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Environmental Damage in the Indonesian 1965 Coup Literature

by Novita Dewi

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UNIVERSITAS
SANATA DHARMA
Y O G Y A K A R T A



Proceeding

The 3rd Literary Studies Conference

THE 1965 COUP IN INDONESIA: QUESTIONS OF REPRESENTATION 50 YEARS LATER

21 – 22 October 2015

Hosted by

English Letters Department,
Graduate Program in English Language Studies,
Universitas Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Co-hosted with



Kritika Kultura



RAFIL



Ateneo de Manila University,
the Philippines

32

15

PROCEEDING

The 3rd LITERARY STUDIES CONFERENCE

“The 1965 Coup in Indonesia: Questions of Representation 50 Years Later”

Department of English Letters and
Graduate Program in English Language Studies
Universitas Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

co-hosted with

Kritika Kultura
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Faculty of Letters Universitas Sanata Dharma Yogyakarta
21-22 October 2015

PROCEEDING**The 3rd LITERARY STUDIES CONFERENCE****“The 1965 Coup in Indonesia:
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Rector's Address

I would like to extend my warmest regards to all speakers and participants of this conference. Let us ask for God's blessing upon this occasion so it can be an effective means to strengthen our role as researchers and writers. I do hope that the conference facilitates a fruitful sharing and exchange of ideas to respond one of the most difficult tragedies to understand, the 1965 coup in Indonesia.

We might agree to what, how and why the coup happened but it is unbelievable to realize that part of the event was thousand innocent citizens killed in a massive massacre. It has left us a painful scar for the victims as well as created a series of serious problems to all related victims up to now. The anxiety, frustration and resentment are still around and felt deeply by the family members of the victims.

It is really unbelievable and difficult to make sense of the event especially when we perceive ourselves as people of having dignified characters such as respecting others, keeping harmonious way of life, and believing in God. Some people understand that the event was a perfect contradiction: defending *Pancasila* (The Five State-Principles), yet at the same time violating those values and principles.

It has been 50 years now, the coup and its related events have been burdening us especially to those who critically understand and feel how bad the tragedy ruins the life of thousand innocent people. It is time for us to step forward by understanding the tragedy from a new and more humanistic perspective. No matter how difficult it is, because many live-witnesses are still around, understanding the event from the victims' perspectives might be appropriate and provide a scheme to heal the wound of the victims as well as the whole nation.

It is the responsibility of ours as academicians to provide the context, framework and narrated presentation to better understand and make sense of the event. I do hope that such endeavor will shed light on us and especially to politicians and public leaders who have position and authority to propose reconciliation and solution. Therefore, *The 3rd Literary Studies Conference on The 1965 Coup in Indonesia: Questions of Representation 50 Years Later* is really an appropriate and relevant call to all of us.

Have an enjoyable conference and may it bring a better conversations, understanding, and awareness to such important but painful tragedy. Thank you for visiting Sanata Dharma.

Johanes Eka Priyatma, Ph.D.
Universitas Sanata Dharma, Rector

Words from the Dean

Fifty years ago a terrible bloody coup took place in Indonesia. It has been a nightmare in the modern history of Indonesia for it has caused a great number of casualties and a variety of horrible and sad stories to be in circulation in the communities right after the event. Unfortunately, most of the public and official discussions on the incident have been confined merely to the party that masterminded the coup, to the one that benefited from it, or even to the one that was supposed to be blamed, which in a way sounds distorting, reductive, and impoverishing.

I guess the committee of the *Literary Studies Conference*, the international conference which is annually hosted by the English Letters Study Program of Universitas Sanata Dharma, make use of the fiftieth commemoration of the coup as a momentum to reflect upon the history of Indonesia as a nation and part of the global community by raising the issue of the representation of the event in cultural texts and practices, especially literature, which have been produced across the country as the theme of the conference of this year. The choice of the theme is undertaken on the basis of the belief that the production and reproduction of a national discourse of one country is implicated in the production and reproduction of its national cultural texts and practices. As contended by Fredric Jameson, the relationship between the two in the field of literature is particularly evident in the third world literature.

