

## Kaneko Misuzu's Environmental Insights in *Tairyo* and *O Sakana* Poetry

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**Abstract.** One of the humanitarian issues in literature is the environment. Through eco-criticism interpretations can be made to representations of attitudes, views, and people's responses to environmental issues raised. This study was aimed to describe the content and insights of Kaneko Mizusu's environment as a poet in *Tairyou* and *O Sakana*. The main data source was *Tairyou* and *O Sakana* by Kaneko Misuzu. The research method used is content analysis with an ecocritical approach. Interpretation of the data shows that *Tairou* describes the writer's sense of empathy for nature due to the large amount of fishing and *O Sakana* describes the poet's concern about the survival of fish as one of the main food sources (for Japanese people). The poet's response to the environment is a manifestation of environmental insight by Kaneko Misuzu which is in line with the moral principles of environmental wisdom by Keraf (2010) such as no harming nature, respect and responsibility for nature.

### 1. Introduction

The writer tries to convey his views on life through his work. Dewi argues that a literary writer has the advantage of using her imagination [1]. A literary work sometimes reveals the realities of real life [2]. Furthermore, Fanani stated that literary works are essentially a person's response (the writer) to situations that occur in the surrounding community [3]. Literature is so attached to humanity where environmental issues are also one of the themes of human values in literature [4]. Literary ecocritic is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. In this case, Endaswara stated that ecocritic focus on the reciprocal relationship between literary works and the environment, including the relationship with socio-cultural and physical realities, which are a concern in ecology [5]. Hardiningtyas said that ecocritical theory in the principles of literary theory can be traced in the paradigm of the mimetic approach which has the basic assumption that literature has a relationship with reality [6]. Chakraborty assesses that ecocriticism as a model of critical studies sees the representation of nature and landscapes in cultural texts, taking into account attitudes towards 'nature' and the rhetoric used [7].

The environment is indeed a problem that is often criticized through literature. The writer's views and attitudes towards the environment reflect the writer's insight or understanding of the various

environmental issues that exist. Through ecocritics, interpretations can be made to representations of attitudes, views, and people's responses to the environment. Literature grows, develops, and comes from society. Literature grows in a society that has interaction with the environment. According to Keraf, all forms of knowledge, belief, understanding or insight as well as customs or ethics that guide human behavior in life in an ecological community are called local wisdom [8]. Furthermore, Keraf states that humans are obliged to respect all living things to exist, live, grow, and develop naturally according to the purpose of their creation, for that the real manifestation of that appreciation, humans need to nurture, preserve, protect, and preserve nature and all contents. The moral principles of environmental wisdom include respect for nature, an attitude of responsibility towards nature, the principle of compassion and care, the principle of no harming nature, and the principle of living simply and in harmony with nature.

One of the poets who conveyed many views about the environment in his works is Kaneko Misuzu. Kaneko Misuzu was born on April 7, 1903 with the name Teru Kaneko in a fishing village called Senzaki village (Nagato, Yamaguchi Prefecture), West Japan. Career as a poetry writer began at the age of 20 years. During his life, Kaneko Misuzu had only published around 80 of the 512 poems he had written. Misuzu's work began to be published again in 1982. Since then Kaneko Misuzu is known as one of the most famous children's poets in Japan. Her poetries are featured in children's school songs and textbooks. Kaneko Misuzu was a smart woman who loves books very much. She was born and raised in a family of booksellers. Kaneko Misuzu continued to attend school until she turned 18 with the support of her mother and grandmother. This was a golden opportunity for Japanese women at that time. Various themes of life underlie her poetries such as on nature, mother's love, human relations, and principles of life. Through the poetries we can feel and understand Kaneko Misuzu's views on various life problems.

*Tairyou* and *O Sakana* are two poems by Kaneko Misuzu that were most likely written between 1923-1930. These poems have a close intertextual. The views of Kaneko Misuzu towards the environment in these two poems are very interesting because they show the criticality of the poet who lived in early modern times in Japan in responding to environmental phenomena that occurred at that time. The purpose of this study was to describe the content and Kaneko Misuzu's environment insight in *Tairyou* and *O Sakana*.

## **2. Method**

This research was library research. The research method used was content analysis. Ratna Nyoman stated that the content analysis method analyzes the content and messages of communication in human life (through literary works) [10]. The research approach used is literary ecocritic. The research data were two poems entitled *Tairyou* and *O Sakana* by Kaneko Misuzu in Kaneko Misuzu Kokoro no Shishuu - The Poetry of Misuzu published by Fujiwara Shoten in 2012.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

**Table 1.** Tairyou

Japanese	English
朝	<b><i>A Big Catch</i></b>
朝	
朝	<i>Morning glow, sunrise glow</i>
朝	<i>A big catch</i>
朝	<i>A big catch of</i>
朝	<i>Oba sardines</i>
朝	
朝	One the beach
朝	People may have a feast
朝	But meanwhile
朝	Under the ocean
朝	Thousands of sardines
朝	Will mourn for the dead

The following is an interpretation of Kaneko Misuzu's poetry content and environmental insights in *Tairyou*.

