

# Eco-Critical Perspective in *Tamasya Danau Toba* Poetry by Sitor Situmorang

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## Abstract

*This study aims to describe the representation of nature, the value of caring for the environment, and an eco-critical perspective in the poem Tamasya Danau Toba. The method in this research is descriptive qualitative. The source of the data in this study is a poem entitled Tamasya Danau Toba by Sitor Situmorang. The result of this research is that Nature's Representation in the poem Tamasya Danau Toba includes dictions: mountains, water, lakes, earth, sky, rocks, lava, grass, forests, continents, fields, rice fields, and trees. The value of caring for the environment is in the form of a description of the condition of the forest that is threatened with extinction and the clearing of increasingly wide fields. The eco-critical perspective in the poem Tamasya Danau Toba is that the clearing of fields/rice fields must take into account the balance of nature in this case the forest. Millions of hectares of Indonesia's forests are damaged every year, at the beginning of the year Indonesia was hit by various disasters such as floods and landslides. Experts argue that one of the causes is the increasingly widespread conversion of forests to oil palm or rubber.*

**Keywords:** *Eco-critical, Tamasya Danau Toba, Poetry*

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## 1. Introduction

Lake Toba is a lake that has very wide waters and a volcanic lake which is a tourist spot in North Sumatra, Indonesia. Lake Toba has its charm for foreign nationals because of its beauty (Astri, 2021:61). Researchers argue that Lake Toba in various versions, especially in the legend contains about someone who has violated the agreement so that nature is angry and there is very heavy rain that forms a lake.

Lake Toba is also a strategic Indonesian tourist destination that has natural potential and cultural tourism potential (Rajagukguk, 2020:530). The Lake Toba area is one of ten national priority destinations. This was confirmed in Presidential Regulation Number 19 of 2015 Article 3. This policy was followed up by the establishment of the BOPDT (Lake Toba Management Authority) which is an institution specifically tasked with managing the Lake Toba area.

The beauty of Lake Toba has been an inspiration for the poet Sitor Situmorang. Sitor is an Indonesian poet from the Toba Batak. Sitor (1924-2014) is a complex character. He is the strongest Indonesian poet, a short story writer whose work is considered the best in the world, and a film character in the birth of the film *Blood and Prayer* (1950) which is considered the first milestone of Indonesian film, besides that he is also a cultural essayist whose thoughts make an important contribution to enlightenment and renewal in Indonesian culture. On this occasion will be examined is a poem by Sitor Situmorang entitled *Sightseeing Lake Toba*.

Literature has a close relationship with nature. One of the types of literature that has a relationship with nature is poetry. Poetry is related to language. The language in question is a "special" language. That special language can contain about nature. Therefore, poetry presents something that will be remembered and appreciated (Carey, 2020:9). Nature becomes an inseparable part of poetry, especially poetry that contains an ecological message.

The existence of a close relationship between literature and nature resulted in a study of ecocriticism, namely ecology and literature. The basis of ecocritical thinking is that a text is never separated from its environment. Environmentalism is at its core a deeply philosophical stance on environmental narratives. The narrative leads to a progressive transformation of reality (Kowska, 2013:164). Poetry is a medium that can contain philosophical messages about environmental narratives.

In the last three decades, many researchers in the world have consistently developed various studies related to environmental issues. This is not based on something incidental in nature. The ecological crisis that occurs is a major factor in the researchers' concern for the survival of the earth. Humans need environmental ethics to show their love for nature (Naess, 2008:88). It is hoped that environmental ethics can become environmental awareness to build a society that understands eco-literacy.

Ecoliteracy is used to provide an overview of the high awareness of the importance of the environment. Another term used for the same meaning is ecological literacy. Both are used interchangeably because eco-literacy stands for ecological literacy (Suwandi, 2021:15).

Based on the description above, the formulation of the problem in this study is how is nature represented in the poem *Tamasya Danau Toba*? How are the values contained in the poem *Tamasya Danau Toba* consistent with ecological wisdom? What is the eco-critical perspective in the poem *Tamasya Danau Toba*?

