Tak Pernah Menangis* by Martin Aleida (2004), and *Kelomang* by Qizink La Aziva (2016). In addition, data sources related to nature and the environment depicted in the three novels were also used. The data were obtained using reading and note-taking techniques. Furthermore, it was analyzed qualitatively using the perspective of literary ecology through categorization, tabulation, and inference. The results of this study concluded that (1) the forms of ecological damage presented in Indonesian novels are (a) river sedimentation and pollution, (b) coastal abrasion, and (c) forest fires. (2) Forms of natural damage occur due to exploitation actions carried out by oligarchic networks supported by government regulations and licenses. The study of ecological literary works builds awareness of the process of ecological degradation and the perpetrators of destruction that form a systemic network.

Keywords: *ecoliteracy, ecological degradation, ecocriticism, oligarchy*

INTRODUCTION

The ecological crisis is no longer local. The issue of environmental degradation has become a global threat. Natural damage in one region is no longer understood as a threat in that region alone. As explained by Hartati (2012), there are a number of reasons that underlie this view. *Firstly*, the effects of environmental degradation are always global in nature. One concrete example in this context is the greenhouse effect. *Second*, ecological issues are often related to the exploitation of global resources. *Third*, ecological issues are often transnational. The case of forest fires is a clear example of this phenomenon. Forest fires in Kalimantan, for example, turned out to be a serious threat to the aviation industry in Singapore. A country's economy can be affected by ecological problems in other countries that are being degraded. *Fourth*, the occurrence of massive exploitation in several regions and countries has finally accumulated as a global problem. *Fifth*, the processes that drive ecological exploitation are related to global political and economic processes. The exploitation of local natural resources that ignores the impacts is often carried out by global economic networks. In this context, the threshold of environmental

damage cannot be seen from the perspective of locality, since it is actually a threat to all life.

Ecological degradation becomes more extensive when it is driven by oligarchic networks that have power relations and control economic resources. One example of ecological degradation that occurs is deforestation, which causes the reduction of the remaining natural forest area. Indonesia's remaining natural forest area is now less than 45 million hectares. Meanwhile, 33,448,501.37 hectares of Indonesia's forests are encumbered by forest product utilization business licenses. All of these business licenses are controlled by 1502 companies (Kurniawan, 2022). The floods that occurred in South Kalimantan in early 2021 were due to failures in environmental governance. Half of the South Kalimantan province has been encumbered by mining and palm oil licenses, not to mention HTI and HPH licenses (Kurniawan, 2022). These conditions caused floods that submerged 24,379 houses, 112 thousand people were displaced, and 15 people died.

When nature begins to be degraded and exploited excessively, literature (of course) has an obligation to contribute to providing awareness. This awareness has led to the emergence of ecocriticism studies. The term ecocriticism was introduced by William Rueckert in 1973 in his article *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*. The idea of ecocriticism at that time was only understood as simple treatises on nature (nature writing) (Dewi, 2016). Afterward, ecocritical studies and themes began to be widely discussed and recorded. Ecocriticism refers to the meaning of ecological literacy (Howarth, 1996; Capra, 1996; Garrard, 2004). In simple terms, ecological literacy is the awareness to preserve the environment and live in harmony with nature (Kerap, 2014). This commitment and awareness of the importance of nature are at the core of ecological literacy awareness.

Regarding the role of literacy in saving the environment, the presence of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* (1962), which was able to influence the regulation of the use of DDT and pesticides in several US states, is referred to as the initiation of ecological criticism (Bertens, 2008; Buell, 1995; Aji, 2021; Dewi, 2016). *Silent Spring* was published in 1962, two years before Carson died on 14 April at the age of 56. The book lyrically and compellingly describes the desolation and dread of spring when birds can no longer be heard singing in the morning because many have died and migrated away from their original degraded environment. Chemicals, according to the author with a background in Marine Biology and English Literature, are to blame for the alarming ecological degradation. Carson rejects the use of the term "insecticide" in her writing. He offers the diction "biocide", which means life-killing poison, not merely insect killer. In the United States, the book's influence was paralleled by a novel published one hundred and ten years earlier, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). This novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe was able to drive the abolition of slavery in the US.

