



# Post-conflict Eco-reconciliation in Moluccan Poetry

## A Review of Literary Ethno-therapy

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### ABSTRACT

As a post-conflict area, Maluku requires special attention so that the psychological condition of its citizens recovers and is peaceful. Various elements of society work together to engage in post-conflict reconciliation, an effort to knit peace, and an alignment with the nature and environment of Maluku. One of the elements of society that participate in peace efforts is literati and literary communities, which are incarnated in literary works and literary actions. This study aimed to analyze the form of post-conflict eco-reconciliation from the perspective of literary ethno-therapy. The research data were obtained from Moluccan literary works. Data sources from poetry anthologies and digital media of Moluccan poets were created after the conflict and contained eco-reconciliation. Data analysis techniques start with reading literary texts, followed by interpretation until post-conflict eco-reconciliation content is found from the perspective of literary ethno-therapy to obtain information on how society resolves and prevents the recurrence of conflicts as embodied in poetry. The result of this research is a literary work, namely the poems of Maluku with the theme of reconciliation or peace can be a therapeutic medium for post-conflict communities. Both poets and readers feel a sense of harmony and peace. The peace experienced by post-conflict communities is also contributed by poetry and literary movements as a meeting point organized by poets, writers, and various elements of the Maluku community.

**Keywords:** *Eco-reconciliation, literary ethno-therapy, Moluccan poetry, post-conflict.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1999, ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup-triggered social conflict in Maluku became a world conversation. The island known for the tradition of Pela Gandong—the feeling of mutual brotherhood—has felt the bitterness of conflict between the brothers themselves. However, the Moluccans were soon made aware that losing became ash and winning charcoal. In this case, literary elements, poets, playwrights, writers, literary communities, and government institutions that serve the literary world are integral parts of the post-conflict recovery efforts in Maluku. They participated in reconciliation measures for peace in Maluku. The literary ethno-therapy approach as a way of eco-reconciliation has its own way of voicing the message of reconciliation because it is wrapped in a touch of humanity, partiality for nature, awakening, and leading to an understanding of human equality.

Miall and Woodhouse (2020) stated that reconciliation is a long-term process to overcome hostility and mutual mistrust between two conflicting groups. This process seeks to create equal-peaceful relations among historical antagonists, based on commonality, mutual respect, and agreement. Much research has been conducted on conflicts and efforts to resolve them. Krisandi, Setyono, and Utomo (2013) explained that since the start of steps to handle conflicts in Maluku, not only implemented by the government, but various organizations have tried to find solutions in the conflict-handling process, including non-governmental organizations, traditional leaders, religious institutions leaders, and the last is the direct initiative of local communities called grassroots movements.

Bakri (2015) explained that an effort to resolve conflicts based on ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup is to include cultural values that have been rooted for a long time, which have become a fundamental part of the fraternal link of Ambonese society and Maluku in general. A study by Anwar (2015) entitled *Membangun Kembali Perdamaian: Rekonsiliasi Konflik Komunal Berbasis Trust* (Rebuilding Peace: Trust-Based Reconciliation of Communal Conflict) explained that post-conflict community reconciliation is a must considering that peace is the ideal reality for post-conflict societies. Next, research by Ali, Zakaria, and Hanapi (2015) entitled *Terapi Bahasa dalam Pantun dan Mantera* (Language Therapy in Pantun and Mantera) concluded that the world of words in rhymes and mantras can influence the psychology of the reader's thinking and behavior. This is in line with the concept that poetry can help to treat clinical problems. Hulse and Singer (2021) stated that poetry was used by the Greek physician Soranus almost two thousand years ago.

Related to the psychological influence of the world of words (poetry), Moon suggested that the interactive use of literature and therapeutic writing could be used to aid in healing schizophrenia, by utilizing metaphors to help find and create meaning in their lives (Maanmieli & Ihanus, 2021). Referring to the openness of poetry therapy, Mazza and Hayton state metaphors and symbols (in poetry) as important, which are similar to the symbolic components. They feel that they and their patients need to have a common frame of reference and become familiar with metaphors or symbols (Bergqvist & Punzi, 2020). And to support meaning-making, agency, healing, and cognitive, emotional, and relational functions and power, poetry therapy considers the importance of understanding narratives more flexibly, action-oriented, and integrative, with roots in medicine, psychoanalysis, social work, and counseling (Punzi, 2022).