## 2. Research Methods

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Sugiyono (2014:9) reveals that the qualitative descriptive method is a research method based on the philosophy of positivism, in which the researcher is the key instrument. The data collection technique was done by triangulation, the data analysis was qualitative and the research results were more meaningful. The object of this research is a poem entitled *Tamasya Danau Toba* by Sitor Situmorang.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The ecocritical perspective is a scientific study of the relationship patterns, of plants, animals, and humans to one another as well as to their environment. Ecocriticism is a form of expression of judgment about literary works related to the environment. One of the forms of literary works is poetry. The following is a poem entitled *Tamasya Danau Toba* by Sitor Situmorang.

*seribu gunung  
seperti kawanan gajah  
menyerbu air danau  
lalu beku-  
kejadian lapisan bumi  
30.000 lalu  
-kata ilmu-  
ketika perut bumi  
memuntahkan ke langit  
batu berapi lahar mendidih  
jadi gunung-gunung gundul*

*ribuan tahun lewat  
- rumput tumbuh  
air menggenang  
jadilah danau  
di kawah raksasa-  
sebelum hutan tumbuh  
sebelum puak pengembara  
tiba dari benua utara  
membuka ladang  
kemudian sawah pertama  
di lembah lembah subur  
menghadap danau  
warna hijau biru  
seperti pohon hutan  
kini kelabu batu  
di tengah kuning padang*

*hutan sisa  
terancam punah  
(Rizal, 2019:60)*

a thousand mountains  
like a herd of elephants  
invade the lake  
then freeze-  
Earth layer events  
30,000 ago  
-said science-  
when the bowels of the earth  
spewing into the sky  
boiling lava rock  
become bare mountains

thousands of years passed  
- grass grows  
puddle  
be a lake  
in the giant crater-  
before the forest grows  
before the nomad clan  
arrived from the northern continent  
open fields  
then the first rice field  
in the fertile valleys  
facing the lake  
blue green  
like a forest tree  
now gray  
in the middle of the yellow field  
remnant forest  
endangered  
(Rizal, 2019:60)

### **3.1 Representation of Nature in the poem *Tamasya Danau Toba***

Nature is represented through dictions including mountains, water, lakes, earth, sky, rocks, lava, grass, forests, continents, fields, rice fields, and trees. The dictions are in the following lines:

*seribu gunung  
menyerbu air danau  
kejadian lapisan bumi  
ketika perut bumi  
memuntahkan ke langit  
batu berapi lahar mendidih  
jadi gunung-gunung gundul  
-rumput tumbuh  
air menggenang  
jadilah danau  
...*

a thousand mountains  
invade the lake  
Earth layer events  
when the bowels of the earth  
spewing into the sky  
boiling lava rock

become bare mountains  
- grass grows  
puddle  
be a lake  
...

In the verse above, the natural conditions at the beginning of the formation of Lake Toba are represented. It happened 30,000 years ago. When the formation of Lake Toba began from a volcanic eruption that made the conditions of the plants around it die because it was exposed to molten lava. Until thousands of years passed, plants began to grow, including grass. The eruption of thousands of years ago formed puddles of water to form Lake Toba.  
before the forest grows

*sebelum hutan tumbuh*  
...  
*tiba dari benua utara*  
*membuka ladang*  
*kemudian sawah pertama*  
*di lembah lembah subur*  
*menghadap danau*  
...

...  
arrived from the northern continent  
open fields  
then the first rice field  
in the fertile valleys  
facing the lake  
...

In the verse above, it is represented that the forest is starting to decrease due to the clearing of fields, including it is used for rice fields. It makes its scenery around Lake Toba. This is illustrated by the existence of fertile valleys, meaning that humans use them to meet their needs.

*seperti pohon hutan*  
*kini kelabu batu*  
*di tengah kuning padang*  
*hutan sisa*

like a forest tree  
now gray  
in the middle of the yellow field  
remnant forest

The condition described in the stanza above is a condition where the forest begins to decrease a lot because it is used for land clearing. The trees in the forest are only remnants. Represented by the condition of only rocks in the forest that lives a little far from the previous forest condition.

