

THE HUMANISTIC DIMENSION OF NATURE AS REFLECTED IN POETRY: A PERSPECTIVE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FROM MALAYSIAN POETS

Sohaimi Abdul Aziz ^a

^a School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Minden, Gelugor, Penang, Malaysia.

^a Corresponding author: soaazz@usm.my

©Ontario International Development Agency ISSN: 1923-6654 (print)

ISSN 1923-6662 (online). Available at <http://www.ssrn.com/link/OIDA-Intl-Journal-Sustainable-Dev.html>

Abstract: Society today is very concerned about the issues of sustainable development which comprises of three related elements; environment, economy and social. Unfortunately, the role of literature in propagating the awareness of sustainable development is not very prominent. Literature has been perceived as irrelevant in this context. This paper will discuss how literature such as poetry can play an important role to contribute to this sustainable development awareness. By using ecological criticism, this paper will show how poetry written by two Malaysian authors give an important dimension to nature such as flora and fauna, i.e., the humanistic dimension. This humanistic dimension of flora and fauna has translated the closeness of man to nature and consequently it has created the sense of loving the nature. To love the nature is an important element towards sustainable development. With the ability of this poetry to heave the human dimension of nature, the awareness of sustainable development which involves the environmental, economic and social activities, which are designed not only to meet the needs of the present but also for the generation to come, will be nurtured and sustained especially among the poetry readers.

Keywords: ecological criticism, humanistic dimension, nature, poetry, sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

In 1987, the United Nations Commission on Environment Development Word (UNCED), chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway

issued a famous report – ‘Brundtland Report’ which was published in *Our Common Future* (1987). This report has brought about a shift in thinking, planning and action in human life, which is becoming complicated, stressful and alarming. In 1970s, there was a report from a project on the predicament of mankind by the Club of Rome, and published under the title, *The Limits to Growth* (1974/2004). This report says that, unchecked limited resources of the economic growth, and consumption will bring disaster to human being. The emergence of this report sparked a great concern that the world will run out of resources, and this development will bring disaster to mankind. Nevertheless, this report was interpreted as a move to hinder the economic and social development. What was interesting, the concern of the report did not materialize because the major resources such as oil was still available and as a result, the report was neglected. Eventually, the economic development proceeded more rapidly. Many efforts were made to increase the development of primary resources such as oil. For Example, oil-producing countries had increased their oil production and new areas of potential oil drilling were discovered and explored.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

After the report had been ignored, the economic development continued to grow rapidly in various industrial sectors. Moreover, the development of the information and communication technology has

contributed tremendously the economic development for the past decades. Nevertheless, the unchecked economic development had created a major problem associated with the environmental pollution, such as, desertification, deforestation, acid rain, the greenhouse effect, the depletion of the ozone layer, the flooding of toxic substances, and the extinction of animal and plant species. The environmental problems begin to hunt human being and this kind of economic development has raised fears among the develop countries, and immediately it becomes a global issue. Eventually; the United Nations Organization has taken the initiative to control this horrified development. Thus, a secretariat was formed and known as UNCED and chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland. After a few years of research around the globe, the commission issued a renowned report, called the 'Brundtland Report', which introduces the concept of sustainable development: ... meets the needs of the present without compromising the future ability of own generation to meet their needs (WECD, 1987: 43, in Lawn, 2001: 14).

The concept of sustainable development in 'Brundtland Report' is quite general, and it has invited various interpretations with regard to the meaning of sustainable development, specifically the meaning of economic development. As a result, the concept of economic development has been studied, and further recommendations have been made pertaining to environmental development. According to Simon Dresner:

Environmental protection and economic development was a through a new approach: sustainable development (Dresner, 2008: 1)

As mentioned earlier, the concept of development in 1970s was often associated merely with economic development and the environmental aspect had been ignored. The emerging of the concept of sustainable development has made the concept of development be reinterpreted. Environmental issues have become heated issues. Economic and social developments are associated with environmental pollution. As a result, future economic development should encompass environmental management. In other words; environmental management forms an integral part in sustainable development:

The environmental effects caused by economic activity often occur outside of market exchanges and are unprized. One result of this is for hire have often been excluded from economic consideration. However, that the environmental issues now have risky in perceived importance, there are intensive efforts to give money values to the environmental effects and resource, so that hire may be taken more into account easily (Ekins, 2000: 28).

