



## Land Conversion in Abroorza A. Yusra's Novel *Danum*: A Study of Literary Ecology

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### ABSTRACT

Land conversion is a change in land function that impacts the environment and the socio-economic conditions of the community. This study examines the process of land conversion in Abroorza A. Yusra's novel *Danum*, including land conversion patterns, their impacts, and the resulting social conflicts. The purpose of this study is to describe the land conversion patterns, their impacts, and the social conflicts that arise as a result of this land conversion process. This study uses Literary Ecology theory to examine the relationship between humans and nature, Sihalohe's land conversion theory on the patterns and impacts of land conversion, and Soekanto's social conflict theory as a basis for analyzing the resulting social conflicts. This study uses a descriptive method with data in the form of excerpts from the novel *Danum* that represent land conversion patterns, their impacts, and the resulting social conflicts. The primary data source is Abroorza A. Yusra's novel *Danum*, which was examined through literature review. Data analysis was conducted through filtering, thematic grouping, interpretation of meaning, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that (1) Abroorza A. Yusra's novel *Danum* depicts three patterns of land conversion, a planned enclave pattern through collusion of power, a pattern resulting from social and economic pressure, and a pattern of agrarian adaptation to a capitalist economy. (2) This land conversion has three impacts, namely changes in land ownership from indigenous communities to companies, changes in land use that damage the environment in the form of loss of customary forests, and social changes in communities. (3) In addition, three forms of social conflict emerged according to Soekanto, including politics, class, and individuals, which highlight social dynamics, human-nature relationships, and changes in values due to land conversion. *Danum* displays social complexity, human-nature interactions, and changes in values due to land conversion.

*Keywords:* land conversion, novel, literary ecology

## Konversi Lahan dalam Novel *Danum* Karya Abroorza A. Yusra: Kajian Ekologi Sastra

### ABSTRAK

Konversi lahan adalah perubahan fungsi lahan yang berdampak pada lingkungan serta kondisi sosial ekonomi masyarakat. Penelitian ini menyoroti proses konversi lahan dalam novel *Danum* karya Abroorza A. Yusra, meliputi pola konversi lahan, dampaknya, serta konflik sosial yang muncul. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mendeskripsikan pola konversi lahan, dampaknya, serta konflik sosial yang muncul akibat proses perubahan lahan tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Ekologi Sastra untuk menelaah relasi manusia dan alam, teori konversi lahan Sihalohe mengenai pola serta dampak konversi lahan, serta teori konflik sosial Soekanto sebagai dasar menganalisis pertentangan sosial yang muncul. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif dengan data berupa kutipan novel *Danum* yang merepresentasikan pola konversi lahan, dampaknya, dan konflik sosial yang ditimbulkannya. Sumber data utama adalah novel *Danum* karya Abroorza A. Yusra, yang dikaji melalui studi kepustakaan. Analisis data dilakukan melalui penyaringan, pengelompokan tematik, penafsiran makna, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa (1) Novel *Danum* karya Abroorza A. Yusra menggambarkan tiga pola konversi lahan, pola *enclave* yang terencana melalui kolusi kekuasaan, pola akibat tekanan sosial dan ekonomi, serta pola adaptasi agraris terhadap ekonomi kapitalis. (2) Konversi lahan ini menimbulkan tiga dampak, yakni perubahan penguasaan lahan dari masyarakat adat ke perusahaan, perubahan penggunaan lahan yang merusak lingkungan berupa hilangnya hutan adat, serta perubahan sosial komunitas. (3) Selain itu, muncul tiga bentuk konflik sosial menurut Soekanto, meliputi politik, kelas, dan individu, yang menyoroti dinamika sosial, hubungan manusia-alam, serta perubahan nilai akibat alih fungsi lahan. *Danum* menampilkan kompleksitas sosial, interaksi manusia-alam, dan perubahan nilai akibat konversi lahan.

*Keywords:* konversi lahan, novel, ekologi sastra

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## INTRODUCTION

The environment has become an increasingly pressing global issue with the increasing impacts of climate change, deforestation, pollution, and ecosystem damage. Rapid population growth, industrial expansion, and uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources exacerbate these conditions, leading to shrinking green spaces and reducing water catchment areas. This disrupts ecosystem balance, triggers natural disasters, and reduces the quality of life (Sundari, 2021:6003).

The expansion of the industrial sector is a major cause of environmental problems. Industrial activities, including the development of industrial estates, the establishment of factories, and the massive exploitation of natural resources, often lead to land conversion, the change in land function from its natural or productive state to a new use (Kustiawan, in Hatu, 2018:39). Uncontrolled land conversion often compromises protective functions, damages forests and ecosystems, and threatens the economic well-being of local communities.

In the face of this reality, humans record, understand, and critique the environment and social dynamics, one way being through literature, which serves as a medium of expression (Mujiningsih et al., in Gultom et al., 2024:179). In literary works, nature can appear as a setting or a main theme, reflecting social, cultural, political, and environmental issues at the time of their creation (Nurhasanah et al., in Oktaviani & Rudin, 2024:255). Novels, as prose fiction ranging in length between short stories and romances, are capable of depicting significant events and critical situations in human life, making them an effective means of critiquing environmental issues, including land conversion.