The role of the lower community in peace in Maluku was also stated by (Iwamony & Relmasira, 2017). They explained that the study they had carried out on the efforts of Muslims and Christians in Ambon City struggled to build reconciliation between them. Latupapua (2018), titled *Sastra dan Perdamaian dalam Bingkai Kesadaran Identitas: Refleksi Kebangkitan Sastra Lokal Maluku Pascakonflik 1999 (Literature and Peace in the Frame of Identity Awareness: Reflections on the Revival of Local Moluccan Literature Postconflict 1999)*, found that the role of literature as a text production and reception area in the context of the Moluccan conflict has proven to be the most responsive and massive medium in an effort to block the effects of conflict, both physical and ideological.

Besides being a therapy for the reading community, poetry can also be a therapy for the author. Quoting Mazza in Karyanta (2012) explained that in 1925, an expert named Robert Hauven Schaffer wrote *The Poetry Cure: A Pocket Medicine Chest of Verse*. Interestingly, the book design was arranged in a recipe. The most important point in the book is that "every poem that has a cure on its wings usually begins its medical career at a time when it is considered to cure its creator."

Related to the above opinion, Indrawan (2022) said that various ways for the conflict to end soon have been held, both commanded by the central and local governments, involving security officers, local communities, women's organizations, and NGOs. The scope of its activities is not only local but also international.

## 2. METHOD

Qualitative research methods were used in this study. Post-conflict eco-reconciliation from the perspective of literary ethno-therapy. Literary ethno-therapy research with literary works and literary action as a source of reference in conflict recovery has occurred in Eastern Indonesia. Literary works and literary actions were the focus of research and were expected to provide valuable information about human behavior and other social problems (Minderof, 2010).

This research data was sourced from two poems from two post-conflict Moluccan poets with an environmental background, namely "Voices from Alifuru" taken from the book *Voices from Alifuru* by Rudi Fofid, publisher of *Teras Budaya* in 2021 and "Cloves No Longer Flower" by Yvonne de Fretes in the book *Beta Ambon*, Collection of Poems of Moluccan Poets, publisher of *Taman Budaya* of Maluku Province in 2020.

Data analysis techniques began by reading literary texts and literary actions as primary data, followed by the interpretation of these data until useful values are found with post-conflict eco-reconciliation to lead to peace. Therefore, the use of various sources, such as literary texts, must be interpreted carefully so that post-conflict eco-reconciliation can be achieved.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The poetry of the Moluccan poet provides two wings of meaning in relation to post-conflict Moluccas. The first wing is the existence of an ecological consciousness twisted with the message of reconciliation that it builds. The second is the creation of poetry as therapy. Poetry, both as text and as it is recited on various occasions, has become a therapy for conflict-ridden souls and minds. This explanation is provided in the following section.

### 3.1. The Form of Ecoreconciliation in Moluccan Poetry

Yvonne de Fretes' poem is a representation of a poet's attitude to a situation. Based on her sensitivity to the Moluccan conflict, Yvonne maintains it in her poetry as a witness and a message of shared humanity distilled from the tears and blood of her brother. He wrote poetry from the capital Jakarta, which was influenced by the resonance of crying from Moluccas. He was then touched by the poetic moment and translated into poetry. This is the poem of the senior Indonesian poet entitled "Cengkeh Tak Lagi Berbunga 2 or Clove No Longer Blooms 2."

#### *Cengkeh Tak Lagi Berbunga 2*

*cengkeh tak lagi berbunga, begitu ceritamu pada lembaran  
 pertama suratmu yang kuterima pagi ini  
 cuma pantai dan bening laut bisa dikenang, kau seperti mengadu  
 sedangkan kabar-kabar itu semakin menjeratku  
     tunggu, kurasakan sekat haru di keringkonganku dulu, dalam diam  
     sambil membayangkan tragedi itu  
     membayangkan bagaimana rupa bunga cengkeh itu  
 konflik, pertengkaran, adu perang, dan panah  
 semesta akan melepaskannya satu demi satu, mengarah pada  
 Gong Perdamaian, yang dengan perkasa berdiri tegak di pojok  
 lapangan kota itu  
     bebaskanlah egomu kekasih  
     agar harum cengkeh dan pala  
     di bumi leluhur tercinta  
     berkumandang seantero nusantara, dan dunia*

(English version)