Sustainable development takes the environmental development as an important aspect. The central issue of sustainable development is to integrate the environmental consideration into the economic policy. In sustainable development, sustainability is no longer intended to demonstrate the development of man to control nature but emphasizes. the monitoring of the behaviour of man towards nature. Through sustainable development, it is believed that man can achieve a sustainability, that is, to predict or shape the future. In this case, man should not only acts rationally but with altruism or unselfishness for future generation (Dresner, 175). Thus, in managing the environment, the environmental activities by the man are monitored so that exploitation of the environment can be avoided or control. Appropriate environmental management is a way forwards for a healthy economic development, and stringent environmental development will ensure the environmental sustainability which become an important aspect of the sustainable development.

The importance of environmental sustainability is not only referred to the Third-World countries which are trapped with poverty but also the developing countries which are enriched with various industrial activities. The poverty which dominates the Third-World countries has resulted in the deterioration of natural resources by deforestation and desertification. The emission of poison gasses into the air by various industrial activities in developed countries has resulted in the greenhouse effect and acid rain phenomenon. The disposal of toxic waste into rivers and oceans by developed activities in developed countries has also contributed to the environmental pollution. In other words, the concept of sustainable development in the 'Brundtland Report' triggered a very important issue which has been neglected in previous reports by the United Nations; that is, the environmental management in the context of economic and social development in the Third-World and highly-developed countries.

Economic and social development in the context of sustainable development requires a development that focuses on fitting environmental management. Everybody, whether in the develop or under develop countries, should have a great concern with the accepted environmental management. Only by proper environmental management the earth planet will be safe for the man of today and also for the future generation. With the present condition, where capitalism plays an important role in our everyday activities, environmental sustainability is quite difficult to happen. Nevertheless, man has the responsibility to ensure environmental sustainability can be achieved, and this achievement can be realized if we can play our environmentalist roles, and this has no exception to the poet. Literary works such as

poetry which discuss about the environment such as nature become the central object of study of eco-criticism (Glottfelty, 1996: xviii). The relationship between literature and nature as being the focus in eco-criticism is reflected in the poems studied for this paper and the relationship is crystallized when the humanistic dimension is identified.

MAN AND NATURE

In the cosmology of the traditional communities in the East such as Japan, Korea and countries in Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia, nature has an important meaning to them. Nature is a manifestation of the spirit which is closed to them. Strong animistic beliefs underlying their thinking is reflected in their everyday life. Without nature, there is no life. Nature must be respected and not to be exploited (Abdul Rahman Ismail, 1998). The close relationship between man and nature is revealed in a Malay traditional poetry known as *pantun*. The structure of *pantun*, consists of two parts, the first two lines are known as the foreshadower and the second two lines are the meaning. The foreshadower of *pantun* consists of the elements of nature such as bird, tree, plant, flower, fruit and insect. Here is a famous Malay *pantun* of four lines.

Dari mana punai melayang?

Dari sawah turun ke kali;

Dari mana datang sayang?

Dari mata turun ke hati.

Whence from the dove fly?

From the fields to the stream;

whence from comes love?

From eyes into the heart.

(Muhammad Haji Salleh, 1991: 39).

The elements of nature in the two lines of the foreshadower are dove, padi field and the stream, and the next two lines are the meaning which tells about falling in love. The foreshadower and the meaning from a meaningful *pantun* and this unity reflects the unity between nature and man. Nevertheless, the influence of foreign elements, especially from the West, has an impact on the emerging of new form of poetry which is no longer focused on the foreshadower, such as the free verse poetry. As a result, the emergence of the free verse poetry, known as *sajak* has affected the popularity of *pantun*. This development reflects the socio-cultural changes that occurred in the Malay society which has been dominated by imperialism and capitalism. When capitalism is so strong, nature is controlled by man and finally, the exploitation of nature becomes

rampant under the licence of development. In due course, some of the Malay poets began to separate themselves from influence of nature. Nevertheless, there are Malay poets who are very sensitive about the spirit of nature and they indicate their love in their poems. Usman Awang and Muhammad Haji Salleh are the two most celebrated poets of Malaysia who uphold the importance of nature in their poems.

