

Lake Toba Fictionalizations Through Indonesian Writings: A Literary Tourism Approach

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Abstract—The beauty of Lake Toba in North Sumatra, Indonesia, not only attracts tourists to come but also inspires novelists to write their literary works. This study is an attempt to understand the fictionalizations of Lake Toba as setting places with references to three Indonesian novels, i.e., Situmorang's *Sordam* (2010), Silalahi's *ToBa Dreams* (2015), and Batu's *Tepi Toba* (2019). This study focuses on how the three novels express the images of Lake Toba and its surroundings and the meaning of the similar and different expressions in a Lake Toba promotion context as a tourist destination. This study adopts an interpretive, qualitative method through a phenomenology paradigm. With a close reading technique, data are analyzed by employing a literary tourism approach with the support of the expressive theory. The findings reveal that the three authors express the images of Lake Toba and its surroundings romantically and critically. In addition to promoting Lake Toba as a tourism destination, both portrayals also help remind all stakeholders, including the government, local community, and visitors, to save Lake Toba and its surroundings from deforestation and water pollution. By investigating the fictionalizations of Lake Toba throughout novels based on the authors' perspectives, one can increase their understanding of the importance of literary texts to the tourism industry.

Index Terms—expressive theory, fictionalizations, Indonesian novels, Lake Toba images, literary tourism

I. INTRODUCTION

Lake Toba is a remarkable natural wonder of the world. This lake is located in North Sumatra, Indonesia, and is the largest lake in Southeast Asia and one of the deepest lakes in the world. Surrounded by mountains, hills, and jungles, Lake Toba sits 900 meters above sea level and offers extraordinary scenery and a cooler climate, giving a well-needed break from the urban heat, humidity, and pollution. Because of that, many domestic and international tourists like to spend their time at villages in six regencies around Lake Toba, i.e., Simalungun, Samosir, Toba, North Tapanuli, Humbang Hasundutan, Dairi, and Karo. Each area offers various natural views from different angles, giving visitors a reason to return and seek other experiences.

Lake Toba has inspired writers to produce literary works. Hundreds of poems, short stories, and novels are published in the local and Indonesian languages. However, only some of them dominantly take place around the lake. Among the novels are *Sordam* (2010), written by Suhunan Situmorang, *ToBa Dreams* (2015), written by TB Silalahi, and *Tepi Toba* (2019), written by Muram Batu. The three novels take places around Lake Toba; *Sordam* at Tanjung Bunga and Ronggur Nihuta Village in Samosir Regency, *ToBa Dreams* at Tarabunga Village in Toba Regency, and *Tepi Toba* at Parapat City in Simalungun Regency. Although all authors are from Toba Batak ethnic groups, they have different backgrounds, life, and job experiences. Their backgrounds influence how they express their feelings and thoughts on their fictionalizations of Lake Toba. Thus, it is assumed that there are both similarities and differences in their fictionalizations of Lake Toba and its surroundings. According to Frost (2010), analyzing several media texts about a topic or place allows one to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how a place is represented in literature and tourism. Therefore, the potential of novels to motivate readers to visit Lake Toba needs to be analyzed using a literary tourism approach.

Literary tourism is becoming a significant and growing study in the tourism industry due to readers showing interest in setting places the author wrote about or was associated with (Busby & Klug, 2001). This approach has been used worldwide, and many scholars have proven the reciprocal relationship between literary and tourism study. Cevik (2020)

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recorded 132 literary tourism papers published from 33 different regions across Africa, America, China, Europe, and Oceania over 20 years, from 1997 to 2016. He found that literary tourism was a wide-range academic field with its eight types and its relations with many tourism types and other social sciences as an interdisciplinary field. However, the analysis of fictionalizations through authors' expressions connected to tourism phenomena portrayed in their literary works still needs to explore.