In the midst of such alarming ecological damage, the influence of *Silent Spring* led to the birth of a view on the involvement of literature in environmental issues. Literature must ultimately be involved in saving the ecology. Ecocriticism emerged to uncover representations of nature in literary texts. This study pays attention to the relationship between literary works and the environment (Glottfelty, 1996), including the relationship between social and physical reality, as typically addressed in ecology. Ecocriticism ultimately seeks to build a commitment to the environment or as Buell (Love, 2003) refers to it, a spirit of commitment to environmental praxis.

Since ecocriticism is concerned with the relationship between literary works and the environment, the question arises as to what kind of literary works can be categorized as literary works with an ecocritical perspective. To answer this question, Buell's (1995) explanation can be considered. According to him, there are several criteria for literary works to be categorized as ecocritical literature, namely (1) the non-human environment is present not only as a framing device, (2) human interests are not taken as the only interests,

(3) human accountability to the environment is part of the ethical orientation of the text, and (4) some understanding of the environment is actually a process. It is not a constant notion, in spite of the fact that it sometimes appears implicit in the text (Buell, 1995; Bertens, 2008).

First, the non-human environment is present in literary works not only as a framing device but as a presence that begins to express the involvement of human history in natural history. Rather than simply presenting nature and the environment as idyllic as in romanticist imaginings or as violent claims of nature as in naturalistic-realist novels, ecocritical literary works reflect on the impact of ecological degradation and natural disasters that are closely linked to human survival (Dewi, 2016). Nature and the environment are not only present as the frame of the story.

Secondly, human interests are not considered the only legitimate interests. Literary works with an ecocritical perspective place human interests no longer dominant. The view that tends to be anthropocentrism begins to be rejected by another paradigm that is more in favor of nature and the environment. Ecocriticism refutes the dominance of anthropocentrism that is too focused on human interests (a human-centered perspective). Ecocriticism instead considers an earth-centered approach to the study of literature (Bertens, 2008). This is due to the fact that anthropocentrism tends to make nature and the environment a means for human life. This perspective encourages humans to be exploitative and unfriendly to the environment. Nature is only valued to the extent of its contribution to the benefits of human life. Literary works with an ecocritical perspective oppose the exploitative practices of nature that are largely driven by the anthropocentrism paradigm. Instead, ecocriticism puts forward the biocentrism paradigm, which is considered more environmentally friendly and has a stronger ecological commitment. If in anthropocentrism the ethical principles of the environment are determined by human interests, then in biocentrism the ethical principles of the environment are determined by the interests of all organisms.

Third, human accountability to the environment is part of the ethical orientation of the text. Ecocritical literary texts have the responsibility to take a stand on ecological issues. This standpoint is part of the accountability towards the ecological problems faced by the environment. Literary texts thus represent a concern and defense of degraded natural conditions. *Fourthly*, some notions of the environment are a process rather than a constant or a given notion that is at least implied in the text (Buell, 1995). These four things mark whether a text is part of ecocriticism or not. If a text fails to meet these ecocritical standards, it is the task of ecocritics to show in what ways it fails to do so, and more specifically why it fails -which discourse is responsible for its anti-environmental message (Bertens, 2008).

In the context of Indonesian literature, a number of literary works have begun to address ecological issues. This is not surprising because literature is always rooted in life and living. Although literature with an ecocritical perspective has emerged, it is currently not the predominant stream of modern Indonesian literature (Dewi, 2015). Indonesian novels with an ecoliteracy perspective include *Api Awan Asap* by Korrie Layun Rampan (1999), *Pertarungan* by Hanna Rambe (2002), *Jemangilak Tak Pernah Menangis* by Martin Aleida (2004), *Sarongge* by Tosca Santoso (2012), *Kelomang* by Qizink La Aziva (2016), *Sampah di Laut, Meira* by Mawan Belgium (2020), and *Haniyah dan Ala di Rumah Teteruga* (2021). As literary works that represent ecological issues, an intensive exploration of these novels is expected to be able to describe the forms of ecological degradation that have begun to pose a serious threat to life. In addition, the analysis is also needed to identify the power relations among oligarchic networks that are allegedly the cause of the widespread ecological damage represented by literary works. This is due to the fact that ecological crises are often caused by human actions (Arianto, Sayuti, & Efendi, 2021).

