

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The beauty of nature has long inspired poets to capture its essence through words, offering readers glimpses of landscapes and seascapes alive with emotion and symbolism. However, the ecological crises threatening these landscapes challenge us to go beyond aesthetic appreciation to critical reflection. This *skripsi*, delves into the relationship between poetic representations of nature and the pressing environmental concerns surrounding Indonesia's seas and islands.

In addition to being geographical elements, Indonesia's oceans and islands are also the cultural lifeblood that influences the customs, identities, and means of subsistence of coastal people. Fish, coral reefs, mangroves, and other marine treasures have been abundant in these seas for ages. They have also been used as commerce routes, migratory corridors, and cultural exchange channels.

As a result, the sea is significant to the history and imagination of the country and is frequently praised in literature for its abundance, beauty, and mystique. Behind this picturesque picture, though, comes a more complicated and pressing reality human exploitation is causing Indonesia's islands and oceans to experience an increasingly dire ecological disaster.

By examining selected Indonesian poems "The Sea in My Heart" by H.S. Djurtatap, "What the Star Tells the Sea" by Iwan Simatupang, "The Sea" by Amal Hamzah, "My Childhood Floats on the Sea" by Nirwan Dewanto, "Lake Toba's Topography" and "Island on an Island" by Sitor Situmorang this study utilizes the lens of ecocriticism to explore the interaction between humanity and nature within the cultural, ecological, and literary contexts of Indonesia. It also considers the role of poetry as a medium to raise awareness about environmental crises, offering an urgent call for harmonious coexistence.

The theoretical foundation of this *skripsi* is ecocriticism, which highlights the dynamic interrelationship between literature and the environment. It aims to comprehend how literary works interact with and depict nature while expressing the ecological issues and cultural values of their era. Ecocriticism, as a theoretical

framework, emerged in the late 20th century to address the growing need for a critical understanding of how literature interacts with ecological concerns.

It was propelled by pioneers like Cheryll Glotfelty, who defined it as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Fromm, 1996). This strategy is especially pertinent to Indonesia as the country's waters and islands, which are both biological hotspots and cultural riches, are intricately linked to its archipelagic identity. Exploring the intersection of cultural imagination and environmental realities is made easier by Indonesian poetry, which is rich in its depiction of natural beauty.

In Indonesian poetry, the water frequently represents both fragility and plenty, encapsulating the conflicting relationship between people and their surroundings. This paradox is best illustrated which uses evocative words and striking visuals. The sea is portrayed in the poem as a nourishing but erratic force, reflecting Indonesia's dependence on its marine resources while acknowledging the mounting dangers to their sustainability.

Similar to this, Iwan Simatupang's *What the Star Tells the Sea* takes on a contemplative tone, examining the interdependence of natural forces through the combination of celestial imagery and maritime motifs. Echoing current scientific worries about the linked effects of climate change on land, sea, and air, this poetic meditation emphasizes the fragility of ecosystems (Hulme, 2009).

My Childhood Floats on the Sea by Nirwan Dewanto takes a very personal approach, contrasting the harsh reality of environmental degradation with childhood nostalgia. The poet offers a moving remark on the generational effects of ecological neglect by drawing a sharp contrast between his memories of clean rivers and current worries about pollution and habitat loss.

Sitor Situmorang's *Island on an Island and Lake Toba Topography* which examines the vulnerability and isolation of small islands in the face of increasing sea levels, delves deeper into this topic of displacement and alienation. The poem's reflective tone, which highlights how ecological disasters disproportionately affect underprivileged populations, is in line with international discussions on environmental justice.

Given the urgency of these issues, this *skripsi* seeks to contribute to the discourse by bridging literary analysis and environmental advocacy. The selected poems offer diverse perspectives on the sea and islands, capturing their beauty, mystery, and vulnerability. Portrays the sea as a metaphor for life's depth and unpredictability, inviting readers to reflect on their connection to the natural world.

The marine and island crisis in Indonesia is not simply an environmental issue, but a multifaceted phenomenon with profound cultural, economic, and political implications. Coastal erosion, exacerbated by unsustainable development and illegal sand mining, threatens the physical existence of islands while overfishing and coral bleaching are destroying marine biodiversity (Hughes, Barnes, & Bellwood, 2017). These changes are disrupting the delicate balance between human activity and ecological systems, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable practices. The poems analyzed in this *skripsi* reflect this complexity, offering nuanced depictions of the sea and islands as both abundant and vulnerable spaces. By integrating poetic and ecological perspectives, this study underscores the role of literature in fostering a deeper understanding of environmental challenges.