POETRY, HUMANISTIC DIMENSION AND NATURE

Ecology, that is, the relationship between culture and environment becomes one fundamental aspect in Usman's poems. In his two poems entitled, "The Ballad of the Death of an Old Beringin Tree at the Side of the City (translation)", and "A Letter from the Community of Birds to the Mayor (translation)" discusses how people has exploited the environment to bring disaster. In "The Ballad of the Death of an Old Beringin Tree at the Side of the City (translation)", Usman tells how the development of the city, has killed the trees which are very important to the ecosystem. For Usman, trees as part of natural resources is vital to the well-being of man, plants, animals and insects. Unchecked economic development has destroyed trees and other species on earth. This desertification and deforestation have brought the green effect to the world. Usman was furious and up-set with this unethical development, and these feelings are reflected in two of his poems. The importance to preserve the trees from uncontrolled economic development can be captured in this poem.

The old Beringin at the side of the road in a city

which still young

hundreds of years standing

shades the sun protects the earth

singing birds fly

here is their home;

happy family

butterflies fly and in laughter,

children play under its shade at the trunk.

(Puisi-Puisi Pilihan (Selected Poems – literal translation), 1988: 31)

The existence of this old Beringin tree (also known as banyan tree or Ficus Benjamina, with aerial roots, standing 20-30 meter) is to provide a sanctuary not only for the children but also for the birds and insects, such as, butterfly. So it is crucial to preserve the tree.

In this poem, Usman describes how the Old Beringin tree has a big role in the ecosystem. Man, animals

and insects need the trees, and the trees need them too. Big tree like the Old Beringin tree is not only providing shady and cooling space for the children to play, but also giving oxygen from the leaves during the process of photosynthesis. Trees are places where life begins and grows. So, in this situation, trees need to be preserved, despite the rigorous economic development. However, the economic development has destroyed the Old Beringin tree. This situation shows that mankind is becoming greedy and inconsiderable. Here what Usman has to say:

My name is the unwanted Old Beringin tree.

I am the enemy of a plan called development.

(Puisi-Puisi Pilihan (Selected Poems – literal translation) : 31)

However, the people of this town have killed the GREEN.

Merely, to pursue the GREEN dollars.

(Puisi-Puisi Pilihan (Selected Poems – literal translation): 36)

The economic development has destroyed the tree. Man is more concerned about himself and money than the environment or the nature.

The importance of preserving the trees in the city has also been discussed by Usman in his poem entitled "A Letter from the Community of Birds To the Mayor." In this poem, Usman uses the voices of the bird community as a strategic narrative to voice his apprehension:

Mr. Mayor,

this letter to appeal against your wisdom,

take care every shoot and root of plants

every leaf, every petal of flowers, every bush

that is our home, our home from the beginning

for the well-being of man, his

health, happiness, peacefulness

natural beauty of a thousand blossoms

under the sunshine.

(Puisi-Puisi Pilihan (Selected Poems – literal translation), 1988: 36)

In the context of eco-criticism (Howarth, 1996), Usman is so concerned about the environmental crisis, and his anxiety would have put him into one of the ecological movements known as "Deep Ecological Movement." According to Evernden (1996: 102):

The 'Deep Ecological Movement,' the one that concerns itself with the underlying roots of the crisis environment rather than simply its physical manifestation, demands the Involvement of the arts and Humanities.

The deep ecological movement as described by Evernden is concerned about the development of the environment, and it acts as a platform for the environmentalists who may include literary writers and humanist champions to strive for a clean and better environment. The deep ecological ethics is based on eco-friendly attitude and actions and is a fundamental component of environmental management. The opposite of deep ecological ethics is the shallow ecological ethics that leads to the destruction of the environment because this negative ecological ethics view the nature as a source of income or a space to create wealth and this ethics has A strong connection with capitalism where thinking of 'money-profit' or 'dollars and cents' is the main focus. In the end, this kind of attitude and thinking will destroy the environment with various economic development projects, which is lacking of proper environmental management.