This study aims to describe (1) the forms of ecological degradation and (2) the role of oligarchic networks of power that appear in Indonesian novels. In the context of this study, the literary works analyzed are limited to three Indonesian novels, namely *Api Awan Asap* by Rampan (1999), *Jemangilak Tak Pernah Menangis* by Aleida (2004), and *Kelomang* by Aziva (2016). All three novels represent the factual reality of ecological damage in several areas, including Kalimantan, the Asahan River, and the north coast of Banten. The whole analysis is intended to make the position of literary works to build ecological awareness stronger, especially since several Indonesian literary works reveal ecological degradation based on factual reality. Literature tries to build ecological literacy awareness through texts with an ecological perspective. That is why ecocriticism has a strong moral and political commitment (Bertens, 2008).

METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative design to describe the forms of ecological degradation and the role of oligarchic power networks that are presented in Indonesian novels. The data sources were selected from Indonesian novels with an ecoliteracy perspective, namely *Api Awan Asap* by Rampan (1999), *Jemangilak Tak Pernah Menangis* by Aleida (2004), and *Kelomang* by Aziva (2016). The data were in the form of story facts that include story sequences, characters, settings, themes, and other literary means from data sources which provide information related to the research problem. The data were obtained using reading and note-taking techniques. Furthermore, it was analyzed qualitatively using an ecocritical perspective through categorization, tabulation, and inference steps.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Forms of ecological degradation in Indonesian novels tend to present real problems in a number of regions. These problems are not only used as the background of the story but also become the main topic of the novel. The novels not only convey the problematic environmental reality but also the strive of the characters to save their environment.

Aleida's novel *Jemangilak Tak pernah Menangis* (2004) explores the destruction of the Asahan River in North Sumatra as a result of deforestation and the dumping of factory waste into the river. The deforestation or logging activities that ignore the principles of environmental management around Lake Toba, the headwaters of the Asahan River, have led to an alarming process of river sedimentation. The siltation of the river, the epicenter of community activities along the Asahan River, has led to severe ecological damage, disrupted the community's economy, and ruined the long-established culture of the community.

Another issue is raised by La Aziva's novel *Kelomang* (2016). The novel addresses natural damage in the form of abrasion due to marine sand mining off the north coast of Serang Banten. Mining that neglects marine ecology has brought severe devastation. Some of the impacts include (1) abrasion on the north coast of Serang Regency. Not only abrasion but also the creation of mining basins that alter the pattern of river flows, which is dangerous for fishermen's voyages, as well as exacerbating abrasion. (2) Damage to marine life. Massive sand dredging will affect the life of marine life. Forest fires are featured in the novel *Api Awan Asap* by Rampan (2015). This novel tells the life of the Benuaq Dayak people who live in the wilderness of the forest on the banks of the Nyawatan river. The Dayak people who live with nature must witness the destruction of the forest that they have been protecting. The damage occurred due to brutal logging by entrepreneurs who own HPH (Forest Entrepreneur Rights) and HTI (Industrial Plantation Rights).

In brief, the various forms of ecological damage featured in Indonesian novels are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Forms of ecological damage in Indonesian novels

| No. | Ecological Issues | Causes of Damage | Novel Title |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | River sedimentation and pollution | a. Deforestation b. Factory waste | <i>Jamangilak Tak pernah Menangis</i> |
| 2. | Coastal abrasion | a. Sand mining exploitation off the north coast of Banten | <i>Kelomang</i> |
| 3. | Forest fire | a. Deforestation by logging companies who own HPH b. Logging has led to a decline in the quality of nature c. Dry branches, twigs, and leaves from mismanaged logging cause fires | <i>Api Awan Asap</i> |

The ecological devastation that takes place in Indonesian novels tends to involve a conspiracy between corporations, bureaucracy, and legislators. Corporations are the ones who exploit nature, the bureaucracy is the one who grants business permits, and the legislature is the one who drafts laws that legalize the process of exploiting nature. The exploitation of nature eventually becomes a brutal act that is legalized. The conspiracy between corporations, bureaucracy, and legislators finally makes the devastation very explosive, massive, and uncontrollable. This condition is very different from the devastation done by individuals or small groups of people.