This study was first employed by Indonesian researchers in 2019, although it has ever been introduced by Ahmad Bahtiar in a national seminar in Semarang, Indonesia, in 2014. Putra (2019) assumed that the recognition of tourism study as a new science in Indonesia is one of the factors behind its lateness. This study has gained momentum in Indonesia since 2019. Several articles have been published in Indonesian journals, and 26 papers are collected in a book entitled *Sastra Pariwisata* (2020). All scholars agreed that literary works positively impact the tourism sector in Indonesia. However, a critical aspect of the author's intention in a literary text is still unexplored, primarily to see the connection between both studies.

Although the interests of national and international scholars on this topic continuously increase, not even one academic research has been conducted on the three novels above using a literary tourism approach. Some academic articles have studied two of the three novels but have yet to explore the tourism phenomena depicted in the novels. This fact is quite surprising, considering that the novels contain Lake Toba tourism phenomena which can promote Lake Toba as a tourist destination. Erika (2021) reported that the Chairman of the Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly, Bambang Soesatyo, asked all stakeholders to be creative and innovative in developing the tourism sector in North Sumatra as the response to the sharp decrease in tourist visits to North Sumatra. The Indonesian Statistic Central Bureau (BPS) reported a 93.83% decrease in tourist visits to North Sumatra, from 22.128 in 2019 to 1.366 visitors in 2020. UNTWO confirmed that the corona-virus pandemic caused a 72% decline in international tourist arrivals in 2020 and 71% in 2021 compared to 2019. This data represented a 2.1 billion international arrivals loss in both years combined.

Accordingly, it is vital to explore the expressions of the three authors in *Sordam*, *ToBa Dreams*, and *Tepi Toba* by employing a literary tourism approach with the support of the expressive theory proposed by Abrams (1971). The three novels are selected as the data sources for several reasons. First, each novel represents the lake and its surroundings from distinct places. The similar and different expressions are expected to enrich the images of Lake Toba and its surroundings. Second, they were published one year after the Indonesian government had declared Lake Toba as one of the national tourism priorities in Indonesia in 2009. It is assumed that each author intended to promote Lake Toba as a tourist destination. To prove this assumption, two fundamental questions of this study are formulated: 1) How do the three authors fictionalize the images of Lake Toba and its surroundings through the novels *Sordam*, *ToBa Dreams*, and *Tepi Toba*?; and 2) Do their fictionalizations help promote Lake Toba as a tourist destination?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted on two of the three novels, *Sordam* and *ToBa Dreams*, but they have yet to employ a literary tourism approach. Nasution et al. (2015), for instance, applied the psychology of literature approach to study moral values contained in *Sordam*, while Malau et al. (2020) applied the linguistic theory to obtain the meaning of figurative language use in the same novel. In line with them, Ginting (2020) focused his analysis of *ToBa Dreams* on patriotism values by using the sociology of literature approach, while Setiawan (2018) analyzed the human needs of the protagonist of *ToBa Dreams* by employing a phenomenology approach. Although the data sources are the same as this study, these articles do not explore the tourism phenomena.

On the other hand, Indonesian and international researchers have analyzed various novels using a literary tourism approach. Artawan (2020), Fajar (2021), and Arini et al. (2021) have published their articles in Indonesian journals. These articles are relevant to this study since they connected novels to tourism phenomena. Artawan (2020) represented Lovina Island, depicted in *Aku Cinta Lovina* (2017), written by Sunaryono Basuki, while Fajar (2021) investigated Buru Island and Lake Rana in Maluku Province, depicted in *Amba* (2015), written by Laksmi Pamuntjak. Arini et al. (2020) added two additional theories, promotion and host and guest theory, to literary tourism to explore interaction elements performed by hotel staff, portrayed in *Aku Cinta Lovina* (2017) and *Rumah di Seribu Ombak* (2011), written by Erwin Arnada. International writers such as Seaman (2016), Quinteiro et al. (2020), and Bêta and Schuster (2021) have shown their attention to literary tourism study also. Seaman (2016) sought tourists' performances in three festivals in connection with the literary places represented in novels, i.e., Jumping Frog Jubilee in Angles Camp, California, Hemingway Days in Key West, Florida, and In the Footsteps of Norman Maclean Festival in Seeley Lake, Montana. Quinteiro et al. (2020) studied the potential of Coimbra tourism resort development in connection with literary landscapes portrayed in literary works. Bêta and Schuster (2021) showed that the novel *Dracula* (1897), written by Bram Stoker, has affected the development of spiritual tourism in Bistrita City, Romania.