#### **Clove No Longer Blooms 2**

clove no longer blooms, as your story unfolds  
 on the first page of the letter I received this morning.  
 only the beach and the clear sea can be cherished, as you seem to confide,  
 while the news continues to entangle me  
     wait, I feel a lump of emotion in my throat first, in silence,  
     while imagining that tragedy,  
     imagining what the cloves' flowers look like  
 conflict, quarrel, battles, and arrows,  
 the universe will release them one by one, leading to  
 the Peace Gong, which stands for mighty  
 in the corner of the city square  
     set free your ego, my beloved,  
     so that the scent of cloves and nutmeg  
     in our beloved ancestral land  
     resounds throughout the archipelago, and the world

Jakarta, 2020  
 (Fretes, 2020, p. 133)

The poem "Cengkeh Tak Lagi Berbunga 2" is drawn from the charm of the natural wealth of Maluku, which is twisted with anxiety about war and conflict. Frase of "cloves no longer flower" in the first line, directly hints at the dryness and lack of life expectancy rumored in you to me. The ecological content of the spice realm wrapped in the beach is referred to as "only" emphasizing the poet's partiality to the Moluccan environment, as well as implying the existence of other matters that can destroy everything as "the news entangled me even more."

For poets, there is no meaning to the luxury that Moluccans have in the form of flowering cloves if their children are busy in war. In fact, he asked to "wait, I felt a barrier of emotion in my throat first, silently" to dive into the pain caused by the tragedy. Between tragedy and clove flowers present at once as a theme as well as a message, through two lines, "while imagining the tragedy" he also imagines what the clove flower looks like." A real concern for spices that

have a long history in the land of Maluku as an ecological alignment is their form of poet sensibility. Tragedy and cloves are both contradictions and paradoxes felt by poets as the sons of Maluku, whose land was once destroyed by disputes.

The poet was a man who wanted peace. Similar to Yvonne de Fretes, if humans dissolve in conflicts that result in the loss of life and destruction of natural resources, then a time has come for peace. The poet believed that “conflict, quarrels, wars, and arrows” would be over and must be moved. The war with all its variants will soon be resolved by force of “nature,” for man has reached the point of complete end and fragility. The poet narrates it with “the universe will release them one another” as a supernatural force beyond human power that is actually unstable, fragile, and brutal.

An interesting thing about Yvonne’s poem is that it was made as a proverb of letters made to loved ones. He said, “Free your ego, my love, so that the fragrance of cloves and nutmeg on the beloved ancestral earth reverberates throughout the archipelago and the world.” Through very touching language, he conveyed a message to his lover: maybe it was a symbol of the Moluccan people as his bloodshed land so that the fragrance of cloves and nutmeg would still reverberate throughout the world. The fragrance of cloves and nutmeg, which once attracted Europeans to Maluku hundreds of years ago, is a proverb that poets perceived in the ecological reality of Maluku as the most obvious eco-reconciliation message of this poem.

One of the senior Moluccan poets, Rudi Fofid, participated in preserving Alifuru’s natural wealth within the framework of ecoreconciliation. Senior journalists born in Langgur are also known as faith figures and have produced hundreds of poems excavated from the womb of Maluku. One of his single books of poems, *Voices of Alifuru*, published in 2021, voiced his concern for the Maluku conflict. The winner of the 2016 Maarif Award made the things of Maluku, which were built from a cluster of islands, seas, mountains, and rich languages, as the starting point of his poems. A poem entitled “*Suara-Suara Alifuru* or *Voices of Alifuru*”, utilizes the distinctiveness of Malay Ambonese.

### ***Suara-Suara Alifuru***

*jika laut panggil nama, beta pasti berdiri  
tagal mata ina ama basah di rimba alifuru  
jika gunung panggil nama, beta pasti tengadah  
tagal tali nafas ina ama putus di lembah alifuru  
jangan ucap salam manis pada nusa ina  
jika perasaan alifuru masih tertusuk duri  
jangan kirim salam manis pada alifuru  
kalau suara nusa ina masih timbul tenggelam  
sio saudara-saudara, alifuru itu orang merdeka  
jangan sampai diinjak melulu di tanah pamali*

(English version)

### **Voices of Alifuru**

*when the sea calls my name, I will surely stand,  
the tears of our mothers and fathers in the Alifuru jungle  
when the mountain calls my name, I will surely look up,  
the lifeline of our mothers and fathers severed in the Alifuru valley  
don't offer sweet greetings to our homeland,  
if the feelings of the Alifuru are still pricked by thorns  
don't send sweet greetings to the Alifuru,  
if the voice of our homeland still rises and falls  
don't send sweet greetings to the Alifuru,  
if the voice of our homeland still rises and falls*

(Fofid, 2021, p.37)

The poem consists of five stanzas and each stanza consists of two lines. Efforts to minimize language have been made in this poem. Thus, according to experts, the pinnacle of poetry achievement is the presence of words that are minimal but offer maximum meaning. The poet’s poem, as a reporter for the Union of Catholic Asian News, comes with a message that is instantly swooping but constructed from powerful metaphors.