Discussion

Ecological Degradation in Indonesian Novels

The novel *Jamangilak Tak pernah Menangis*, which was first published in 2004, raises the issue of ecological damage to the Asahan River, which is silting up. The siltation of the Asahan River is caused by (1) massive logging in the upstream area, and (2) the deposition of mud and sand flowing from the upper reaches of the river. Hence, the ecological damage was caused by the intervention of humans who lacked a sense of environmental awareness. The river, which had been the center of the community's activities, has become seriously silted up and therefore the city has become deserted and no longer serves as the central hub of the community's life.

The novel *Jamangilak Tak pernah Menangis* dramatically describes the impact of ecological damage to the Asahan River with the abandonment of fishermen's equipment, such as crumbling baskets and crates of salted fish and drums of diesel used to refuel boats that are stacked and rusted. In detail, the impact of the economic decline caused by the sedimentation of the Asahan River is illustrated in the following quote.

The road that runs from the harbour to the market lost its blood a few years ago. Now, desolation slowly comes lurking. The signs of the city's imminent death became more and more evident, the more the woman's heart sank. Along the road were crumbling baskets and crates of salted fish. Rusted diesel drums were piled up.

(Aleida, 2004: 6-7)

Sedimentation along the Asahan River was caused by the Rayon I Toba pulp mill, which was established in 1986. The factory has brought misery to the people and devastated Lake Toba and the surrounding environment. Considering the issues raised, the time setting, the place setting, and the type of operation of the company, the novel seems to be a representation of the reality facing Lake Toba and its surrounding communities.

Firstly, deforestation that neglects the impact on the environment. Pine trees that conserve water for Samosir Island were logged on a large scale. The pine trees were

replaced with *eucalyptus* trees, which absorb more water. The *eucalyptus* trees turned out to cause ecological problems, including (1) the soil became dry because it was absorbed to meet the large water demand, (2) the area around Lake Toba became barren, (3) the soil fertilizer decreased, and (4) Lake Toba experienced an alarming sedimentation process. The following excerpt describes the devastating impact caused by the deforestation activities of the Rayon I Toba pulp mill.

...the pine trees that preserved the expanse of water that encircled Samosir Island were logged to feed the factory's machinery. The barren soil was then planted with a ferocious tree imported from abroad, called *eucalyptus*. This tree grew with a very strange possession. It grew so fast that it outgrew any tree known to man on the shores of the lake. But, to sustain its rapid growth to feed the factory's ever-hungry stomach, the tree sucked in an incredible amount of water. On the land where it was planted, the tree became a water-sucking scourge that left not only the land where it grew, but also the surrounding area, barren. The substances that nourish the soil are killed. It is no wonder, then, that many people assumed, and in fact proved with research figures, that the surface of Lake Toba had silted up significantly after the establishment of this bizarre tree-eating factory.

(Aleida, 2004: 187-188)

Secondly, the disposal of *eucalyptus* wood processing plant waste has caused serious ecological damage. Molek, the main character of the novel, learned more about the ecological damage along the Asahan River when he read the research report of three experts, Alexander Manurung, M. Tampubolon, and J.F. Tambunan. The report stated that (1) the CaCO_3 sludge produced by *eucalyptus* wood waste along with other compounds will be disposed of by the Rayon I Toba pulp mill. If the disposal is done in the river, the waste will cause sedimentation and cover the *benthos* (animals and plants that live on the riverbed). (2) NaOCl, resins, and soaps made from fatty acids will be toxic to aquatic organisms, such as fish, and also harmful to human health (Aleida, 2004: 188-189).