The questions to be answered at the conference are whether the representations of the 1965 coup in Indonesian cultural texts and practices only confirm “what is already known”, conforming to the political mainstream or whether they go beyond that, giving a voice to both those that possess no voice and those that have been silenced. Indonesian cultural texts and practices of the former kind situate themselves as an instrument for maintaining the prevailing structure of power. On the contrary, those of the latter kind serve the function of establishing one’s critical collective awareness.

Indeed, the establishment of one’s critical collective awareness in turn enables him to see the history of his nation with a proper perspective, locating the history as an opportunity to learn as both a human and a citizen. Only when one comes to this awareness, as Ignas Kleden puts it, would he not present himself as a romantic, treating history as a mere repertoire of human virtues, nor would he situate himself as a pathologist, treating it as a mere document of human follies.

Dr. F.X. Siswadi, M.A.
Faculty of Letters, Dean

A Welcome Note from the Chair

As stated in its Strategic Plan 2013 - 2017, one of the short-term goals of Universitas Sanata Dharma is the improvement of the productivity, quality, and scope of its academic contribution and community service. This goal is carried out through various activities such as developing the quality of the education system and improving the quality of the lecturers. Those are supported by the improvement of research quality and research publication. It is emphasized that the researches done by Universitas Sanata Dharma must be qualified and contextual.

The English Letters Department as one of the leading departments at Sanata Dharma University actively participates in reaching this goal by conducting the annual international conference 'Literary Studies Conference'.

This year's conference is different from the previous one because the 3rd Literary Studies Conference is hosted together not only with Ateneo de Manila University but also with Kritika Kultura, RAFIL Consortium, and the Graduate Program in English Language Studies, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

Without neglecting the main focus of Literary Studies Conference which is to focus on the Asian Literature, the selected theme of the conference is "The 1965 Coup in Indonesia: Questions of Representation 50 Years Later."

The theme is selected to commemorate a painful event that occurred in Indonesia 50 years ago. Another reason is because similar experience also occurred in other countries in South East Asia.

It is expected that this conference can give us a chance to see and to question the coup from literary and linguistic perspectives, and to share our ideas so that we can better understand and make sense of what happened 50 years ago.

Finally, have an enjoyable conference and may it bring enlightenment for us to contribute in creating more humane society for all of us.

Anna Fitriati, S.Pd., M.Hum.
Conference Chair

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Environmental Damage in the Indonesian 1965 Coup Literature

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Abstract

Violence, atrocity and human rights abuse in Indonesia have become part of the narratives of the 1965 Coup Literature. Not only has such body of writing enriched Indonesian literature, but it has also contributed to the history of Indonesia in a way inconceivable by the country's official history.

What has been scarcely documented, however, is the fact that environmental problems were also added to the dark past of the coup. Pollution, poverty, economic exploitation, land seizure are among the ecological injustice often surface in some Indonesian literary works using the 1965 coup as backdrops.

This paper, therefore, is to examine Indonesian contemporary fiction in the light of Ecocriticism. It will discuss the ways in which ecological issues in several literary works need to be politically and ideologically contested.