The main causes of the major ecological problems facing the Indonesian archipelago are human activities and climate change. The natural environment and livelihoods of millions of people who depend on the ocean are at risk due to a range of issues including overfishing, land reclamation, coral reef degradation, rising sea levels, and marine pollution.

For example, the capital city of Jakarta suffers from devastating flooding exacerbated by rising sea levels and land subsidence. As sea levels rise, small islands are at risk of disappearing altogether, endangering wildlife and uprooting coastal populations. The crisis affecting Indonesia's oceans and islands has far-reaching implications for the environment, economy, and society. The degradation of marine ecosystems threatens biodiversity, as coral reefs often referred to as the rainforests of the sea support a variety of marine species.

The analysis of these poems underscores the power of literature to articulate ecological issues in ways that resonate emotionally and intellectually. Poetry's ability to distill complex ideas into vivid images and metaphors makes it an effective medium for engaging diverse audiences. Furthermore, the poems analyzed

in this study highlight the interplay between local and global perspectives on environmental issues. Although rooted in the specific context of Indonesia's seas and islands, themes of connection, loss, and resilience have universal relevance. This dual focus enhances its potential as a tool for both local advocacy and global awareness.

In conclusion, this *skripsi* demonstrates the important role of poetry in addressing the ecological crisis affecting Indonesia's seas and islands. By engaging nature through an ecocritical lens, the selected poems not only celebrate the beauty and richness of nature but also confront the challenges that threaten its survival.

The poems call for a re-evaluation of the human relationship with nature, advocating for a more harmonious and sustainable coexistence. This study contributes to the broader discourse on environmental humanities, by highlighting the intersections between literature, culture, and ecology. It underscores the urgency of integrating ecological awareness into cultural narratives, recognizing the seas and islands not simply as resources to be exploited, but also as living entities worthy of respect and protection. Through the voices of these poets, this *skripsi* aspires to inspire deeper reflection and action to preserve Indonesia's invaluable natural heritage.

1.2 Statement of the Study

1. How do the selected Indonesian poems depict the beauty of nature, particularly the sea and islands?
2. How do these poems represent the ecological crisis facing Indonesia's seas and islands?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

1. To analyze the portrayal of the beauty of nature in the selected poems.
2. To examine the ecological themes and messages conveyed in the poems.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it bridges the realms of literature and environmental advocacy, emphasizing the role of poetry as a medium for raising ecological awareness. By focusing on Indonesian poems that explore the beauty

and fragility of the sea and islands, this study highlights how literature can foster a deeper understanding of pressing ecological issues. Indonesia, as an archipelagic country with rich biodiversity and cultural heritage, faces critical environmental challenges such as rising sea levels, marine pollution, and coral reef degradation.

These crises not only threaten ecosystems but also disrupt livelihoods and cultural traditions associated with the ocean. The selected poems offer insightful reflections on the interactions between human activities and nature, depicting the sea and islands as sources of inspiration and spaces of vulnerability. This study contributes to the environmental humanities by demonstrating how poetry can inspire emotional and intellectual engagement with ecological issues, advocating for a sustainable and harmonious coexistence with nature.

1.5 Methodology of the Study

This study uses an ecocritical approach, a framework that examines the relationship between literature and the environment. By analyzing selected poems "What the Star Tells the Sea" by Iwan Simatupang, "The Sea" by Amal Hamzah, "My Childhood Floats on the Sea" by Nirwan Dewanto, "Lake Toba's Topography" and "Island on an Island" by Sitor Situmorang this study explores the poetic techniques and ecological themes conveyed by these works.

The methodology used includes close reading to identify the poetry that depicts the beauty and ecological fragility of the seas and islands in Indonesia. This study also integrates secondary sources, such as environmental news particularly of the ocean and islands in Indonesia, and theoretical texts, to contextualize the poems within the ecological reality of Indonesia. This interdisciplinary approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of how poetry articulates and responds to environmental crises, fostering a connection between cultural imagination and ecological advocacy.

1.6 Scope of Limitation

The scope of this study focuses on Indonesian poetry that explores themes of nature, particularly the sea and islands, in the context of ecological crisis. This study examines five selected poems that span a range of poetic styles and themes, offering diverse perspectives on Indonesia's maritime identity and environmental

challenges. This study is limited to poetry as a literary form, given its ability to distill complex ideas into evocative imagery and emotional resonance. Geographically, this study focuses on the context of the Indonesian archipelago, highlighting issues such as marine biodiversity loss, coastal erosion, and rising sea levels.