The novel "Danum" by Abroorza A. Yusra serves as an example of literary representation of the issue of land conversion. This novel addresses the conflict arising from the expansion of a palm oil plantation in Sakai Village, West Kalimantan, which threatens the rights of the Uud Danum community. PT S's activities have transformed the vil-

lage landscape, destroyed customary forests, ignored river boundaries, and extended plantation permits into residential areas. Government support for the company exacerbates the situation, leading some residents to support the industry for its economic benefits, while others reject it due to environmental damage and threats to traditional livelihoods, demonstrating a multidimensional social conflict involving economic, environmental, and political interests.

Based on this description, this research focuses on the issue of land conversion in the context of the novel *Danum*. This includes how land conversion patterns are represented in the novel, the impacts of land conversion, and how social conflict arises as a result of land conversion. Accordingly, this research aims to describe the land conversion patterns depicted in the novel *Danum*, its impact on the environment and society, and the forms of social conflict that arise as a result. Through a literary ecology perspective, this research seeks to examine how literary texts portray environmental damage, the struggle for living space, and the accompanying social dynamics.

This research is expected to provide benefits from academic, practical, and socio-cultural perspectives. Academically, this research can enrich the study of literary ecology, particularly regarding the representation of land conversion and social conflict in modern Indonesian literature. Practically, the results of this research can serve as a reference in literature learning in schools to foster ecological awareness through literary texts. From a socio-cultural perspective, this research has the potential to increase public understanding of the impacts of land conversion and the importance of maintaining a balance between development and environmental sustainability.

This research will be examined within the framework of literary ecology. Didipu (2024:165) states that literary ecology is understood as an interdisciplinary approach that highlights the relationship between literature and the environment. This approach specifically examines various en-



environmental issues reflected in literary works, such as land conversion. In analyzing this research problem, the concept of land conversion patterns used refers to Sihalohe's idea (in Hatu, 2018:40), which states that land conversion can be divided into several patterns, including: gradual conversion with a sporadic character due to low land productivity and economic pressures; systematic conversion with an enclave pattern due to power collusion; adaptive conversion related to population growth; conversion triggered by social problems; conversion without structural barriers; conversion related to agrarian adjustment; and multifunctional conversion that does not follow a specific pattern. All of these patterns not only change the physical conditions of space but also impact the social, economic, and cultural structures of society.

The impacts of land conversion are also multi-layered. Sihalohe (in Hatu, 2018:40) explains that land conversion impacts land ownership and use patterns, agrarian relations, livelihoods, as well as social structures and community life. When such land conversions harm local communities, social inequality often arises and leads to conflict, particularly when corporate economic interests clash with the rights of indigenous communities (Armaya, 2025:2).

This situation then gives rise to various forms of social conflict. Conflicts arise from clashing interests, values, and perspectives within society. Coser (in Alwi, 2016:9) defines social conflict as an effort to fight for values, status, power, and limited resources, while Lawang (in Alwi, 2016:10) adds that conflict can also arise as an attempt to subjugate others. Soerjono Soekanto (in Alwi, 2016:14) categorizes social conflict into five categories: individual, racial, social class, political, and international. These forms of conflict commonly occur when communities must confront changes in values and social structures, for example in the context of the conversion of agricultural land to industrial areas.

Several previous studies provide relevant foundations, although they have different focuses. Sudarma et al. (2024) examined the impact of land

conversion on farmer welfare and food security, while Atzaliz (2024), Gultom et al. (2024), and Daeng et al. (2025) focused more on cultural representations, human relations with the environment, and the ecological conditions of Kalimantan in the novel *Danum*. Unlike these studies, this study combines analysis of land conversion and social conflict simultaneously, allowing for a more comprehensive examination of the relationship between ecological change, social dynamics, and cultural representation in literary texts.

## METHOD

This research uses an in-depth and comprehensive qualitative approach to understand and describe phenomena in their natural context (Rachman et al., 2024:137). This approach allows researchers to describe and explore problems in detail, as well as analyze facts supported by accurate interpretations, particularly within the context of literary works. This allows the research to focus on understanding and solving problems related to the importance of environmental sustainability.

The type of research used is descriptive analytic, a method that describes relevant facts and then analyzes them to discover more complex patterns, relationships, and insights (Ratna, in Damayanti et al., 2023:503). This method allows researchers to outline facts that support the analysis of land conversion patterns and their impacts in the novel *Danum*, as well as to construct a systematic narrative regarding the phenomena studied. Thus, this method provides a foundation for an in-depth understanding of the representation of land conversion in literary works and the relationships between characters, settings, and themes that reflect environmental conditions, while also strengthening the study of literary ecology.

The research data consists of quotations from the novel *Danum* that describe land conversion patterns, their impacts, and the social conflicts that arise from land conversion. The primary source for this research is the novel "*Danum*" by Abroorza A. Yusra, published by Enggang Media in 2021,

which serves as material for describing and analyzing the patterns and impacts of land conversion through literary narrative.