As a result of the river pollution, the fish population has been drastically depleted in the river basin since the operation of Rayon I Toba pulp mill in Sosor Ladang, Porsea. (3) Gas discharged into the air has the potential to harm the respiratory tract and human skin. In fact, SO_2 gas can be carried by the bloodstream to all body tissues and cause damage to the nervous system, even damaging genes in sperm. (5) Acidic substances, such as H_2S , H_2SO_4 , and HCl not only damage crops and agricultural land but also have the potential to damage the roofs of houses and buildings. The ecological damage represented in *Jamangilak Tak pernah Menangis* is similar to reality. The existence of the pulp and paper processing industry has caused damage to the aquatic ecosystem of Lake Toba and polluted the Deli Asahan River (Aritonang, Hardjanto, & Soemarmi, 2016). The findings of this study reinforce Dewi's (2019) view that the novel *Jamangilak Tak pernah Menangis* succeeds in revealing the cause of the exploitation of nature since humans are too anthropocentric. The anthropocentric paradigm prioritizes human interests over the interests of nature and organisms. The impact of this perspective is strongly opposed by Molek's character in *Jamangilak Tak pernah Menangis*. If ecocriticism is considered as an earth-centered view in literary studies, as Bertens (2008) states, then this novel clearly represents the ecocritical paradigm.

Kelomang by Aziva (2016) describes the resistance to the exploitation of nature by corporate interests supported by corrupt government regulations. Corporate interests are represented by the character Sakib, a businessman who is very well-known in Banten and has a strong network in the government. The conflict occurred when Sakib obtained a license to mine sea sand off the north coast of Serang Banten. The exploitation plan was

opposed by the community, represented by Saija, Lukman, and Yanto. For them, mining sea sand is a detrimental action because it risks damaging the environment.

As a literary work with an ecological perspective, this novel raises the case of abrasion caused by the exploitation of sand mining off the north coast of Banten. The potential of the north coast of Serang Banten has been plundered and exploited because of the assumption that natural resources are a very promising economic commodity. The issue of sand mining that is exploitative and neglects environmental sustainability is a concern as it will lead to ecological and social problems.

"Three million cubic metres is the initial stage of PT Bintang Laut's mining quota. The Jakarta-based company has applied for a licence to mine ten million cubic metres of sea sand," Saija continued.

"That's insane. This is crazy exploitation of natural resources." Bobby, the stocky environmental activist, interjected.

(Aziva, 2016: 36)

From the perspective of Saija and his friends, sand mining off the north coast of Banten will cause ecological devastation, social, and even economic problems for coastal communities. Some of the impacts include (1) abrasion on the north coast of Serang Regency. The result of this abrasion encouraged Saija and his friends to carry out a movement to plant mangroves on the north coast of Banten. Justicea's (2016) research on the practice of sand mining off the north coast of Banten showed tremendous danger. Not only abrasion but also the creation of mining basins that can change flow patterns and thus are dangerous for fishermen's voyages, as well as exacerbating abrasion. (2) Damage to marine life. Massive sand dredging will affect the life of marine life. If marine production is reduced, it will obviously have an economic impact on the lives of local residents who depend on fishing for their livelihoods. The following excerpt shows that the damage caused by sand mining practices off the north coast of Banten can have biological, ecological, economic impacts, and can even affect the cultural patterns of the community.

"Based on this thesis, marine sand mining can affect the growth of crabs. The size of the crab becomes smaller," Saija said. "This is just crab fishermen, not yet the impact that may be felt by seaweed farmers, fishermen, fish traders, and so on. Anyway, economically, residents around the mining site will be very disadvantaged," he continued.

(Aziva, 2016: 37-38)

As a result of the sand mining, fish will migrate to clearer waters or, if this is not possible, many fish will die due to the grains of sand that are lifted, affecting the respiratory system of the fish gills. Mining, which has been ongoing since 2003, has led to a depletion of fish stocks in the area. This condition will threaten the livelihood of the population, most of whom are fishermen.