He dug up the character of the Malay-Ambonese language through the vocalist's words so that the sound he built was born from the echo of assonance. So, these two lines are present, "if the sea calls a name, I must stand, mother and father's eyes wet in the jungle of Alifuru."

What is it about the sea that, if you call it a name, beta will stand? This was caused by China's wet eyes in the jungle of Alifuru. The father and mother crying in the jungle became an interesting temple. Alifuru has a jungle that causes Beta to cry. This means that it is very likely that the Alifuru human is threatened, along with the threat of the Alifuru themselves. Forests as buffers for ecocentrism are faltering for some reason. The sound of the vocals /i/ and /a/ has an effect on this poem, so that we feel an evocative effect that is both realistic and magical.

The attachment of man and nature, the mountain for example is beautifully and inherently imprinted in the second stanza. Here, man is not a single center, but one of the beings inhabiting the universe, who respect each other's existence. These two lines give the niche their intended meanings.

*jika gunung panggil nama, beta pasti tengadah  
tagal tali nafas ina ama putus di lembah alifuru*  
(when the mountain calls my name, I will surely look up,  
the lifeline of our mothers and fathers severed in the Alifuru valley)  
(Fofid, 2021, p. 37)

Once again, Alifuru became a powerful buzzword that became the center of meaning resonance. What are there in Alifuru? According to Maemoen (2018), Alifuru is an ancient tribe in Maluku and the mother of various tribes that exist today. Based on the narration of his friend, who is also of the Alifuru ethnicity, the island of Seram is the residence of ancient Alifuru. Alifuru is known for his philosophy of life, namely Esatana, Esalala, and Esaaman, that is, man's relationship with God, human-to-human relationships, and man's relationship with nature. Based on this, Rudi Fofid as a poet made Alifuru the center of dedication to his poetry message.

Maluku is known for its philosophy, derived from the macrocosm of its beliefs. Nusa Ina is a philosophy that is interpreted as the mother island. In Maluku, the islands are likened to mothers who, if treated arbitrarily, are angry with their biological children. Thus, the sweet words spoken to the mother island feel empty if Alifuru, once again Alifuru, is sick, as in the following verses.

*jangan kirim salam manis pada alifuru  
kalau suara nusa ina masih timbul tenggelam*  
(Don't send sweet greetings to our homeland,  
If the feelings of the Alifuru are still pricked by thorns)  
(Fofid, 2021, p. 37)

Thus, love for the mother island as a proverb for the Moluccan homeland must be intertwined with the fate of Alifuru as the origin of the ancestors of the Moluccans. Reconciling Maluku will never be complete without making Alifuru a representation of humans and Nusa Ina parable for the motherland. This insightful view provides a line of understanding that man, nature, and God are inseparable. Concern for one of these will lead to ecological, anthropological, and sociological inequalities.

There is no independence of the Alifuru people if colonization is present. Colonization can be interpreted as the exploitation of natural and human resources, colonization of foreigners in the past, colonization of fellow citizens (Maluku), and horizontal conflicts that have exploded there. Word *sio*, which is a typical Malay-Ambonese vocabulary containing a message of compassion towards others if there is still "stamping" in Pamali Land. Philosophically, Alifuru is referred to as the Pamali Land because it began the ancient ethnic Moluccas, which became a disputed land resulting in the mother island, namely the submerged homeland of Maluku. An ecologist consciousness that also shakes the message of eco-reconciliation on earth of *Pela Gandong*. The last two lines of the poem cover the bright but metaphorical voice of the poet.

*sio saudara-saudara, alifuru itu orang merdeka  
jangan sampai diinjak melulu di tanah pamali*  
(Dear brothers and sisters, the Alifuru are a free people,  
Don't let them be trampled upon only in sacred land)  
(Fofid, 2021, p. 37)

Independence is free of colonialism and disputes. Preserving Nusa Ina as the mother island is by giving it a sense of tranquility, and freedom from disaster and appreciating the ancestors from where humans come today. This is why Alifuru is valuable and meaningful in Rudi Fofid's poem.