This study would bring a novelty to literary criticism, especially literary tourism since it combines the literary tourism approach with expressive theory to explore how the authors expressed the nature of Lake Toba and its surroundings through their novels. Besides that, there is a gap compared with the previous studies above, which is potential to study for the sake of the development of Lake Toba as a tourist destination.

III. THEORETICAL APPROACH

A. *Literary Tourism*

Several international researchers have studied the multidimensional relationships between literary works (novels) and travel writing and place toward the end of the twentieth century (Robinson & Anderson, 2002). However, they focused on the significance of literature and place in cultural geography without seeing its connection to tourism. In the last three decades, some researchers have employed literary tourism worldwide, such as Squire (1996), Herbert (2001), Busby and Klug (2001), Baleiro and Quinteiro (2018), Hoppen et al. (2014), and Gentile and Brown (2015). Although there are several pieces of research, literary tourism remains under-researched (Smith, 2003). One of the arguable matters is the area of study. Butler (1986; cited in Busby & Klug, 2001) divided literary tourism into four types, namely: (1) homage to an actual location, (2) places significance within the work of fiction, (3) areas are appealing because of their appeal to literary figures, and (4) work of the writer becomes so popular that an area becomes a tourist location per se. Then, Busby and Klug (2001) proposed two more types to add the four, i.e., travel writing and film-induced literary tourism.

Literary tourism is becoming a significant and growing study in the tourism industry since people are drawn to visit the setting places that the author used or was associated with (Watson, 2006; Busby & Klug, 2001) and as a result of this, places depicted in literature are frequently used to promote the destination. By depicting the locations in a series of stories, novels could replace actual travels. That is, practicing literary tourism means traveling to the places of literature, the “literary places” (Herbert, 2001) associated with authors’ biographies and their works (Fawcett & Cormack, 2001). Fawcett and Cormack determined that literary tourism is shaped by the intersection of the writer (biographical facts and real places associated with the author) and fiction (settings and characters).

B. *Expressive Theory*

Expressive theory connects a literary work to its author (Abrams, 1971; Teeuw, 2015). According to this theory, the creative process is dominated by the author's emotions expressed in the artistic work. The external reality is left aside. However, when aspects of the external world are evoked, their image is either used to generate certain inner content or is constructed by the author's emotional state. In this case, only the author knows the background of their writing. The sequence of stories is the projection of the author's emotions, feelings, thoughts, and life experiences. So, the author's intention can be traced back to their biography, dealing with his hometown, ideology, work, and opinion of the author. Once, Wellek and Warren (1956) argued that the author's biography, such as the reading of the authors, his associations with literary men, his travels, the landscape and cities he saw and lived in could answer other questions of literary history (p. 79).

IV. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative interpretive method through the phenomenology paradigm, which has become increasingly popular as a research perspective to study experience in the humanistic and social science disciplines. As interpretive analysis is encompassing and circumstantial but not reductionist and isolationist, researchers can provide interpretive explanations, which focus on language, signs, and meaning from the perspective of participants participating in social phenomenon (Bhattacharjee, 2012). The term ‘phenomenology’ comes from the Greek word ‘phenomenon’ means ‘that which appears’. Edmund Husserl, the father of modern phenomenology, is sure that the only thing to be certain is the individual’s consciousness of the world. According to him, each individual knows and understands the essence of an object through their consciousness, called the mental process of reflection. This statement may seem a very subjective and precarious view of reality, but Husserl regards individual consciousness as the sole source of our understanding of the world.