Both of these poems by Usman, clearly reflect the two ecological ethics. The author himself undoubtedly has positive ecological ethics. He is very concerned to preserve the environment, and this is reflected in the humanistic dimension given to the old Beringin tree. . As already explained, Usman realizes the importance of trees as part of the nature, and it should be preserved and protected from the demon of the economic development. Usman also criticizes the developments which neglected the importance of environmental management. In his poem entitled, "The Ballad of the Death of An Old Beringin Tree at the Side of the City," Usman Awang sadly describes:

Suddenly, a black morning came

a giant technology attacked

with cruel teeth of an iron sink into the trunk

horrific screams heard

the voice of Beringin fell to the ground.

(Puisi-Puisi Pilihan (Selected Poems – literal translation): 31)

Technology has been used to destroy trees and forests. A heavy machine has been deployed to destroy them on a large scale. Trees of hundred years old such as the old Beringin tree have been destroyed overnight. The man with negative ecological ethics will act irrationally to destroy the nature, including the environment. To this man, the environment is like an enemy that must be suppressed and destroyed as

Usman says: "My name is the unwanted old Beringin tree; I am the enemy of a plan called development." In another poem entitled "A Letter from the Community of Birds to the Mayor," Usman Awang criticizes the man with shallow ecological ethics who destroy the green for money. Usman Awang says; "The people of the city have killed GREEN/Merely to pursue the GREEN dollars." This phrases clearly show how materialism has corrupted the man of negative ecological ethics. In other words, the old Beringin tree and its destiny has been given a humanistic dimension. The reader of this poem should feel empathy with this tree and try to understand and love it. In other words, although Usman has criticized the man of shallow ecological ethics who fail to carry out a proper environmental management, he has managed to show the humanistic dimension of the tree. He has successfully portrayed not only the good deeds of the tree but also the plight and the death of the old Beringin tree. Usman has combined the aspect of man and nature in his poems, and this juxtaposition has enriched the humanistic dimension of nature. Besides Usman, another Malay poet who can be placed in the contact of man and his relation with the deployment of 'deep ecology' is Muhammad Haji Salleh.

Muhammad did not write the poem like Usman, who criticized those who have exploited the nature, Muhammad writes poems about man and nature in an artistically manner in which a humanistic dimension of nature is beautifully embedded between the lines and the words. The humanistic dimension is beautifully crafted and reflected in his poems, which have been published in his recent anthology entitled *An Emerald Hill by the Sea* (2006). Muhammad has an intimate relationship with nature, and the relationship is mentioned in the preface to the anthology:

As a poet I observe and drift along on yearly rhythms, am drenched or parched by seasons, stopped short by butterflies, kingfishers or monitor lizards; my days are ornamented by angšana, Morinda and saga, flame of the forest and also a hundred flowers that were planted or have grown were before I set foot here. In all of these I read qualities, characters, personalities, and meanings of rocks leaves, flowers, insects, and animals.

(Muhammad, 2011: xi).

For Muhammad, the elements of nature are so familiar to him, and they have become part of his life, and he could feel the rhythm of every pulse and beat of them. As for Muhammad, nature has spirit and this spirit becomes a bridge that links him to the nature. With this closed and fine relationship, Muhammad managed to write such a beautiful poems, which reflect the humanistic dimension. This

humanistic dimension is also his inner consciousness of his touch and feeling towards the elements of nature. In other words, Muhammad has crafted a sense of his inner consciousness towards nature, and this shows his deep ecological ethics.