### ***3.2. The Role of Moluccan Poetry in the Perspective of Literary Ethnotherapy***

The Moluccans, when the conflict took place, were at the lowest point in terms of trust between them. There is almost nothing that has become a common cling on which hope depends. This is why the presence of poets and writers in the midst of conflict becomes an oasis to look forward to.

According to Rudi Fofid, one of the poets and peace figures in Maluku, the perpetrators and victims of conflict in Maluku, are in the position of victims themselves. They are victims of a situation that leads them to cancel each other out of their Moluccans because of religious issues, a labeling that actually makes them a country that has lived for hundreds of years in true diversity (*Interview with Fofid, June 9, 2023*).

Poetry is then presented in the midst of a conflict or post-conflict atmosphere to be read, along with other arts such as music, dance, and drama. Art, by promoting a universal humanitarian message, can enter the soul of the fragile and defeated Moluccan people, thus giving birth to the awareness that the victims are the Moluccans themselves, fellow brothers. Poetry plays a role in therapy based on ethnic diversity, religion, language, culture, and so on.

Poetry is a language of beauty that acts as a channel for channeling feelings of brotherhood between Moluccan children. The momentum of poetry readings held with various other arts at an event became a meeting stop; both literati, poets, religious leaders, conflict victims, officials, and young people shared stories, hopes, and beliefs.

At this point, according to Moluccan figures, who are also the initiators of Peace Provocateurs (a reconciliation movement in Maluku), poetry has become a subtle language that humanizes humans. Before poetry and poetry were present in the arena of conflict, the dominant language was the language of violence and fighting, as well as mutual disbelief between Moluccans. Poetry becomes the noblest and most trusted voice because it is born from the deepest conscience of the author, who is the biological son of Maluku itself (*Interview with Wakano, June 12, 2023*).

One of the strengths of poetry written by poets is that they depart from religious and ethnic diversity so that tolerance between people who are different religiously has been deeply ingrained in them. Diversity approached with the diversity approach itself will be quickly accepted and produce unexpected results, namely, recovery from trauma.

In addition to being therapeutic, poetry is a healing medium for Moluccans who hear the reading of the above poems and other poems, especially as therapy for the poet or author himself. Moluccan poets, whether they experienced conflict firsthand, were part of the conflict, or lived far outside Maluku, felt the profound psychological impact of the civil war on their land. Poetry became therapeutic on this side.

As stated by Schaffer quoted by Mazza in Karyanta's writing (2012) "every poem that has a cure on its wings usually begins its medical career at a time when it is thought to cure its creator." The poet who witnessed the war on a city first engaged in it, and then tried to be part of reconciling it, essentially made a healing wing upon himself.

In the Moluccan context, the role of poetry becomes multiple for the poet and the community. Poetry has fulfilled its duty as a medium of ethno-therapy for its creators as well as for the society in which it was excavated and re-voiced.

Poetry, which has launched its role in the paradigm of literary ethno-therapy, has been increasingly strengthened in the dressing of reconciliation. This paradigm gained accentuation in Maluku, which was once torn apart because of prolonged conflict. Between eco-reconciliation and literary ethno-therapy that makes poetry the object of his study, Maluku is an arena of peace whose resonance effect reaches Eastern Indonesia.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The poems of the Moluccan poets above clearly demonstrate the existence of eco-reconciliation in literary works as a medium of therapy or healing for post-conflict communities in Maluku. A touching message from the poet is that there is no meaning to the wealth of spices and the nature of Maluku if the country is hit by conflict.

The momentum of poetry readings held by Moluccan literati at various art events is considered a meeting stop for literati, poets, religious leaders, conflict victims, officials, and young people to share their stories, hopes, and beliefs. This is where recited poetry plays a major role in therapy. In association with Moluccas, the role of poetry is at least two-fold. First, poetry asserts its role as a vehicle for ethnotherapy for creator poets. Second, the role of poetry is real for people who are victims of conflict. If drawn more broadly, between ecoreconciliation and literary ethnotherapy that

makes poetry a study material, it has been proven to bring Maluku as a social space for peace, whose wave effect propagates to Eastern Indonesia.

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