The data correlating with the image of Lake Toba and its surroundings were selected from three Indonesian novels, i.e., Situmorang’s *Sordam* (2010), written by, Silalahi’s *ToBa Dreams* (2015), and Batu’s *Tepi Toba* (2019). The secondary data were obtained from library research and other relevant sources to provide a description, summary, and critical evaluation of the research problems. This study employs a literary tourism approach accompanied by expressive theory to explore the fictionalizations of the images of Lake Toba and its surroundings based on the authors’ biographies, namely viewpoints, opinions, feelings, and intentions. It is also included in the category of actual places related to the three novels, the second type of literary tourism. The data were translated into English for the sake of complete understandings.

V. RESULTS

Sordam talks about the struggle of a Batak youth to save Toba Lake's environment through a non-government organization from deforestation and water pollution. It is Suhunan Situmorang’s first novel. Situmorang was born on March 12, 1961, in Pangururan, the capital city of the Samosir Regency. After graduating from Junior High School, he moved to Jakarta to continue his study. He got his law bachelor's degree from the University of Kristen, Indonesia, and became a lawyer. Besides that, he is active in a non-government organization concerned with Lake Toba conservation called *Save Lake Toba Community* (SLTC). He republished *Sordam* in 2010 to support the program of SLTC as inserted

on the first page of *Sordam*, saying, "*Direvisi khusus untuk mendukung program konservasi alam Danau Toba oleh Komunitas SLTC*" (A special revised edition to support Lake Toba nature conservation under the auspices of the Save Lake Toba Community). Based on his biography above, there are some similar descriptions to Paltibonar, the protagonist of *Sordam*. As narrated in the story, Paltibonar is from Tanjung Bunga Village, near Pangururan City. He continues his study at a law faculty in Jakarta after graduating from Senior High School. He also becomes a lawyer and environmental activist, like Situmorang. Paltibonar is the reflection of Situmorang's biography itself. However, there are some differences since Paltibonar is narrated as dead at the end of the story.

ToBa Dreams is about a dream of an ex-military man to develop his hometown and Lake Toba. It is the first novel of TB Silalahi. He was born on 17th April 1938 in Pematang Siantar, North Sumatra, Indonesia. He is from Pagarbatu near Balige, the capital city of Toba Regency. He got married to a Javanese woman. After retiring from the Indonesian army officer, he was appointed as Indonesian State Minister for State Apparatus Empowerment in the VI Development Cabinet from 1993 to 1998, a Special Counselor to the President of Indonesia from 2004 to 2006, and a member of the Presidential Advisory Council from 2006 to 2010. Amidst his busy life in bureaucracy, he spends his spare time writing books. He has produced many about bureaucracy, the military, politics, history, and leadership. In addition, he likes art too. For so long, he has directed National Christmas Eve Opera 13 times, Nommensen Opera, and other national cultural events. These experiences inspired him to write and publish *ToBa Dreams* in 2015 and directly transformed it into a film in the same year. Like *Sordam*, *ToBa Dreams* reasonably reflects the biography of Silalahi through Tebe, the protagonist. As narrated in the story, Tebe is an ex-military man who gets married to a Javanese woman. He takes his wife and three children to Tarabunga Villages, four kilometers from Pagarbaru Village. However, there are some differences since Silalahi has no blood children from his marriage.