In *An Emerald Hill by the Sea*, Muhammad has enriched his poems with the elements of nature such as trees, plants, insects, flowers, rock and these elements are given the humanistic dimension. Nature has been given a lively texture and meaning to Muhammad, and this humanistic dimension produces an impact on the readers by the suggestive power that makes the reader feel the vitality and the vibrant of the elements. Eventually, the suggestive power will transform the reader's consciousness into an aesthetic experience and with this experience, the reader will be more conscious of loving the nature and awake the importance to care and preserve the nature. With the suggestive power of the poems and the aesthetic experience that the reader has, the deep ecological ethics will grow and manifests in the form of positive attitude and action towards the nature.

Muhammad with his expression of humility as manifested in his poems could contribute to the materialization of the concept of sustainable development with regard to the environmental management. His poems could create the awareness of the importance of managing the nature according to the needs of the present and future generation. The readers of Muhammad's poems could nurture and foster the human relationship with nature. With this relationship, man could control himself in dealing with nature and when the deep ecological ethics is practiced, the environment will be managed and preserved. The bottom line is, man with deep ecological ethics will care for nature and love it with the utmost loving and responsible deeds. This attitude will ensure the nature will be conserved and entrusted to future generation. With this situation, the desired sustainable development will be materialized. The role of the poets like Muhammad are needed in ensuring the success of sustainable development agenda that is driven by the United Nations through the 'Brundtland Report.' Muhammad in his poem entitled "The Flame of the forest," says:

flame of the forest

reflects the sun

its blooms mark the drought with strokes

and brace the dome of the sky.

the trunk stretches

waking from the cold

leaves as fine as a baby's curls.

None is more beautiful

than Sparklers.

That sprinkle color on the canopy's curve

even the drought is discoloured

by a Crimson future.

(Muhammad, 2011: 4)

The 'flames of the forest', is a tree which is scientifically known as 'Delonix Regia.' This big tree can be found in tropical and near tropical countries such as Malaysia. This tropical tree is adaptable to hot and dry weather. The 'flames of the forest', produces a lot of flowers with bright and vivid colors such like red and yellow.

The 'flames of the forest' tree which can be found in the campus of Universiti Sains Malaysia where Muhammad is one of the academic staffs have was given him an inspiration to write the poem. In "Flames of the Forest," Muhammad has painted humanistic dimensions by linking the elements of nature such as the red flowers with energy and life. The red flowers are like the sun which are bright and energetic. The bright-red color of the flowers has lessened the amount of energy of hot dry air that is sweeping across the place where the 'flames of the forest' tree grows. The 'flames of the forest' tree which bears the red flowers has become a powerful source of energy to move people's life as mentioned by Muhammad in the two phrases - 'the trunk stretches waking from cold' and 'even the drought is discoloured by a Crimson future.'

The beauty and diversity of the nature should be appreciated by man. It can become his companion and teacher. Nature should be treated with due respect. Muhammad in his another poem entitled 'shade of the angšana', tells a story about a student and a tree. The story goes as follows:

a student

shelters in the green shadow,

his life smells of wood sweetness of the kernel,

and so he sips the clean vapours of the canopy.

there he gathers the chill

in his cupped hands

because he is kin

in a large clan

to which all belong.

there he tastes the water.

that is purified by leaves,

and returns

the essence of breath awaited

green by his sister.

the dome of cool fragrances

shelter is a pleasant shared.

from here

the yellow of the angšana

this is lodged his hair.

(Muhammad 2011: 12)

The big angšana tree (its scientific name – *pterocarpus indicus*, 30-40 meter tall and with a trunk up to 2 meter in diameter) has become a shelter to protect the student from the sweltering heat. The student has an acquaintance with the tree and with this contact, he can smell the scent of the angšana tree. Furthermore, he is not only protected from the heat of the sun, but he is also being given a fresh oxygen to inhale by the leaves from the tree through the process of photosynthesis. Consequently, during the breathing, the student exhales the carbon dioxide which becomes one of the components for leaves of the tree to execute the process of photosynthesis. With the process of photosynthesis, a biological space between nature and man has been created where an interaction between them occurs. According to Muhammad the relationship between the student and the tree as reflected in the poem is a manifestation of the relationship between man and nature:

there he gathers the chill

in his cupped hands

because he is kin

in a large clan

to which all belong.