Keywords: *ecocriticism, water pollution, economic injustice*

Introduction

Every act of violence has its own history, and when this harrowing experience lives in literary works, remembering the past is not to revive hostility, but instead to learn from the past. The Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe believes that literature is to help make right what went wrong in official history.¹ Literature, as any other cultural production, has captured the sheer scale of violence of Indonesia's 1965 tragedy with which fingers had been pointed at the suspected communists and their family members whilst people were trampled underfoot by Suharto and his cronies. Given the censorship and repression of the government, the most consistent motif in literary works published right after the coup is of pain and remorse when war turns brother against brother. As Aveling claims in the introduction to his own translation of the Gestapu short stories, human sympathy is present in the works preoccupied mostly by death written by then young writers like Kipandjikusmin, Satyagraha Hoerip, Mohammad Sjoekoer, Martin Aleida, Gerson Poyk in between 1965 - 1970.² Then, the fall of Suharto's New Order saw the profusion of scholastic writing³ alongside literary works revisiting the event by the new emerging writers such as Leila S. Chudori's *Pulang* (2009), Laksmi Pamuntjak's *Amba* (2012) and G.M. Sudarta's short stories. The contemporary writers' representations of the coup resist the imposed amnesia and scared silence of the PKI-alleged coup. Thus, the publication of the varied literary representations of the coup to date has given evidence of the continuing national awareness of unlearning the history of the Indonesian past atrocities. This is indeed a good sign.

However, dearth of ecological concern is conspicuous in these texts be they written before and after the end of Suharto's military regime. As with any mass killing, it has always incriminated territorial claim and confiscation, as victory seals that separate the slaughterers and the slaughtered; and in this eventuality, environment, social and physical alike, was severely damaged. The concern of this paper is to look at the repercussion of violence associated with the 1965 tragedy towards environment.

Environmental Injustice

Why environment matters? Aside human misery, environment vulnerability is no more evident than it is in the time of war. The oil spillage that killed flora and fauna during the Gulf War in the 1990s, for example, has convinced the international law to place sanction against the warring nations to minimize people's suffering and the earth on which we live.⁴ In today's context, the then added "eco-war" to this "war on terror" in the Persian Gulf sounds even more apt. It is not an exaggeration anymore to assume that our planet will soon render deteriorated before it will become uninhabitable.

¹ Chinua Achebe, "The Novelist as Teacher" in *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1975), pp. 52-5.

² See Harry Aveling. Trans. Ed. "GESTAPU: Indonesian Short Stories on the Abortive Communist Coup of 30th September 1965" *Southeast Asian Studies Working Paper No. 6*, Southeast Asian Studies Program University of Hawai'i, 1975.

³ ⁶ for example the works of Heryanto (1999), Wieringa (2000), Zuburchen (2002) among many others.

⁴ Hans-Peter Gasser, "For Better Protection of the Natural Environment in Armed Conflict: A Proposal for Action" *The American Journal of International Law* 89. 3 (July 1995):637-644 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2204184>. Accessed: 30-09-2015 06:10 UTC

It must be mentioned in the outset that unlike the latter nuclear-age wars, the historical violence in Indonesia in 1965 is not an eco-war in the modern sense. But all kinds of cruelty, scapegoating, excommunication and other human-rights violations afflicted to the victims of the 1965 have, in fact, environmental dimensions, be they psychological, physical, and socio-economic. At the psychological and political level, the victims are ostracized. The New Order's notorious "*bersih diri, bersih lingkungan*" [clean self/identity, clean environment] is among the anti-communist campaigns directed to anyone that the authority disliked regardless the person had any communist links in the past or otherwise. Next, at the physical level, the savagery of 1965 tragedy left behind such hard evidence as mass graves and corpses dumped into the seas and rivers.⁵ Finally, at the socio-economic level, the aftermath of the mass murder is destruction of homes and farms. Especially in Java, the Indonesian Communist Party was often associated with the syncretic or nominal Muslim rural farmers vis-à-vis the *Santri* or Muslim-educated populations. With the 1965 pogrom which mostly involved labours and peasant communities, property and land grabs were inevitable. To compare, when talking about mass killing and heinous crimes carried out by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, for example, Leckie points out the importance of addressing cases of land seizure and violations of economic rights.⁶ In all conflicts, the destruction of property, housing, fields and many more always entail ownership and occupancy disputes.

Given that violence is inextricably linked to environment, this paper attempts to show that violence that plagued human beings also tortures nature with which people are further injured. As such, it will discuss one Indonesian 1965 fiction to see how the text juxtaposes environmental inequalities and political violence.