Tepi Toba, on the other hand, talks about a revenge trial of a young lady against a boat captain in Lake Toba. This novel was written by Muram Batu in 2019. Batu was born on 30th August 1978, in Batubara District, North Sumatra, Indonesia. He lived in Langsa, Aceh, until graduating from Senior High School in Langsa. Batu continued his study at the University of Gadjah Mada, Jogjakarta majoring in Indonesian Literature. He did not finish his study for a reason and then worked as a journalist in some newspaper publishers in Medan and Aceh since 2008. As a professional journalist, he deals with local and national issues. Due to this, his traveling experiences and educational background make him creative and productive in writing many literary works, such as short stories, play right, and non-fiction. He narrates the story based on his job experiences as a journalist who travels to many places. Batu takes Parapat, Simalungun Regency, as his central literary place in *Tepi Toba*. Undoubtedly, Batu has ever stayed in Parapat because he represents everything in detail, such as Lake Toba, climate, landscape, facilities, attractions, transports, tourist activities, citizens, and so on. He must also have interviewed villagers about myths in Batak society, from how he added a new myth called *Boru Sipanggaron* to the Toba Batak myth list.

In short, from the transparent background of the novels and their biographies above, their intentions could be revealed through their fictionalizations of Lake Toba and its surroundings. Putra (2020) divides expressions into two categories, romantic and critical. Romantic expressions relate to beauty, praise, love, intimacy, joy, and sentimentality, whereas critical expressions relate to their opposite, i.e., unattractiveness, pollution, disillusionment, and hatred. Although both seem contrary, they can coexist in poems (literary works) to describe the true complexity.

A. Romantic Expressions

The three authors portray the beauty of Lake Toba and its surroundings romantically from distinct places and angles, i.e., Tanjung Bunga, Ronggur Nihuta, Tarabunga, and Parapat. Situmorang describes the beauty of the Lake from Ronggur Nihuta, a village on the top of Samosir Island, Samosir Recency near Pangururan, his hometown, as follows:

The more he steps into an area rarely inhabited by people, the more stunning the panorama becomes. Hundreds of hectares of pine forest stretch out like a wide carpet. Looking to the west and north, a silent lake like a giant mirror enters his view. The blue sky is dotted with clouds that seem very close and easy to pick. (Situmorang, 2010, p. 163)

From the excerpt, readers can 'see' the detailed description of the beautiful view. To strengthen the extraordinary landscape of Lake Toba and its surroundings, Situmorang uses simile in his narration by using 'like' in 'hundreds of hectares of pine forest stretch out like a wide carpet' and 'he sees a silent lake like a giant mirror'. He compares the jungle with a wide carpet and the lake to a giant mirror. Readers can imagine how vast the jungle and the lake are. In addition, he portrays the sky with clouds to give readers a pre-experience.

Furthermore, he uses another romantic expression to describe the lake from its surface in detail by telling readers the various colors spread over it depending on the time and the climate. The surface of the lake looks dark blue, moss green, dark grey, or silvery when the rain falls, and the wind blows (p. 79), and turns to silent, calm, silvery when there is no rain and wind in the afternoon (p. 153), and changes to golden under the moonlight at night (p. 252). It is deniable that what he describes can be accepted logically. Like a mirror, the color of the lake water and the sunlight is visibly reflected in the morning and afternoon, and the perfect shape of the full moon shining at night can be seen on the lake's surface, moving on the waves. Indeed, Situmorang can express it vividly and romantically because he lives there and is familiar with literary styles.

As narrated in *ToBa Dreams*, Silalahi describes the beauty of Lake Toba through Togar's statements, first when Ronggur feels disappointed to live far away from Jakarta, as follows: "*You know nothing about the beauty here yet. It is*

like a small heaven," Togar says (p. 65), and second when Togar and Ronggur take 20 tourists sailing to enjoy the natural beauty of Lake Toba by boat: "I have told you before, right? It is like paradise here," Togar opens a conversation (p. 75). Silalahi uses a simile to compare the beauty of Lake Toba and the beauty of heaven or paradise. He aims to strengthen how fantastic the view is. However, the way Silalahi represents the beauty of the lake and its surroundings goes straight to the point in his narration with no detailed descriptions. Similarly, it has no precise color of the sunset spread over the lake's surface either when he portrays the beauty of sunset from the hill of Tarabunga Village near Balige, the capital of Toba Regency, as Situmorang does (p. 71) from Tarabunga hill. A slight romantic expression lies only when Silalahi portrays that the lake is vast and calm (p. 233).