Data collection was conducted through a systematic literature review, following the steps outlined by Zed (2008:3). The researcher prepared equipment such as stationery, notebooks, and sticky notes to highlight key sections in the novel relevant to the issues of land conversion and social conflict. A working bibliography was compiled as an initial list of reading materials, including the novel "Danum" as the primary source, as well as books, journals, and articles supporting the theory of literary ecology, land conversion, and social conflict. The research time was managed flexibly to ensure consistency in reading, note-taking, and analyzing the novel's content. The reading process was carried out carefully and repeatedly, with key quotations noted to ensure easy tracking and avoid data loss.

Data analysis was conducted systematically according to the steps outlined by Hamidi (in Taqwiem, 2019:16) and Razak (2017:19). The analysis process began with selecting or reducing irrelevant data to ensure a more organized record containing only sections that support the research focus. The data were then classified based on shared characteristics, focusing on the patterns and impacts of land conversion and the social conflicts that arose as a result of this process. Next, the data were interpreted using Sihaloho's theory of land conversion patterns and their impacts and Soerjono Soekanto's concept of forms of social conflict, resulting in an in-depth description that represents the research problem. The final stage was drawing conclusions to answer the research problem formulation, so that the research findings were presented comprehensively and systematically.

## RESULT

Research on Abroorza A. Yusra's novel, *Danum*, focuses on the issue of land conversion, its impact on the environment and local communities, and the social conflicts triggered by land conversion, using a literary ecology approach. This section will describe the research data,

including: (1) the land conversion patterns depicted in the story, (2) the impacts resulting from land conversion, and (3) the social conflicts that arise in response to land conversion.

### 1. Land Conversion Patterns in the Novel, *Danum*

The research results indicate that in Abroorza A. Yusra's novel, *Danum*, three of the seven land conversion patterns identified by Sihaloho are found: (1) a systematic enclave-based conversion pattern, (2) a conversion pattern resulting from social problems, and (3) an agrarian adaptation conversion pattern. These three patterns depict various forms of land conversion, ranging from planned and legal to those driven by social pressures and economic needs.

The systematic enclave-like conversion pattern in Abroorza A. Yusra's *Danum* is presented as a form of land conversion that occurs in a planned, centralized, and large-scale manner. This process occurs simultaneously and is legalized through government policy, but often ignores the social and ecological conditions of the local community. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

*"Empat bulan lalu, Santo yang geram karena luasan sawit PT S terus mengancam kampungnya, mengirim sebuah surat kepada Yang Terhormat pejabat negara di Jakarta. Isinya adalah keluhan atas tindakan pelanggaran HAM, pelanggaran undang-undang lingkungan, dan pelanggaran undang-undang soal tata ruang"* (Yusra, 2021:2)

"Four months ago, Santo, furious that PT S's oil palm plantation continued to threaten his village, sent a letter to the Honorable State Officials in Jakarta. The letter contained a complaint about human rights violations, environmental laws, and spatial planning laws." (Yusra, 2021:2)

This quote clearly demonstrates Santo's frustration with PT S's oil palm expansion, which threatens his village. The phrase "human rights violations, environmental laws, and spatial planning laws" is the central point of this quote. This emphasizes that the land conversion not only damages the environment but also violates the law.



Despite this, the expansion process continues, indicating the inaction or complicity of authorities who should be enforcing the law. Santo's decision to send a letter to officials in Jakarta indicates that legal protections at the local level are not being implemented. Therefore, this quote illustrates a form of conversion by authorities and government permits that involves government approval or negligence, not simply corporate action.

Map manipulation is also part of this conversion pattern. This occurs when maps are used as a tool of power to legitimize land ownership, often in ways that expose or contradict real conditions on the ground. In Abroorza A. Yusra's novel, "Danum," this problem is explicitly explained through a narrative that shows how maps are used manipulatively by both companies and local governments. This is reflected in the following quotes.

*"Sekarang, kawasan ini juga masuk area sawit. Bayangkan." Suara Santo meninggi. "Aku sudah lihat peta mereka. Liang Sellnep, Bukit Sellnep, Korong Ngupak, masuk dalam peta mereka. Dan bupati iya-ya saja. Tidak diperiksa lagi. Itu kan kelewatan batas" (Yusra, 2021:40)*

"Now, this area is also included in the oil palm plantation. Imagine that." Santo's voice rose. "I've seen their maps. Liang Sellnep, Bukit Sellnep, Korong Ngupak are all included in their maps. And the regent just said yes. No further investigation. That's crossing the line." (Yusra, 2021:40)

The practice of falsifying or distorting maps in a systematic, enclave-like pattern is clearly evident in this quote. The statement, "I've seen their maps. Liang Sellnep, Bukit Sellnep, Korong Ngupak are all included in their maps" is the most prominent indication that the company included important and sacred areas within the concession area without legal basis or community consent. Spaces that may have ecological, historical, or spiritual value were unilaterally included through administrative manipulation to appear legitimate in the mapping documents. The phrase, "And the regent just said yes. No further investigation" further confirms that the process took place without review by the authorities, who accepted

the maps without verification and without reference to field conditions. This situation demonstrates a covert collusion between those in power and the company, so that maps no longer serve as objective geographical representations but instead become instruments of legitimacy to facilitate land conversion.