Reading Green in 'Red' Indonesian Literature

Deep reflections on the impact of environmental pollution and natural disasters barely surface in contemporary Indonesian fiction, because, in general, authors often focus more on socio-political (and economic) problems. For example, it is revealed that out of the 25 short-stories with ecology themes published in the national newspapers *Kompas* in between 2010 - 2015, environmental issues are used mostly as setting of place or time; And only a few are engaged in some kind of political commitments for environmental protection.⁷ While the presence of ecological awareness is yet to be seen in contemporary Indonesian literature, it is even harder to see how ecology features in the 1965 coup literature. Most scholarships on the 1965 coup focus on the detailed analysis on the ways the New Order government has silenced the victims by means of oppressions and violence as shown by, to name but two important ones, Hoadley's *Indonesian Literature vs. New Order Orthodoxy: The Aftermath of 1965 -1966* and the more recent work by Taum Sastra dan Politik: *Representasi Tragedi 1965 dalam Negara Orde Baru* [Literature and Politics: Representations of the 1965 Tragedy in the New Order].⁸

Among the scarcity of environmental themes in Indonesian post-coup literature is *Amba* (2012) written by Laksmi Pamuncak. The novel tells about the exploitation done by the New Order government of life in the penal Buru Island. Wiyatmi's study shows that the novel has political, economic and capitalistic dimensions in that the regime has made the natural wealth of the island such as oil fields, eucalyptus trees and others a paradise for foreign investors.⁹ It is argued here that sinister portrayal of the penal colony was deliberately constructed by the authorities to hide the economic exploitation therein. Although Wiyatmi concludes by underlining that the novel's portrayal of nature is to provide setting for what she calls "historical fiction", her study is a good start to explore other contemporary writing with deeper sense of concern about exploitation of nature which is thus far hard to find.

Contrary to anthropocentric reading of literary works portraying people's defeat because of the harshness of place, ecocritics today reflects concern about the destructive impacts of globalization and modernization toward culture and environment. For this, writers combine literature and activism, hence highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of ecocriticism as proven by Allen when drawing parallels between two female writers Arundhati Roy and Ishimure Michiko.¹⁰ Despite the different starts of their environmental engagements, both writers believe in the transforming power of stories as to make a difference in dispelling self-centeredness and building environmentally conscious community. While Roy began with her literary career and has later involved in environmental activism, Michiko first drew public

⁵ See, for example, Nathaniel Mehr's 'Constructive Bloodbath' in *Indonesia: The United States, Britain and the Mass Killing of 1965 - 1966* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 2009).

⁶ Scott Leckie. "United Nations Peace Operations and Housing, Land, and Property Rights in Post-Conflict Settings" in *Housing, Land, and Property Rights in Post-Conflict United Nations and Other Peace Operations: A Comparative Survey and Proposal for Reform*. Ed. Leckie (Singapore: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 3 - 18.

⁷ Novita Dewi, *Sastra Hijau sebagai Gerakan Sosial: Kajian Karya, Penulis dan Komunitasnya*, Unpublished Research Report, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, 2015.

⁸ See Anna-Greta Nilsson Hoadley's *Indonesian Literature vs. New Order Orthodoxy: The Aftermath of 1965 -1966* (Sweden: Department of East Asian Languages Lund University, 2002) and Joseph Yapi Taum's *Sastra dan Politik: Representasi Tragedi 1965 dalam Negara Orde Baru* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2015).

⁹ Wiyatmi. "Berziarah ke Pulau Buru melalui Novel *Amba* Karya Laksmi Pamuncak" in *Prosiding Seminar Bahasa dan Sastra dalam Perspektif Ekologi dan Multikulturalisme*. Yogyakarta: Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, FBS, UNY, 2014, pp. 301 - 310.