Batu, on the other hand, expresses the view of Lake Toba and its surroundings more romantically than Silalahi and is quite similar to Situmorang. He portrays the view from Parapat City, Simalungun Regency, when tourists get up early in the morning, as follows:

The tourists open the windows to enjoy the calm wind blowing from the lake. Some get out of their rooms with thick sweaters taking sweet and hot drinks. They sit on the hotel balcony facing the calm lake wave. They exhale white cigarette smoke into the air. It unites with black fog changing to grey, then white when the calm lake appears; the pine shoots can be seen; the sunrise shines. Seeing those, the tourists thank God for giving a chance to them to witness the extraordinary view of Toba Land (Lake Toba). (Batu, 2019, pp. 3-4)

The quote above is narrated at the very beginning of *Tepi Toba*. The image of Lake Toba comes out slowly and in a sequence from the dark to the bright time. Through the tourists' activities who get up early in the morning, readers can feel, touch, and see it imaginatively. The image is so detailed and precise. Like Situmorang, Batu uses his writing experiences and capability to combine all he notices in a vivid picture. The cool weather around Parapat is added to the narration above as one thing the tourists are eager to find. Situmorang and Silalahi also describe the cool weather from two distinct places. Situmorang connects the weather with a romantic place to make love (p. 164) when Paltibonar describes Ronggur Nihuta Village to her girlfriend, Diandra. Silalahi demonstrates the weather when Andini asks permission to leave Tarabunga Village in a conversation with Tebe, her father-in-law: "This village is peaceful, beautiful, and cool" (p. 245). They have a similar description of the weather around Lake Toba in general, but there is a different expression on how they make readers feel about the weather. By comparing how the three depict the weather, it seems that Situmorang and Batu use their creative writing to make the readers imagine the situation as if they were in the places.

B. Critical Expressions

Besides expressing the view of Lake Toba and its surroundings romantically, the three authors also represent them critically regarding deforestation and water pollution. They describe the causes of water pollution which dangers the water ecosystem of Lake Toba, as follows:

The cargo ships dump the remaining diesel and oil into the lake deliberately, which causes water pollution. (Situmorang, 2010, p. 246)

Tebe is concerned about the behavior of the residents who discharge almost all of their waste into Lake Toba. (Silalahi, 2015, p. 72)

This lake is dirty now, Bro. (Batu, 2019, p. 8)

The three novels represent some causes of water pollution in Lake Toba. Situmorang focuses on oil spills which are dangerous for the lake ecosystem. The oil spills can significantly affect not only the fish but also the lake plants. The fish will die because of chemical toxic in the oil and respiration block. If sunlight is blocked, lake plants will die because it affects photosynthesis and its process. Silalahi and Batu, on the other hand, concentrate on the garbage dumping into the lake, which also ends to water pollution. The garbage dumped into the lake could deplete the oxygen in the water, which can cause fish to die. Furthermore, Situmorang and Batu represent the condition of the hills around Lake Toba, as follows:

His gaze sweeps across the village that he used to explore very often. The forest is not thick anymore. Paltibonar is shocked to notice that pine, johar (black-wood cassia), macadamia, and ingul (toona sureni) trees are no longer visible in the forest. Where are those big trees? (Situmorang, 2010, p. 173)

He sometimes stares at the bare hill around the lake and the floating fish farm extending over the lake. (Batu, 2019, p. 14)

Although both authors portray the phenomena of deforestation, Situmorang, as an activist, looks more enthusiastic about representing it than Batu. Situmorang depicts the bare hill on the outskirts of Ronggur Nihuta Village on the top of Samosir Island in detail by telling the kinds of big trees growing in the area, whereas Batu only observes it from a distance. To answer his question about the responsible parties behind the absence of all trees not only in Samosir Island but also in other regions, Situmorang continues: "Loggers and wood factories from Samosir and Toba regions (around Lake Toba) have cut down the trees illegally for decades until there are no more trees around" (p. 271). This excerpt shows how Situmorang criticizes illegal loggers and wood factories around Lake Toba. The additional phrase 'for decades' to the quote is not a hoax. According to the Environment Agency of North Sumatra, by 2010, only 12 percent of 356,800 hectares of tree vegetation in the Lake Toba area was left because of forest exploitation practices for years (Utomo, 2013).