The pattern of conversion due to social issues in Danum emerged when changes in land use were driven by the community's need to seek better living conditions, primarily due to economic constraints and changing perspectives. Economic incentives were a strong reason for the community to accept and even justify the presence of the palm oil industry. This was evident when work on the plantation was seen as a new income opportunity, as illustrated in Amat's statement.

*"Aku lakukan ini bukan untuk aku sendiri Bens, tapi untuk semua orang kampung kita... ekonomi yang baik itu, ya muncul dari kampung, dari orang-orang seperti kita ini". (Yusra, 2021:116)*

"I'm not doing this for myself, Bens, but for everyone in our village... a good economy comes from the village, from people like us." (Yusra, 2021:116)

The character Amat defends his involvement in land conversion practices on the grounds of collective village economic progress. The most prominent line, "a good economy comes from the village," demonstrates that conversion is seen as a path to village prosperity. In this context, the hope for economic improvement is the primary reason for accepting land conversion, despite its negative impacts on the environment and living space. This view illustrates how economic values are often placed above ecological considerations. Furthermore, the narrative demonstrates the moral dilemma faced by the community between preserving the environment and pursuing material well-being.

Furthermore, agrarian adaptation conversion, which arises from the desire to increase agricultural yields, is a pattern of land conversion or management carried out with the aim of increasing productivity and profits through agricultural

commodities considered more profitable than before. In the novel "Danum" by Abroorza A. Yusra, one example is oil palm being seen as a path to progress. However, this narrative of progress often ignores the potential social and ecological impacts that may arise behind this growth. This will be increasingly clear through the following quote.

*"Posisi karet sekarang tidak kuat Bens. Yang kuat sekarang sawit. Aku bisa bertaruh, semua kampung yang dimasuki sawit sepuluh tahun lagi nanti maju. Lihat Sanggau. Lihat Bengkayang. Pernah kau ke sana, Bens?"* (Yusra, 2021:117)

"Rubber isn't strong right now, Bens. What's strong now is oil palm. I can bet that every village where oil palm enters will be successful in ten years. Look at Sanggau. Look at Bengkayang. Have you ever been there, Bens?" (Yusra, 2021:117)

In this quote, Amat compares rubber and oil palm, emphasizing that rubber is no longer profitable, while oil palm is seen as a symbol of new economic power. His conviction is evident in the statement "all villages where oil palm enters will be successful in ten years," reinforced by examples of regions like Sanggau and Bengkayang. This view demonstrates that land conversion to oil palm is not only driven by economic reasons, but also by the narrative that oil palm brings progress and modernity. Belief in the success of other regions creates a domino effect, making oil palm not just a commodity but also a marker of social status and village development.

## 2. Impacts of Land Conversion in the Novel Danum

The findings of this study indicate that Abroorza A. Yusra's novel, *Danum*, represents three of the five types of impacts of land conversion according to Sihalohe: changes in land tenure patterns, changes in land use patterns, and changes in social structures and community life. These three impacts demonstrate that land conversion always gives rise to unique consequences in response to conversion. The following description explains

each form of land conversion impact seen in the novel, *Danum*.

Land tenure patterns are evident in who owns the land and how access to it is regulated. In the novel, *Danum*, a shift in ownership occurs when land previously managed by the community is transferred to a plantation company, thus restricting or even eliminating the community's access to the land. This situation marks a shift from traditional ownership to a system of ownership oriented towards large-scale economic interests. Based on an analysis of quotations in the novel, one form of this change is the loss of community control over the land and resources they previously controlled. This can be seen in the following quotation.

*Suara Santo meninggi. "Aku sudah lihat peta mereka. Liang Sellnep, Bukit Sellnep, Korong Ngupak, masuk dalam peta mereka. Dan bupati iya-iya saja. Tidak diperiksa lagi. Itu kan melewati batas."* (Yusra, 2021:40)

Santo's voice rose. "I've seen their map. Liang Sellnep, Bukit Sellnep, Korong Ngupak are all on their map. And the regent just said yes. No further investigation. That's crossing the line." (Yusra, 2021:40)

Santos' anger in this quote clearly demonstrates how the community has lost control over their land and resources. The phrase "Liang Selinep, Bukit Selinep, Korong Ngupak are all on their map" indicates that the community's living space has been annexed by outsiders without their consent. Meanwhile, the phrase "And the regent just said yes. No further investigation" demonstrates the government's bias toward the company, leaving the community powerless to defend their land rights. This situation indicates a loss of community control, replaced by formal legitimacy that favors corporate interests.

Another visible impact is the change in land use patterns. This change is evident in how both the community and outsiders utilize the land's resources. Before the conversion, the land was used for subsistence farming, hunting, gathering forest products, and utilizing rivers for daily needs. However, after the conversion, its use changed drastically when the area that was once the



community's living space was converted into a large-scale oil palm plantation. This shift in function not only eliminated traditional livelihoods but also had socio-ecological impacts, such as the loss of access to clean water and the exploitation of forests and natural resources that encroached on customary forests. As illustrated in the following quote.