¹⁰ Bruce Allen, "Facing the True Cost of Living: Arundhati Roy and Ishimure Michiko on Dams and Writing" in *Coming into Contact: Explorations in Ecocritical Theory and Practice*. (Eds.) A. M. Ingram et al. (London: The University of Georgia Press, 2007), pp. 154 - 167.

attention with her study on the Minamata industrial poisoning incident. The latter is often likened to Rachel Carson in that her widely acclaimed *Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow* (1969) helps raise Japanese people's consciousness of the danger of ecologically unsound projects. Both Asian woman writer-activists have continued campaigning against the destructive power of modernization through their literary pieces. It is critical scrutiny of relationship between literature and ecology and the implications thereof that will be used in reading the work discussed in this paper.

Such interconnectivity between people, place and costs of living is in line with the recently released Papal document on the environment by the Vatican (28 June 2015). Crisis in ecology, consumerism, global inequality, poverty are central to *Laudato si'* ("Praise be to you, my God"). Subtitled "On care for our common home", Pope Francis' encyclical is offered in 8 languages (i.e. Italian, German, English, Spanish, French, Polish, Portuguese and Arabic) and soon translated into world languages not only for Catholics but also everyone on earth interconnected by grave problem of climate change. The Head of the world's largest faith asserts that people who do not love Nature do not love God the Creator of Nature and thus cannot possibly love others. In short, the Holy See claims that environmental crisis results from human activities that ignore the grace of creation. The Pope's encyclical addresses global imbalance whereby the rich (multinational companies) continue to indulge their appetite to exploit nature at the expense of the poor who are the most grieved because they are deprived of the otherwise bounty of nature. What follows is discussion on Aleida's novel in the light of Ecocriticism and Papal encyclical.

The Crying Coup Novel

Written by Martin Aleida, *Jamangilak Tak Pernah Menangis* [Jamangilak Never Cries] (2004) addresses environmental deterioration when telling us about the characters who happen to be suspected Communist partisans in the 1965 tragedy.¹¹ Forced similarity can be drawn between Aleida and the writer-activists aforementioned in terms of their resolute efforts to send message through poetic expressions. A bit of biographical note about the writer is necessary here. Born in in Tanjung Balai, Sumatra in 1943, the devout Muslim Martin Aleida set the novel studied in the Asahan River, the pride and prized nature of his hometown that had turned ugly by the time the novel was written. Arriving in Jakarta in the early 1970s, Aleida formerly took up varied profession and once became a reporter for the newsweekly *Tempo* whilst publishing his short stories in Medan-based newspaper *Indonesia Baru* and *Harian Rakyat* (Jakarta). Since then Aleida has prolifically written short stories and novels to date. Owing to consistency in his writing and artistry, Aleida earned several writing prizes such as the literary award from the Department of National Education in 2004. It is worth mentioning first that *Jamangilak Tak Pernah Menangis* (henceforth *JTPM*) is sen to discuss given the obvious ecological theme, instead of Aleida's earlier 1965 novels such as *Layang-Layang Itu Tak Lagi Mengepak Tinggi-Tinggi* [The Kites No Longer Fly High] published earlier (1999).

Inspired by the pollution of the Asahan River caused by the waste from a multinational rayon factory in Sumatra, *JTPM* tells of a female character named Molek who complains the local authorities so as to suspend the company's business permit. The river from where the residents catch fish, take a bath and procure water has become contaminated. Day by day, floods of increasingly high sand accumulate, and the river gradually recedes. The local government turns a blind eye to this toxic wasted river. Molek braves herself to meet the Regent claiming for taxes paid by the people to at least remove the mound of sand in the river. But Molek's efforts thwart. Her concern for environment and people who live in it are fruitless. Instead, not only are her protests unheeded, she too is abused by the authorities once they know that her son is a runaway political detainee.