With such a relationship, the elements of nature such as the angšana tree should not to be destroyed but to be loved and protected. The angšana tree is alive and its contributes to the well-being of man, and man has the role to play to safeguard the relationship. Nature such as the angšana tree has a biological relationship with man. The relationship exists in a mutual manner in which both parties, man and nature are expected to give to and take from each other. The angšana tree and the student interact in a biological and truthful manner. The two ways relationship which is not

contaminated with negative elements such as lust (read capitalism) will sustain and this sustainability will contribute to the meaning of the sustainable development. Muhammad further says:

there he tastes the water
that is purified by leaves,
and returns
the essence of breath awaited
green by his sister.

The relationship between nature and man should be created in the heart of sincerity and the feeling of love. As a result, any exploitation towards nature will not be condoned and in this poem, Muhammad paints a humanistic dimension to the poem which is crucial in convincing the readers that nature needs respect and caring. In other words, the humanistic dimension in clearly shines through this poem, and it generates a suggestive power that empowers the reader to embrace nature.

Muhammad has divided his poems in *Emerald Hill by the Sea* into several parts. Each distinct part is noticeable by a specific month from January to December. Each month is manifested with a specific weather. For example, January is a dry season, and raining will be in February. Actually, the poems in each month reflect a specific season, and it reflects the weather in Malaysia. In Malaysia, the flowers of the 'flames of the forest' tree, bloom in the dry season. The hot dry season is being neutralized by the arrival of the bright flowers of the tree. The ability of the 'flames of the forest' tree to adapt to the dry season is associated with the lives of man. Muhammad believes that man should also adapt himself to the surrounding and stay energetic through good and bad times. In other words, man has a lot to study and learn from nature. Man should regard nature as his teacher and not as an enemy as reflected in Usman's poem as mentioned earlier.

After January, then comes the month of February, and it starts to rain. February is the start of the rainy season, and it brings a new life to nature. With this background, Muhammad writes a poem entitled 'Mangkudu at February End' and 'February Mangkudu'. The two poems in this anthology speak about the 'Mangkudu' tree. 'Mangkudu' tree or its scientific name - *Morinda citrifolia*, is a tree of moderate size, with big or small leaved. This tree has captured Muhammad's imagination and in these poems Muhammad describes the nature of the 'Mangkudu' tree. In this tree Muhammad sees the humble personality. According to Muhammad:

Contemplative in character

bent on observing
its own soul

its small leaves and coy
density but hides a personality.
(Muhammad 2011: 23).

Muhammad is so attracted and zealous about this 'Mangkudu' tree and this tree has a special message for him. The nature of this tree reflects a character that builds the humble personality. According to Muhammad, the name of this tree is not beautiful or having a grandiose looking, compared to the 'flames of the forest' tree. What kind of personality that lures Muhammad to this tree? The answer to this question can be detected from one of the verses of another poem entitled, 'February Mangkudu':

your name is not beautiful
but in the hands of the physician,
you become the antidote for sorrows,
easing and assisting.

(Muhammad, 2011: 20)

According to Muhammad, the nature of 'Mangkudu' tree is not beautiful and the fruits are so ugly but, to a physician this tree is so special. According to Muhammad, those who have knowledge about this tree use it as a medicine. Traditionally, in Malay society, 'Mangkudu' tree is used as traditional medicine. This traditional medicine could be used to heal bleeding, asthma, cough and malaria. The leaves, fruits, barks and roots from 'Mangkudu' trees can be used to treat these health problems. The boiled shoot which is known as *ulam* is consumed together with rich and *ulam* is good for the health. And the ugly fruits could be used to treat asthma and cough. The drinking water abstracted from the boiled barks is used to heal malaria and becomes an astringent to stop bleeding by shrinking the tissue and reduce in size the blood vessels. In other words, between the lines, Muhammad has managed to coat the humanistic dimension of the 'Mangkudu' tree in the two poems. The humble personality and the medical function of 'Mangkudu' tree should be reflected in man. Man should be humble and ever willing to contribute to the well-being of nature or the planet earth. The understanding of this reflection is crucial for man to care and conserve the nature. Man should regard nature as his companion and teacher. Nature such as trees and plants has the right to be respected by allowing them to grow and man should intelligently manage them.