*"Suatu hari, dekat sebuah sungai, tim melihat gelondongan kayu belian yang disusun. Ini menjadi pemandangan yang membuat rombongan terheran-heran dan bertanya-tanya, punya siapa gelondongan itu, untuk apa, bukankah wilayah ini termasuk hurung haras himbak yang artinya tidak boleh ada sebatang pohon pun tumbang. Sementara para porter Soban, menjawab tidak tahu ketika ditanya"* (Yusra, 2021:76)

"One day, near a river, the team saw stacked belian logs. This sight astonished the group, who wondered: Who owned the logs, what were they for, and wasn't this area considered a hurung haras himbak (forest area), meaning not a single tree was allowed to fall? Meanwhile, the Soban porters, when asked, said they didn't know." (Yusra, 2021:76)

The phrase "stacked belian logs" indicates deliberate and organized logging. The group's astonishment, as evident in the phrase "isn't this area considered a hurung haras himbak (forest area), meaning not a single tree was allowed to fall," confirms that the area is a forbidden forest according to customary law. Customary law clearly prohibits logging in this area, so the presence of stacked logs is evidence that exploitation is being carried out in violation of local norms and wisdom that preserve the forest. The Soban porters' ignorance also suggests that the practice is being carried out covertly by outsiders for commercial gain. Thus, the quote shows that land conversion in the novel Danum not only damages the ecological function of the forest, but also ignores the customary values that serve as guidelines for the community in managing the environment sustainably.

*"Kalau Liang Sellnep ini sampai terkena sawit, habis semua ikan, habis semua air, terkena*

*racun pupuk. Sampai ke hilir sana. Burung-burung tadi yang kita lihat, jangan harap masih ada".* (Yusra, 2021:41)

"If Liang Sellnep is affected by oil palm plantations, all the fish will be gone, all the water will be poisoned by fertilizers. It will even reach downstream. Don't expect those birds we saw to be around anymore."

(Yusra, 2021:41)

The statement "Because their forest was cleared by PT S, their river is no longer drinkable. Just bathing makes them itchy. Poison and fertilizer are what fill the river" clearly demonstrates the damage to water resources and the socio-ecological environment caused by land conversion. This passage emphasizes that forest loss has had serious consequences, polluting the river, which was previously the community's main source of clean water. The statement "Just bathing makes you itchy" demonstrates that environmental quality has drastically declined, disrupting basic needs like drinking water and sanitation. Furthermore, the statement "Now, the company also wants to take over the South section. Even though that's where the farm is located. It also borders the customary forest. It directly connects to the Sakai region" emphasizes that ecological damage also contributes to social problems, as it threatens the sustainability of agricultural land and the existence of customary territories. Thus, this quote illustrates how corporate exploitation not only destroys aquatic ecosystems but also disrupts the socio-ecological balance of local communities that depend on forests, rivers, and fields for their primary livelihoods.

The final impact identified is social and community change. This change encompasses how communities work, interact, and manage resources. In Abroorza A. Yusra's novel, Danum, social and community change emerges when local communities, who previously lived in harmony with nature and managed forests, rivers, and fields for subsistence needs, are confronted by the entry of a plantation company. This section reveals a form of social and community change, namely the

weakening of community solidarity and collective awareness. This is illustrated in the following quotes.

“Jelas baginya, usaha yang disusuri lebih terjal, karena masalah bukan hanya dari luar. Kerusakan sudah berbenih dari dalam, dari orang-orang desa sendiri. Jika nanti perusahaan masuk, itu hanya akan menjadi pemantik, bukan sebab utama”. (Yuzra, 2021:77)

"It was clear to him that the path he was taking was more difficult, because the problem wasn't just external. The damage had already begun to take root within, within the villagers themselves. If a company were to enter, it would only be a catalyst, not the primary cause." (Yuzra, 2021:77)

Signs of internal division within the community are clearly visible in this quote. The phrase "the damage had already begun to take root within, within the villagers themselves" emphasizes that community solidarity is weakening due to conflicts and vested interests within the community itself. This situation suggests that the primary threat to unity comes not from external parties, but from the fracturing of collective consciousness among residents. Another passage, "if a company were to enter, it would only be a catalyst, not the primary cause," reinforces that internal disharmony has left the community fragile and vulnerable. This illustrates how land conversion exacerbates social divisions and erodes the community's collective power to protect their land and resources.

### 3. Social Conflicts Arising from Land Conversion

Yusra presents three forms of social conflict that align with Soerjono Soekanto's classification: political conflict, social class conflict, and individual conflict. Political conflict is evident in clashes of interests between communities and those in power who support companies, while social class conflict arises from the unequal position between local communities and capital owners. Individual conflict, on the other hand, is evident in friction between characters due to differing

views on land conversion. These three forms of conflict demonstrate that land conversion not only impacts economic and environmental aspects but also triggers social struggles at various levels, reinforcing the relevance of Soekanto's conflict theory in interpreting the dynamics emerging in the novel, *Danum*.