JTPM is a rich novel in that the novelist puts together the narratives of double violence, i.e. military aggression and ecological damage with which ordinary people suffer. Thanks to Vandana Shiva that the wealth of literature on eco-feminism has grown rapidly focusing as it does on gender vulnerability. Indeed, women and nature share a common oppression by patriarchal industrialized society; and the novel is just about that. *JTPM*'s apocalyptic tone suggests that the marginalized people are doubly victimized by their denial of rightful space to live. Through the voice of Molek, ecological catastrophe is revealed.

Comparing the novel with Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Gadis Pantai* [Girl of the Coast], Bandel argues that Molek's struggle is that of environmental activism, unlike the struggle of Pramoedya's unnamed heroin.¹² It can be argued here, however, that Molek is as just as strong-willed as the female characters of Pramoedya.¹³ Molek's capacity to change in order to survive makes her appear stronger than, for example, her son Hurlang whose direct impacts of communist stigmatization help ruin him. Right from the beginning, the author introduces Molek to come across as a strong, tough woman. She is a wife and mother who is "luar biasa untuk ukuran perempuan" [extraordinary by measure of average woman], thus appearing pluckier than her husband (*JTPM*, 39). Molek is the one to challenge the army men who sometime come to their house asking for money by force. When the roof tile broke, we are told that she, too, is the one who

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¹¹ Martin Aleida, *Jamangilak tak Pernah Menangis* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2004).

¹² See "Perempuan Pesisir dalam Novel *Gadis Pantai* dan *Jamangilak Tak Pernah Menangis*", *boemipoetra* (November-December 2008): 3-4.

¹³ I argue elsewhere that the female characters in Pramoedya's are determined and often outshine their male counterparts, hence the similarity with Molek's characterization. See "Women of Will for Nation Building in Pramoedya's Three Early Novels" *Kritika Kultura* 20 (February 2013): 1-20. <http://kritikakultura.ateneo.net/issue/no-20/novita-devi-women-of-will>

fixes it. As it is, it becomes clear that her effort to mobilize public protest about the poisoned river appeals more to women than men. It is her persistence that infuriates the authorities that are mostly male.

Inserted in the novel, for example, is the interrogation scene when Molek bravely retorts the interrogators for torturing and accusing her of being an ex-Gerwani, to say nothing of the offensive and impolite words thrown at her. Here, Aleida masterfully rewrites official history by dismantling the gossipy, filthy accounts of the bizarre dancing and genital mutilation of the top-ranked generals performed by the members of the PKI-linked women organization. Saying that the Gerwani, like she herself, struggled to further women's rights and causes, Molek refuses to believe the story:

Ah, don't you chew such a carcass-smelled hoax. Within a few days after the incident, the results of the medical investigation showed that the generals' private organs had remained intact, perfect. So detailed was the examination that there was one that's not circumcised because the victim was Christian. Did you know that the reality had been distorted to inflame the public's anger so that people killed the communists and their allies, as is the case here. In fact, they were good people. I was a witness, like it or not, they converted the thugs in this town to be human again.¹⁴ [My translation here and elsewhere]

Molek goes on to tirade about the obligatory broadcast and school children's viewing of the G30 S/PKI movie every year, corrupt and lying officials, unwarranted arrest of her son and a lot more embarrassing facts about the authority. She does not easily give up and consistently defends herself against the indictment of hiding political motifs behind the riot-turned mass gathering she helped arrange in Padang Bandar. She unswervingly says that what she cares is saving the river.

Using story telling technique, Aleida again makes use of Molek to recount the aftermath of the coup, i.e. land seizure as an act of revenge by the anti-communist people with the help of Muslim clerics supported by the army. She speaks of the fate of the peasants and share-crop farmers who used to be mobilized by the PKI to claim their rights in a series of "aksi sepihak" [unilateral declarations] but later became the main target of killing where "hukum dan undang-undang kehilangan makna di hadapan balas dendam" [law and constitutions have no meaning in the face of revenge] (JTPM, 65). Recalling the horror of the 1965 war, Molek details that in the eastern and central part of Java large properties belonging to the Islamic boarding schools were reclaimed as the table was now turned.