Rampan's novel *Api Awan Asap* raises the issue of forest fires in Kalimantan as a serious problem. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) noted that the area of forest and land fires in 2015 reached 2.61 million hectares. This amount is almost the same as the total area of forest and land fires throughout 2016-2019, which is 2.78 million hectares. Of the burned area, 33 percent, or 869,754 hectares occurred on peatlands, which are the most efficient terrestrial ecosystems in storing carbon and freshwater resources (*Tirto.id*, 6/11/2020).

In the context of the novel *Api Awan Asap*, forest and land fires are caused by a long drought influenced by El Nino. These conditions are bad for humans and nature (Rampan, 2015: 124). However, the extreme climate change due to El Nino is actually the result of

brutal deforestation. Deforestation is mostly carried out by entrepreneurs who own HPH (Forest Business Rights) and HTI (Industrial Plantation Rights).

"The reason is obvious, Gok. Anyone knows that forests are logged without taking into account the bad consequences. See for yourself in the forests outside the *lou* area. How many thousands of logs are piled up by HPH entrepreneurs on land, and how many thousands more are held in the estuaries of small rivers that meet the Nyawatan River."

(Rampan, 2015: 104)

The above conversation took place during a village meeting. It shows the awareness of the community to always take care of nature. The quote above also reveals the root cause of ecological damage in Kalimantan's forests. The damage occurred because of the exploitative actions of entrepreneurs holding HPH and HTI who cut down the forest without the "wisdom of logging". The following quotation shows the Dayak people's knowledge of the problems that plague their region.

"HPH and HTI entrepreneurs must indeed be responsible for environmental damage. But who will sue them? Which officer will scrutinise that one meranti tree falls to the ground, thousands of other small trees are sacrificed? There would be no need for HTIs if the entrepreneurs had the wisdom to log..."

(Rampan, 2015: 104)

Ardiansyah (2011) explains that the higher the accessibility of forest areas and the wider the HPH, HTI, and mining areas, the wider the deforestation. This condition confirms that the presence of entrepreneurs holding HPH and HTI is the cause of ecological devastation in Kalimantan. The study conducted by Angi and Wiati (2017) revealed that deforestation is mostly caused by the granting of licenses in the forestry and plantation sectors. Meanwhile, forest and land degradation are mostly caused by mining activities. The following quote confirms the findings of this study.

Banjir-kap and HPH are traumatic in themselves. Let alone HTI and gold and coal mining. These activities severely disrupt the land allotments that are part of the *lou*, and also directly disrupt the ecosystem. Whereas in the past the seasons could be determined by the stars, massive logging has had serious consequences, shrinking rivers to critical levels in the dry season, and uncontrollable flash floods during the rainy season. The soil is eroded of its humus and sometimes landslides and debris destroy roads that have been built by the community in mutual cooperation, sometimes bringing disastrous consequences to people who pass through the place.

(Rampan, 2015: 128)

The above description portrays the deterioration of forest quality due to logging by HPH. Deforestation has brought alarming ecological damage to Kalimantan's forests. These damages include (1) It disrupts land use, (2) damaging the ecosystems, (3) extreme climate change, (4) shrinking river water, (5) extreme droughts, (6) uncontrolled flash floods, (7) erosion of humus, and (8) disastrous landslides. These problems alone do not include the consequences of severe forest and land fires. Forest and land fires can disrupt health, cause death to residents, hamper community activities, and disrupt the economy. The impacts caused by brutal deforestation by entrepreneurs holding HPH and HTI can be mass, even global. The severe forest destruction in Kalimantan is no longer a local problem but has turned into a global problem.

The following excerpt shows the impact of forest fires caused by land clearing by plantations. Not only does the area of forest and land fires expand during the dry season, but forest fires are also bad for health.

Land clearing done by the plantation conglomerates by burning actually has an added value for plant fertility because of the ash and soil maturity. However, the smoke and heat of the fire have a negative impact. You can imagine tens of hectares of land being burned simultaneously, tongues of fire will lick across the area, the heat that coalesces brings the dry winds more boiling, and as a result, the wind will bring overflow and the fire will become more rampant. Hot clouds will always hang over the horizon, and the smog makes for limited views. The air turns unhealthy, and the seasons become unpredictable, bringing flu and various respiratory diseases.