The political conflict in the novel, *Danum*, is evident through clashes between communities and authorities who support companies. The existence of plantation companies, which receive legitimacy from state officials, triggers tensions because communities feel their land rights are being ignored. This situation aligns with Soerjono Soekanto's view that political conflict arises from differing interests in the struggle for or use of power. In the novel, policies favoring companies weaken the community's position, making conflict inevitable. The political conflict found in this novel is the government's impartial policy as depicted in the following quote.

*"Hah, bupati? Peduli pun tidak. Tak kau dengar, ia mengeluarkan surat, mendukung perusahaan masuk ke sini. Orang Jakarta sana pun mendiamkan."* (Yuzra, 2021:41)

"Huh, the regent? He doesn't even care. You didn't hear him, he issued a letter supporting the company's entry here. The people over there in Jakarta kept quiet." (Yuzra, 2021:41)

This quote demonstrates a form of political conflict rooted in government policy. The passage "he issued a letter supporting the company's entry here" clearly demonstrates that the local government, in this case the regent, used its authority to issue policies that favored plantation companies. These policies caused opposition because they harmed the community, who lost their land rights. Furthermore, the statement "The people over there in Jakarta kept quiet" reinforces the idea that the central government contributed to exacerbating the conflict by allowing this unfair situation to persist. Thus, this quote represents political conflict driven by government policy, where official decisions that should protect the community instead become a source of tension and resistance.



The next conflict identified is social class conflict. Social class conflict is a conflict that arises from differences in interests, status, and access to resources between dominant groups with power and capital and weak or marginalized groups. In the novel *Danum* by Abroorza A. Yusra, this conflict is seen through the clash of values and perspectives between society and the company, as depicted in the following quote.

*"Kita tidak lagi hidup di zaman barter barang, bukan?" "Benar. Hanya mengingatkan bahwa uang bukan masalah utama di sini." "Tidak ada yang beranggapan seperti itu. Tetapi kita hidup ketika semua hal diukur lewat uang. Pernah Bapak dengar kalimat, uang bukan segalanya, tetapi segalanya butuh uang? Apa yang diproduksi oleh tanah, air, seperti yang bapak maksudkan tadi, nantinya juga akan diuangkan. Atau semua orang harus menjadi petani baru bisa makan?"* sanggah Roland. Cukup jelas, Roland sedang berusaha keras mempertahankan kesabarannya. Nadanya bersilih ganti antara sinis dan optimis". (Yuzra, 2021:216)

"We no longer live in an age of bartering, do we?" "That's right. Just a reminder that money isn't the main issue here." "No one thinks that way. But we live in a time when everything is measured in money. Have you ever heard the saying, money isn't everything, but everything needs money? What is produced by the land, water, as you mentioned earlier, will eventually be converted into money. Or will everyone have to become a farmer to be able to eat?" Roland argued. It was clear that Roland was struggling to maintain his composure. The tone alternates between cynicism and optimism. (Yuzra, 2021:216)

This quote depicts a clash of values between Roland, the company CEO, and Santo, a representative of the indigenous community. Roland's statements, such as "we live in a time when everything is measured in money" and "what the land and water produce... will eventually be monetized," demonstrate his view of land and forests solely as economic commodities. This contrasts with Santo's perspective, which views

land as ecological, social, and a pillar of community sustainability. Santo's statement, "no one thinks that way," illustrates his efforts to uphold these values, while Roland's cynical and confident response underscores the tension in their dialogue. This conflict demonstrates how differing perspectives between those with economic power and local communities can fuel tensions, with land and forests symbolizing the clash between financial interests and the indigenous community's right to life. This difference in values gives rise to heated debate and makes it difficult to reach an agreement. Furthermore, the social conflict encountered is individual conflict. In the context of Abroorza A. Yusra's novel, *Danum*, individual conflict is evident in Santo's struggle with other characters like Leto and Roland, where differing perceptions of forest conditions, cultural values, and economic interests create personal tensions, is evident in the following quote. In *Danum's* novel, we find a form of individual conflict, namely personal and ego tensions.

*"Santo berdiri, "Satu lagi, apa Bapak kira, kami tidak bisa maju tanpa perusahaan? Atau Bapak merasa punya hak untuk mengatur masa depan kami?" "Pertanyaan itu tidak dijawab Roland".* (Yuzra, 2021:219)

"Santo stood up and asked, "One more thing, do you think we can't progress without the company? Or do you feel you have the right to determine our future?" Roland didn't answer that question." (Yuzra, 2021:219)

Roland's statement, "You think the company is a god!" His voice, raised, demonstrates the heightened emotions and loss of control in the conversation. This tension stems from clashing interests and egos, as Roland attempts to assert the company's authority while Santo rejects practices that harm the community. This situation demonstrates how personal conflict can escalate into emotional confrontation, while also reflecting the underlying differences in values and perspectives. This moment also emphasizes how ego and positions of power can hinder communication and demonstrates how

psychological pressure in interactions between characters can influence the decision-making process.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings presented previously, the researcher will present a discussion of the problems identified in this study. The purpose of this discussion is to facilitate understanding and clarify the research problem and objectives. The focus of this discussion covers the land conversion patterns in the novel "Danum," its impacts, and the social conflicts that arise from this process.