Based on the description of the representation of nature above, it can be seen that the lines contained in the poem Sightseeing Lake Toba represent the condition of Lake Toba in ancient times or the formation of Lake Toba until it was used by humans. This utilization has an impact on the condition of the forest less and less due to land clearing for fields.

### ***3.2 The Values Contained in The Poem Tamasya Danau Toba are Consistent with Ecological Wisdom***

#### ***3.2.1 The Value of Caring for The Environment***

The value of caring for the environment is shown by the existence of a clear picture of the condition of the forest that is threatened with extinction and the clearing of fields that are getting wider. The following will describe both of these. The condition of the endangered forest is found in the stanza:

*seperti pohon hutan*  
*kini kelabu batu*  
*di tengah kuning padang*  
*hutan sisa*  
*terancam punah*

like a forest tree  
now gray  
in the middle of the yellow field  
remnant forest  
endangered

In the verse above, it can be seen the value of caring for the environment, especially the forest which is decreasing and threatened with extinction. If things like that are allowed to continue, disasters such as floods, landslides, and the extinction of animals in the forest will happen. All of that also ultimately has an impact on human life.

### **3.2.2 The Opening of Fields is Getting Wider**

*sebelum puak pengembara  
tiba dari benua utara  
membuka ladang  
kemudian sawah pertama  
di lembah lembah subur*

before the nomad clan  
arrived from the northern continent  
open fields  
then the first rice field  
in the fertile valleys

The verse above also contains the value of caring for the environment in the form of opening wider fields which will reduce the forest. If you don't take into account the balance of nature, then humans themselves will lose. Although at the beginning it was humans who benefited a lot, at some point it would be able to have an impact on their own lives. For example, the existence of many open lands on the other hand is beneficial on the other hand detrimental. Profitable if the clearing of the field provides benefits for human life. It is detrimental if the impact of the clearing of the fields is not carefully calculated, then be prepared for a disaster to come.

### **3.3 Ecocritical Perspective in The Poem Tamasya Danau Toba**

Enjoying the poem *Tamasya Danau Toba* by Sitor Situmorang, the reader's imagination is invited to the nature of Lake Toba. Describes the former Lake Toba with the current Toba Lake. The depiction of Lake Toba in the past explained that it was still natural without human intervention, but since there was human intervention, many of the forests around Lake Toba have been converted into fields, or rice fields.

The environmental criticism to be conveyed in this poem is that the clearing of fields/rice fields must take into account the balance of nature in this case the forest. Millions of hectares of Indonesia's forests are damaged every year, at the beginning of the year Indonesia was hit by various disasters such as floods and landslides. Experts argue that one of the causes is the shift of forests to oil palm or rubber which is increasingly widespread. (lindungihutan.com).

Facts about Mangrove forests in Indonesia: 23% of the world's mangrove forests are in Indonesia; 3. 14 billion metrics of carbon stored in Indonesia's mangrove forests which account for one third of global coastal carbon stocks; 40% of Indonesia's mangrove area has been lost in the last 3 decades. The loss of mangroves in Indonesia is due to shrimp farming, land conversion, and degradation due to oil spills and pollution. 42% of greenhouse gas emissions are 'donated' by Indonesia to affect the national and global climate (lindungi.com).

## **4. Conclusion**

Representation of nature in the poem *Tamasya Danau Toba* through dictions, among others: mountains, water, lakes, earth, sky, rocks, lava, grass, forests, continents, fields, rice fields, and trees. The value of caring for the environment is shown by the existence of a clear picture of the condition of the forest that is threatened with extinction and the clearing of fields that are getting wider. The eco-critical perspective in the poem *Tamasya Danau Toba* is that the clearing of fields/rice fields must take into account the balance of nature in this case the forest. Millions of hectares of Indonesia's forests are damaged every year, at the beginning of the year Indonesia was hit by various disasters such as floods and landslides. Experts argue that one of the causes is the increasingly widespread conversion of forests to oil palm or rubber.

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