(Rampan, 2015: 130)

The brutal logging of forests has had a devastating impact on the lives of communities around forests. The dry season is often used as an excuse for forest fires. The novel confirms that logging, which leaves large amounts of dried branches, twigs, and leaves, makes it easier for fires to spread more widely. Remnants of HPH logging will ignite large fires, especially in the dry season (Rampan, 2015: 127). HPH was originally intended to protect forest lands as permanent production forests. In practice, however, this concession system has increased deforestation and forest degradation. The commercialization of forests encouraged entrepreneurs to exploit Kalimantan's forests more brutally. The damage to forests caused by this exploitation has reached a level that is very dangerous and difficult to restore.

The ecological crises represented in the Indonesian novels above tend to involve conspiracies between corporate power, bureaucratic networks, and legislative involvement. Corporations are the ones who exploit natural resources arbitrarily. The bureaucratic network acts as the party that grants business licenses. Meanwhile, legislators are involved in drafting laws that legalize the process of exploiting nature under the pretext of improving human welfare. The exploitation of nature eventually becomes brutal, legal, uncontrollable, and causes massive natural damage.

In the novel *Jamangilak Tak pernah Menangis*, the damage occurred because the exploitation by the Rayon I Toba pulp mill was supported by the government and legislators. This is in line with Dewi's findings (2020) that, as represented in the novel *Jamangilak Tak pernah Menangis*, the government tends to ignore the ecological crisis. When there was pressure from the community represented by Molek's character to close the factory, several parties rejected the proposal. A number of parties who rejected it included businessmen, the government, local authorities, and those who benefited from the exploitation of nature (Dewi, 2019). Not only does the government favor the oligarchic network, it is also very ignorant of the suffering of the people affected by ecological damage (Dewi, 2020).

In Aziva's *Kelomang*, the exploitation of nature is conducted to accommodate corporate interests supported by corrupt government regulations. Corporate interests are represented by the character Sakib, a businessman who is notorious in Banten and has a strong network in the government. The conflict occurred when Sakib obtained a license to mine sea sand off the north coast of Serang Banten. Meanwhile, Rampan's novel *Api Awan Asap*, raises the issue of forest fires in Kalimantan, which represents the exploitative destruction of nature. The main perpetrators of the destruction are entrepreneurs holding HPH and HTI who log the forest without "ecological wisdom".

These findings show that uncontrolled corporate power is the cause of the global ecological crisis (Boggs, 2007). Worse exploitation of nature will arise when corporations build oligarchic networks with government bureaucracies and legislative councils. When oligarchic networks strengthen and become syndicates, the destruction of nature will be

explosive, massive, and uncontrollable. This condition is very different from the damage done by individuals or small groups of people.

CONCLUSION

Indonesian novels have raised ecological issues intensively. The issues described in the novels represent the destruction of nature and the environment in several regions of Indonesia. The forms of damage that emerge in Indonesian novels are (1) sedimentation and river pollution. The case raised is the sedimentation of the Asahan River due to deforestation and river pollution by pulp companies near Lake Toba. (2) Coastal abrasion due to sand mining exploitation off the north coast of Banten. Besides leading to coastal abrasion, this exploitative mining destroyed marine life and created mining basins that are dangerous for fishermen. (3) Forest fires. The fires occurred due to the brutal logging of forests by entrepreneurs holding HPH (Forest Business Rights) and HTI (Industrial Plantation Rights).

Expansive ecological destruction occurs due to the behavior of oligarchic networks, namely corporations that are only oriented towards the commercialization of nature and governments fraught with corrupt and collusive practices. Both do not have a good ecoliterate view. Their position in Indonesian novels is contrasted with the attitude of people who live by the principles of ecoliteracy. These principles emerge as an antithesis to the expansive exploitative behavior of corporations and governments that ignore ecological issues.

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