Land conversion in Abroorza A. Yusra's novel "Danum" reflects complex changes in people's living spaces due to the influence of power, economics, and social dynamics. Referring to Sihaloho's classification, this study identified three main patterns of land conversion in the novel: a systematic enclave pattern, a pattern resulting from social problems, and an agrarian adaptation pattern. These three patterns are interrelated and demonstrate that changes in land use are not only triggered by political policies and economic expansion, but also by shifting values and societal efforts to adapt to modernity.

The systematic enclave pattern of land conversion illustrates a planned, centralized, and legalized land conversion process by those in power, yet it ignores the rights of indigenous communities and damages ecosystems. According to Dharmawan et al. (2007:262), "enclave" land conversion refers to a stretch of land that is converted simultaneously. In Danum, this pattern is evident through the expansion of PT S's territory, facilitated by the local government through permit issuance without regard for social and environmental aspects, as well as map manipulation. First, the government grants permits unilaterally without considering social and environmental aspects. The Regent in the story is depicted as siding with the company, as Sangalang (2025:168) found that agrarian conflicts in Central Kalimantan often arise from overlapping concession permits with customary areas. Second,

map manipulation is carried out to erase the existence of settlements by depicting them as "bushes," in line with Sari's (2021:7) finding that digital maps often ignore social realities on the ground.

Unlike the first pattern, the social conversion pattern in Danum highlights how economic pressures and social change influence communities' decisions to change land use. Within the political ecology framework, according to Cockburn & Ridgeway (in Herdiansyah, 2019:5), environmental exploitation is often rooted in power relations and economic needs. Communities facing poverty consider selling land as a solution, as found in research by Saihuna et al. (2024:14), who noted that residents' incomes increased after land conversion. However, Danum reveals the dark side behind this promise of prosperity: environmental damage and the moral dilemma between economic needs and environmental sustainability.

Meanwhile, the agrarian adaptation conversion pattern demonstrates local communities' efforts to adapt to a new, market-oriented economic system. In the novel, Danum, oil palm plantations symbolize the shift from subsistence agriculture to a capitalist economy, where land is no longer viewed as a source of food but as an investment asset. Jannah et al. (2020:8) explain that oil palm plantations create jobs and increase community incomes, so this conversion can be seen as a survival strategy. This view aligns with the representation of the community in Danum, which struggles to adapt economically amidst limited resources.

From a literary ecology perspective, the three patterns of land conversion in the Danum enclave: social pressure, and agrarian adaptation, demonstrate how the dominance of power, economic needs, and the flow of modernity shift the way society interprets nature. Map manipulation, within the enclave pattern, demonstrates the process of desacralization of nature, as criticized by Endraswara (2016:225-226), where nature is no longer valued as a living space with socio-spiritual value, but is reduced to a commodity. As a result, the ecological



relationship between the Uud Danum indigenous community and their land is severed, and various nature-based social capital, such as sacred forests, water sources, and cultural identity spaces, is degraded.

Social pressure and agrarian adaptation further confirm Endraswara's view that modernization and economic orientation drive environmental exploitation. In Danum, economic needs drive communities to sell their land and accept the presence of oil palm plantations, which transform land into marketable assets, while simultaneously fostering dependence on companies. This transformation is in line with Endraswara's criticism that ecological damage arises when nature is treated as a commodity, so that human-nature harmony fades, social conflict increases, local wisdom weakens, and ecological vulnerability becomes stronger in the lives of indigenous communities. Furthermore, this novel highlights three impacts of land conversion, according to Sihaloho: changes in ownership, use, and social and community impacts, which indicate the disruption of the ecological and social balance of indigenous communities. The first impact of land conversion in Danum is the change in land tenure patterns. The novel depicts the shift in ownership from a customary communal system to corporate ownership through capital and government support. This shift marks the appropriation of indigenous communities' living space and the emergence of power imbalances, leading to the loss of access to natural resources. This situation aligns with Soepomo (in Yolanda et al., 2024:237), who stated that land grabbing practices in the name of development often ignore local community rights and exacerbate environmental damage.

The second impact of land conversion in Danum is land use patterns, marked by the conversion of forests to exploitative monoculture plantations. Before the company's entry, the community used the forest sustainably to meet its needs. After the conversion, they lost their clean water sources and economic independence, resulting in ecological poverty due to the loss of rights to natural resources. This aligns with the

opinion of Syadiah and Hamid (2023:352), who assert that corporate monopolization of resources threatens the survival of communities.

The third impact of land conversion is social and community change. The conversion of forests to oil palm plantations in the Danum community shakes the social and spiritual structure of the Uud Danum community. The conversion of forests to plantations leads to the destruction of social values, evident in the weakening of solidarity and the rise of individualism due to the economic influence of companies. Promises of prosperity brought by external parties fragment community unity and give rise to internal conflict. Sari (in Philia et al., 2025:11) notes that modernization not only influences people's lifestyles but also replaces traditional values with a more rational, individual-centered perspective. Thus, land conversion in the Danum community not only destroys nature but also erodes the values of humanity, solidarity, and the spirituality of indigenous communities.