VI. DISCUSSION

From the results above, the three authors set their works in towns or villages around Lake Toba, which represent the special places connected with them. Situmorang takes place only in Samosir Regency, where he comes from, and so does Silalahi. Silalahi talks much about Tarabunga Village, near his hometown. Differently, Batu takes place only in Parapat City, Simalungun Regency, where he often visits as a journalist. It seems that the motto of Raja Inal Siregar saying, "*Marsipature hutana be* (Let us build our hometown)," when governing North Sumatera, Indonesia, from 1988 to 1998, still effective and successful in calling them under the decline of tourist visits to Lake Toba tourism destination. Undoubtedly, what they portray corresponds to the reality around Lake Toba because they belong to the places. They know some internal issues and want to change people's behaviors through their writings. Representing Lake Toba and its surroundings in a literary text surely needs careful accuracy and qualified skill in writing. A destination can be constructed through books and novels as wonderful, holy, unique, and 'other', thus showing individuals' 'geographical imaginaries' of places or areas. These geographical imaginaries influence visitors' travel choices (Ridanpaa, 2007).

From the results above, Lake Toba and its surroundings are represented romantically and critically. Tourists' imagination of the literary tourism destination is more accurate than the scene's appearance now because these fictional places are injected with emotional and imaginary power to stimulate tourists' desire (Herbert, 2001; Stiebel, 2004). They do not praise the beauty of the lake only, but they depict some issues dealing with the actual situation around Lake Toba through the characters in their novels. Although the novels are fiction, their honesty deserves to be complimented since once readers who have pre-knowledge and pre-experience turn to real visitors; they will feel that they have known the places already (Gothie, 2016).

Novel has a powerful effect on readers (Jenkin & Lund, 2019) and is a powerful agent for tourism (Frost & Laing, 2014). The romantic expressions expressed in the novels will bring the readers to imagine, feel, touch, and smell every single image of Lake Toba portrayed. The nuance of the story sequences will put them in an actual situation. Readers who have ever witnessed the detailed description of Lake Toba provided by the authors will agree and get an overwhelming sense of their past. In another case, those who have never been there may pause to think about the truth of their expressions. The critical expressions in the novels will give readers a positive awareness too. They will have pictures of how to keep Lake Toba clean and tidy when they visit the lake.

In addition, both fictionalizations are also vital for all stakeholders involved in the tourism sector also. The romantic expressions remind the local people to thank God for giving them a wonderful lake that could attract tourists' attention to Lake Toba and its surroundings. Consequently, there is a big responsibility to keep it as it is through good management. It is for sure that this needs a deep awareness not only from the local government but also from everybody involved in the tourism sector, including the local community who settle around Lake Toba.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study explores how Situmorang, Silalahi, and Batu fictionalize the images of Lake Toba and its surrounding through their novels. Their portrayals are mimetic to the natural condition around Lake Toba, which connects with them. Although the way they represent the images similar or distinct from one another, their romantic and critical expressions are vital for readers to give pre-knowledge and pre-experience about the nature images of Lake Toba and its surroundings. The romantic images create a dream, a gratitude for God's grace, and a motivation to visit Lake Toba, while the critical images remind all people involved in the Lake Toba tourism sector to look after Lake Toba and its surrounding as a form of responsibility.

This study is a content analysis focusing on the three authors' fictionalizations of Lake Toba and its surroundings. Further research on the other topics of the three novels is still essential to explore by using literary tourism and other approaches to investigate literary works.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank DIKTI (The Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology) for providing the BPDDN scholarship.

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