Verse 1. *Morning glow // sunrise glow // A big catch // A big catch of Oba sardines* // illustrates that since early in the morning the fishermen have returned to land successfully carrying large catches of sardines. In fact, Kaneko Misuzu was born and raised in Senzaki Village, which is one of the fishing villages that produce sardines in Japan. This fishing activity is the main source of livelihood for the local community where fish is used as a source of food and an economic commodity.

Verse 2. *One the beach // people may have a fest* // describes the atmosphere on a busy beach as if it were a matsuri. The busy atmosphere can show the joy of the fishermen due to the abundant responses or the buying and selling activities of the fish catch. Furthermore, *But meanwhile // Under the ocean // Thousands of sardines // Will mourn for the dead* // describes the poet's empathy attitude that seems to feel 'grieved' just like the fish in the sea that have lost many other fish because caught by the fishermen.

From the two verses of *Tairyou* above, the contents of the poem are about the writer's sense of empathy for the bad possibilities that will occur if large numbers of fishing are carried out in a long period of time. The poet's environmental insight is expressed through the view that humans can take advantage of nature and all its contents to fulfill their daily needs, but continuous exploitation in large numbers has the potential to threaten the survival of fish in the sea. In this case, Kaneko Misuzu's environmental insight is in line with one of the principles of environmental wisdom, namely the principle of not harming nature [8].

**Table 2.** O Sakana

Japanese	English
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<p>魚</p> <p>魚魚魚魚魚魚魚魚</p> <p>魚魚魚魚魚魚魚 魚魚魚魚魚魚魚魚 魚魚魚魚魚魚魚魚</p> <p>魚魚魚魚魚魚魚 魚魚魚魚魚魚魚魚魚 魚魚魚魚魚魚魚魚魚 魚魚魚魚魚魚魚魚魚</p> <p>魚魚魚魚魚魚魚魚魚</p>	<p>O Sakana</p> <p><i>I fell sorry for the fish in the sea</i></p> <p><i>The rice in the field is cultivated by man, The cows in the pasture are raised by man, The carp in the pond too are fed by man</i></p> <p><i>But the fish in the sea Are under the care of nobody at all And even thought they never cause any trouble They're eaten by me just like this</i></p> <p><i>I really feel sorry for the fish</i></p>

The following is an interpretation of the content of the poem and Kaneko Misuzu's environmental insights in *O Sakana*.

Verse 1. *I fell sorry for the fish in the sea* // describes Kaneko Misuzu's deep sympathy for the life of fish in the sea.

Verse 2. The rice in the field is cultivated by man // The cows in the pasture are raised by man // The carp in the pond too are fed by man// shows Kaneko Misuzu's argument that other food sources (such as rice, cattle) are maintained well by humans so that they can produce rice and meat for human consumption, even Koi fish as ornamental fish are also maintained and fed by humans.

Verse 3. But the fish in the sea // Are under the care of nobody at all // And even thought they never cause any trouble // They're eaten by me just like this // illustrates Kaneko Misuzu's concern for the fish inside the seas that are captured just like that in enormous numbers every day. Even so, humans do not think about efforts to preserve and survive these fish for the future.

Verse 4. *I really feel sorry for the fish* // depicts Kaneko Misuzu's great sympathy for the preservation and survival of fish and other sea creatures.

From the four verses of *O Sakana* above it can be seen that the contents of the poem are about deep concern for the survival of fish and other sea creatures as one of the main food sources of Japanese society. The poet's environmental insight is expressed through the view that the use of fish and other marine products as a source of food and livelihoods (Japanese people) must be accompanied by human efforts so that the survival of fish and other sea creatures can be maintained. Kaneko Misuzu's environmental insight is in line with the moral principles of environmental wisdom, namely the principles of respect for nature and being responsible for nature [8].

In accordance with its function, literary works are not only a medium of entertainment but also serve as a good educational medium for the audience. Likewise with the poetry of Tairyou and O Sakana. Kaneko Misuzu's environmental insight in his two poems gives a deep message to all of us that (a) humans can use natural resources for their survival, but overuse of natural resources, especially in a long time, will have a negative impact on the environment, due to imbalance. ecosystems in nature can cause habitat destruction and even extinction of living things; (b) humans are required to take initiatives, efforts and policies, and real collective action to protect the universe and everything in it.

#### **4. Conclusion**

*Tairyou* and *O Sakana* are a manifestation of Kaneko Misuzu's environmental insight as a poet on the use of enormous marine resources by humans. This environmental insight is in line with the moral principles of environmental wisdom, namely not to harm nature, respect for nature and responsibility for nature. The existence of Kaneko Misuzu's poems as quality children's poetry is the right means as a medium to educate young people from an early age so that they have a high sense of concern for the natural environment which is the source of human life.

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