From a literary ecology perspective, the process of land conversion in the Danum community aligns with Endraswara's (2016:23) view that changing nature for economic gain actually triggers the loss of biodiversity, a decline in environmental quality, and disruption of the harmony of human life. This novel depicts this through the company's seizure of Uud Danum customary land, which not only deprives the community of access to natural resources but also severing the spiritual connections and ecological knowledge that maintain environmental balance. The conversion of forests to oil palm plantations reflects the clash between capitalist interests and the ecological values of indigenous communities.

Furthermore, Danum demonstrates that environmental damage is always followed by social damage. The conversion of forests to monoculture plantations leads to the loss of biodiversity, water sources, and economic independence, which then leads to ecological poverty. The destruction of sacred spaces and community culture also weakens solidarity and triggers internal conflict. This depiction confirms Endraswara's idea that environmental degradation

ultimately leads to social disharmony, as seen in the fragility of indigenous communities' lives when their supporting environment is destroyed by capitalist interests.

In addition to the patterns and impacts of land conversion, this novel also depicts social conflicts arising from land conversion. The social conflict resulting from land conversion in Abroorza A. Yusra's *Danum* depicts the conflict between indigenous communities, the government, and corporations over living space. This conflict is not only rooted in economic interests but also involves clashes of values, power, and identity. In line with Coser's (in Alwi, 2016:9) argument that conflict is a struggle for values, status, and limited resources, this novel presents the complexity of disputes over customary land and forests as a reflection of structural inequality. Yusra then emphasized Soerjono Soekanto's three forms of conflict—political, social class, and individual—that are intertwined in the socio-ecological dynamics of the Dayak Uud *Danum* community.

The first form, political conflict, reflects the imbalance of power between indigenous communities and the government, which favors corporate interests. The government in the novel is depicted using policies and legal instruments to legalize land ownership, while the voices of indigenous communities are ignored. As explained by Cahyono et al. (in Sari, 2021:4), the state often grants permits to capitalists on customary land without regard for the rights of local communities. The second form, social class conflict in *Danum*, arises from the imbalance between capitalists and indigenous communities dependent on nature. Land and forests, once spiritually valuable, are transformed into economic commodities, while companies, with state support, exploit legal loopholes to acquire land without certificates, rendering indigenous communities illegitimate. *Danum* reflects a value clash between capitalist perspectives and local wisdom. This view aligns with Samho & Purwadi (2023:358) who argue that indigenous peoples view land as a source of life, while corporations view it as a means of accumulating profit. Therefore, the class conflict

in this novel is also an epistemological conflict between traditional ways of thinking that maintain balance and modern, profit-oriented logic.

Third, the individual conflict in *Danum* demonstrates how social and political clashes extend into the personal realm. The characters Santo and Roland represent differing views on nature and development. Santo steadfastly upholds tradition and rejects progress that sacrifices forests and indigenous identity, while Roland sees the exploitation of nature as a sign of modernization. According to Coser (in Devi, 2024:10), individual conflict arises when expectations and social positions are incompatible, creating emotional and ideological distance. Santo's rejection of Roland's offer symbolizes resistance to domination, emphasizing that maintaining cultural values often begins with personal struggle.

Overall, the three forms of social conflict in *Danum* are interconnected and demonstrate how land conversion undermines the integrity of indigenous communities. Political conflict depicts abuse of power, class conflict demonstrates economic injustice, and individual conflict shows the characters' struggles to defend themselves and their beliefs. Through *Danum*, Abroorza A. Yusra not only shows the loss of land and forests, but also the struggle of the community to maintain their living space.

## CONCLUSION

This research shows that the land conversion patterns in the novel "*Danum*" reflect the process of change in people's living spaces influenced by political power, economic pressures, and shifting cultural values. The three patterns of conversion: enclaves, social problems, and agrarian adaptation illustrate how land conversion occurs in a planned manner through government policy, driven by the economic needs of the community, and followed by their efforts to adapt to an increasingly capitalist economic system. These patterns demonstrate that nature is no longer viewed as a sacred space and source of life, but rather as a commodity to be processed and traded.



In terms of its impact, the land conversion in the novel "Danum" causes major changes in the ecological and social structures of indigenous communities. Land ownership shifts from a communal system to the control of capital-based companies, while forests are transformed into monoculture plantations, destroying food sources, water, and the community's economic independence. In addition to ecological damage, these changes also give rise to a social crisis in the form of weakened solidarity, the loss of traditional values, and the decline of the cultural identity of the "Uud Danum" (the Law of Danum). This demonstrates the close link between environmental damage and social rifts, as depicted from the perspective of literary ecology.

Land conversion also triggers various forms of social conflict in the novel "Danum." Political conflict occurs when state power favors corporations and ignores the aspirations of indigenous communities. Class conflict arises through the inequality between capital owners and local communities who lose their livelihoods. Meanwhile, individual conflict is reflected in the clash of values experienced by figures like Santo and Roland, who each bring different perspectives on nature and development. These three forms of conflict are interconnected and demonstrate that land conversion not only robs indigenous communities of their living space but also threatens their social, cultural, and overall identity.

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