CONCLUSION

Sustainable development must be well understood because there are many interpretations on this concept. The meaning of development of which the concept of sustainable development is referring to, involves three interrelated issues, that is, economic, social and environmental. Sustainable economic development is a development which encompasses a good environmental management. Man needs to manage efficiently the environment in order to have sustainable economic and social development. A good environmental management requires a good social development. Nature is part of the environment, such as, forest, water, soil and air. Appropriate management of nature is also a part of the management of environment. Man has the responsibility to manage the nature for the benefit of the present and future generation. The awareness of caring and conserving nature should be cultivated meticulously in order to have better environmental management. Poets can also play an important role in managing the nature. Usman and Muhammad are the two Malaysian poets that have contributed to create an awareness of caring and preserving nature. The humanistic element that have been tinted on the elements of nature in the poems studied to have the suggestive power to make the readers feel close to nature and able to understand their existence. The poems studied in this analysis reflect the creativity and the compassion of the poets in writing such poems. Poetry could play an important role in giving an appropriate meaning to the concept of sustainable development. The poems studied, have the potential to promote deep ecological ethics among the readers of the poetry so that they could be the appropriate force to move the environmental development in sustainable development. Usman and Muhammad are the two Malaysian poets who have contributed to the better understanding of how environmental management could be realized by creating an awareness about the biological and cultural relationship between man and nature.

REFERENCE

- [1] Abdul Rahman Ismail. (1998). *Falsafah Alam Semesta di Nusantara. Tradisi dan Reaksi Dalam Sejarah Kosmologi Melayu (The Philosophy of Nature in Nusantara: Tradition and Reaction in the History of the Malay Cosmology)*. Sungai Petani: Yusran Publishing House.
- [2] Dresner, Simon. (2008). *The Principles of Sustainability*. Of London (Second Edition). Washington, DC: Earthscan.
- [3] Ekins, Paul., (2000). *Economic Growth and Environmental Sustainability*. London and New York: Routledge.
- [4] Evernden, Neil. , (1996). *Beyond Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*. Glotfelty, Cheryll & Harold, Fromm (eds). *The Ecocriticism Reader*. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, pg. 92-104.
- [5] Glotfelty, Cheryll. (1996). Introduction. *Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis*. Glotfelty, Cheryll & Harold, Fromm. (eds). *The Ecocriticism Reader*. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press. pg. xv-xxxvii
- [6] Howarth, William. (1996). *Some Principles of Ecocriticism*. Glotfelty, Cheryll & Harold, Fromm (eds.). *The Ecocriticism Reader*. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1996. pg. 69-91.
- [7] Lawn, Philip. A. , (2001). *Toward Sustainable Development. An Ecological Economics Approach*. Coca Raton: Lewis Publishers.
- [8] Meadows, Donella H., Club of Rome, Potomac Associates. (1974). *The Limits to Growth. A Report for the club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind*. New York: Universe Books.
- [9] Meadows, Donella H., Rander, Jorgen., Meadows, Dennis L., (2004). *Limits to Growth. 30-Years Update*. Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.
- [10] Muhammad Haji Salleh. (2011). *An Emerald Hill by the Sea. Poems of Nature USM (English Translation)*. Sinha, Lalitha and Md. Salleh Yaapar (transl). Penang: Universiti Sains Malaysia Publisher.
- [11] Muhammad Haji Salleh. (1991). *The Owner story. The Mind of the Malay Author*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- [12] Puisi-Puisi Pilihan Sasterawan Negara Usman Awang (Selected Poems of Usman Awang National Laureate). (1988). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

AUTHOR'S BIODATA

Sohaimi Abdul Aziz is a Professor of literature. He specializes in literary theory and criticism, Malay literature, comparative literature and children literature. He has been in the field of teaching and research at the university for the past 17 years. Currently he is the Deputy Dean of Research and Postgraduate Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia. He has published several books, hundreds of articles on literary criticism and Malay literature.