1.7 Status of the Study

This review highlights five relevant studies that have informed the conceptual and theoretical framework of my *skripsi*, “The Beauty of Nature in Poetry and the Reality of Facing the Crisis of the Sea and Islands in Indonesia Through Ecocritical Analysis.” Each of these studies offers valuable insights into ecocriticism in literature but addresses themes and perspectives that differ from my research focus. By examining their contributions and emphasizing their differences, this section demonstrates the unique position of my study in the fields of ecocriticism and Indonesian literary studies.

The first previous study entitled “The Philosophy of Nature in the Poetry of Ghulam Sarwar Yousuf and William Wordsworth: A Comparative Ecocritical Analysis” by Alvi et al. (2019) This study compares how two poets from vastly different cultural and temporal contexts Ghulam Sarwar Yousuf from Malaysia and William Wordsworth from England explore nature's philosophical essence. The comparative framework between Western Romanticism and Southeast Asian poetic traditions is a key feature of this study. In contrast, my *skripsi* narrows its geographical focus to Indonesia, with an emphasis on ecological crises related to the sea and islands.

Purwanto Siwi et al. (2022) in the analysis entitled “Treatment of Nature: An Ecocriticism Approach in ‘Komat Kamit’ of Tejo and Kamba’s *Tuhan Maha Asik*” *The research* analyzes how Tejo and Kamba’s novel integrates environmental themes into a broader religious and philosophical framework. This study uses Greg Garrard's ecocriticism theory to examine how nature becomes a medium for theological discourse, particularly in its treatment of environmental ethics as an extension of spiritual reverence. It highlights the intertwining of ecological awareness and Indonesian cultural-spiritual perspectives. Additionally, while Siwi’s study addresses philosophical reflections on environmental stewardship in a

novelistic context, the researcher emphasizes poetic expressions of ecological crises.

Another previous study by Juanda and Azis (2023) entitled “Dolphin Conservation in the Short Story *Pengelana Laut*: An Ecocritical Study by Greg Garrard” research applies Greg Garrard’s ecocritical framework to examine *Pengelana Laut*, a short story centered on dolphin conservation. The findings of their analysis investigate anthropocentrism and ecocentrism in the text, highlighting the tensions between human development and the preservation of marine ecosystems. Furthermore, this research is not limited to marine fauna but extends to human communities and their evolving relationship with natural surroundings. The scope of this research encapsulates both the aesthetic representation of nature and its transformation due to socio-environmental crises.

Jakhrani and Shaikh (2024) in their study entitled "A Critical Analysis of Imagery in *My Heart Leaps Up*: Illuminating Wordsworth's Nature Poetry in the Context of Ecocriticism". This study examines Wordsworth's poetic imagery through an ecocritical lens, highlighting how his descriptions of nature evoke both personal reverence and broader ecological concerns. This study emphasizes Romantic ideals and their modern relevance to environmental thought. Although both studies have an ecocritical approach, this study focuses on Indonesian poets' local expressions of environmental beauty and crisis, especially about maritime and island landscapes.

Ied Veda Sitepu's (2024) research entitled "The Charms of Nature vs. Realities of People Living alongside the Water in Indonesian Poetry" the study aims to explore how water is dynamically depicted in Indonesian poetry. In addition to addressing the difficulties faced by people living close to rivers, lakes, and oceans, it looks at how poets convey their appreciation of the beauty of nature.

The same concept it expanded upon in this research, which provides a more crisis oriented focus. The study I conducted especially examines Indonesia's ongoing sea and island crises, whereas Sitepu's study mainly contrasts the beauty of nature with the human experiences of individuals who live near water. The researcher examines how poets address urgent environmental concerns including pollution, habitat loss, and sea level rise in addition to celebrating nature. It aims to

relate the poetic portrayal of nature in Indonesian poetry to pressing ecological and social issues by drawing attention to these crises.

1.8 Organization of the Study

Organization of The Study This *skripsi* consists of four chapters:

Chapter 1 is introduction. This chapter contains a description of the background of the problem, problem formulation, research objectives, research benefits, research methodology, scope and limitations of the research, research status and writing systematics.

Chapter 2 is review of related literature. This chapter contains the theories or related research studies in the same field. This provides the theories used in analyzing the data, that is theory masculinity and memory.

Chapter 3 is finding and discussion. In this chapter, the answers to the research problems including the research findings, research findings integrated into established knowledge, theories, and explanations of research results will present.

Chapter 4 is conclusion and suggestions. This chapter contains conclusions and suggestions based on the research findings of the previous chapter to answer research questions on the selected scene. This chapter describes the conclusions from what has been discussed previously and some suggestions regarding this research.