As the story unfolds, we see that the brutality continues in post-conflict times where economic and political interests collide. The pollution of the Asahan water is an evidence of the avarice of the power of the day as to ignore the ordinary people's sufferings. Big multinational company has succeeded in buying off the officials to misuse their power for private gains at the expense of environmental deterioration. Here the Papal encyclical rings true: Environmental damage is inseparable from human and ethical degeneration. It is a big lie that the earth's supply is infinite. As Mahatma Gandhi says, Nature is accessible for people's need but not for people's greed.

This novel thus unveils the fact that the maltreatment of nature is a debt that must at some time be terribly repaid by the next generation. A biting paragraph ends the novel thus:

For two years, an ill-treated river has to wait for the change of fate that has been handed to a woman who vowed to do something to save her. During that time, thousands of people who live on both sides of the river have to await for the return of the people who has encouraged and convinced them that the city about to sink will be salvaged by the strong will to fight together that appears from the minds and hearts of the entire population. Otherwise, the river will remain as a mere stopover, where people earn money, accumulate wealth, as promised by every port city. [...] Then, the river must polish herself, wash the dirt and rust cast by passers-by: to the Asahan River.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ah, jangan kau kunyah-kunyah cerita bohong yang sudah berbau bangkai it. Hanya beberapa hari setelah kejadian, hasil pemeriksaan dokter menyebutkan kemaluan para jenderal semuanya utuh, sempurna. Begitu rinci hasil pemeriksaan itu, sehingga disebutkan ada satu yang tidak disunat karena korban beragama Kristen. Tahukah kau bahwa kenyataan telah diputarbalikkan untuk memanas-manasi masyarakat supaya orang membunuh orang-orang komunis dan konco-konconya, seperti yang terjadi di sini. Padahal, mereka orang-orang baik. Aku menjadi saksi, suka atau tidak, kenyataannya, mereka membalikkan preman di kota ini menjadi manusia. (JTPM, 107)

¹⁵ Selama dua tahun, sebatang sungai yang teraniaya harus menunda perubahan nasib yang telah diserahkan kepada seorang perempuan yang bersumpah akan berbuat sesuatu untuk menyelamatkannya. Selama itu pula, ribuan orang yang bermukim di kedua tepi sungai itu harus menanti pulangnya orang yang telah menggerakkan dan meyakinkan mereka bahwa kota yang terancam tenggelam itu akan bisa ditolong dengan kehendak memperjuangkannya dengan niat yang padu, yang muncul di dalam pikiran dan hati seluruh penduduk. Kalau tidak, dia akan tetap tinggal sebagai persinggahan semata, tempat orang mengadu nasib, mengumpulkan kekayaan, sebagaimana dijanjikan setiap kota. pelabuhan.[...] Maka, sungai harus mengasah dirinya sendiri, membasuh daki dan karat yang dicampakkan orang yang lalu ke situ: ke Sungai Asahan. (JTPM, 238 - 239)

Concluding Remarks

Ecological reflections can hardly be seen in Indonesian literary works using the drawback of the 1965 coup. The ways in which contemporary literature depicts violence, trauma, and all sorts of atrocity have not been sufficiently sensitive to ecological issues found in the literary texts. It would seem that change about the understanding of human nature is somewhat slow from anthropocentric to ecologically aware as shown in the 1965 literary representations throughout the span of 50 years. Be that as it may, no smaller change will do, and Martin Aleida's novel, to say the least, sparks a light of hope. If we believe that enthralling stories have transformative power to make us imagine, understand and sympathize with the wretched lives of others, more ecologically-inclined literature is needed. Finally, Pope Francis's call for ecological conversion is to tread the same road with efforts to reconcile with the agony of the 1965 history believing that the common enemy now lurking ahead is but the gradual loss of our common home and the catastrophic implications thereof.

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