

Environmental Humanities Character of Gulliver in Swift's *Gulliver's Travel*

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Abstract. This paper provides the environment ecosystem reflected in the *Gulliver's Travel: A Voyage to Lilliput*. The theory used in this paper was the Ecocriticism approach to literature. This approach focuses on the literature that reflects the ecological system. The method used in collecting the data was close reading and note-taking. Then the researchers analyze the data by using genetic structuralism. Genetic structuralism mainly concerns the context of the text relates to the existence of reality. The environment in *Gulliver's Travel* shows conditions from a Utopia perspective. Indication found in the form of Gulliver is a figure who acts as a war protector and abundant resources for Lilliput.

Keywords: ecocriticism; environmental humanities; *Gulliver's Travel*

Abstrak. Makalah ini menyajikan ekosistem lingkungan yang tercermin dalam *Gulliver's Travel: A Voyage to Lilliput*. Teori yang digunakan dalam tulisan ini adalah pendekatan Ecocriticism pada sastra. Pendekatan ini berfokus pada literatur yang mencerminkan sistem ekologi. Metode yang digunakan dalam pengumpulan data adalah membaca saksama dan mencatat. Kemudian peneliti menganalisis data dengan menggunakan strukturalisme genetik. Strukturalisme genetik berfokus pada memperhatikan gagasan tentang konteks teks dan apa yang mungkin berhubungan dengan realita. Lingkungan pada *Gulliver's Travel* menunjukkan kondisi pada perspektif Utopia. Indikasi yang ditemukan berupa Gulliver merupakan Tokoh yang berperan sebagai War Protector dan Sumberdaya yang melimpah bagi Lilliput

Kata kunci: ekokritik; humanitas lingkungan; *Gulliver's Travel*

INTRODUCTION

Literary works can give birth to new thoughts that affect the world, build a world view and determine how the world works (Teeuw, 2017). In literary studies, the role of the researcher is vital, especially in interpreting meaning carefully. Research trends also influence literature, encouraging researchers' thinking to examine a particular subject in literary works (Nyoman, 2013). One of the literary streams currently being studied by many researchers is Literary Ecology. The early trend on ecological study at *literature* was presented by Cheryl Glotfelty's Work (Glotfelty, 1996). This monumental literary work entitled *Silent Spring* has brought a new perspective on a literary study that literature may have an interest in Environment as well.

Recently trend in ecological literature has driven the researchers to investigate more at the Environmental Humanities notion. The topic of Environmental Humanities in Literary work emerged as the journal of Ecocriticism published some related articles. Jørgensen (Jørgensen, 2019), in his article *Dependence on a whale: Multispecies Entanglements and Ecosystem Services in Science Fiction*, analyses the concept of service, entanglement, and dependence as whale depicted in *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*. Four subtopics being concerned in his article related to how the whales support the ecosystem in the film: whales as provisioning service providers, whales as regulating service providers, whales as supporting services providers, and whales as cultural service providers. Rigby (Rigby, 2019), in her article *Weaving the environmental humanities: Australian strands, configurations, and provocations* develop the insight of the Australian movement in term of environmental humanities. Although her article is not explicitly concerned with a literary work, she tries to argue on how the development of Ecocriticism might be spread widely in terms of multidiscipline studies. It elucidates that there was an impact on moving the societies from a literary work.

Fantasies may lead the reader to imagine the world and sometimes painfully realistic themes in a clearer perspective of imagination than in realistic Fiction or fact (Anggawirya & Prihandoko, 2020). Therefore, the presence of cyber literature through electronic media should not be underestimated (Damian, 2019). It also supports the latest theme of fantasy to be spread through the digital platform to the world. The fantastic characterization in fantasy and setting gives readers an emotional distance that gives them room to wonder about sensitive and essential ideas more objectively than in other genres (Rahman, 2017). An irony about fantasy is that despite the fanciful characters, strange imaginary worlds, and bizarre situations encountered, it has the power to help us better understand reality (Kurkjian et al., 2006).

Artemis Fowl: The Opal Deception, by Eoin Collier (Burkam, 2015), was a story about some fairies with Artemis Fowl's character. This story took place in a lower-ground world, which is close enough to the earth's core. Research related to this novel was conducted to reveal the relation to folklore and some works of literature. A part of lower ground is described similarly to the tunnel in London (Pettersson, 2009). The fantasy world in literature is also depicted in a work of Jonathan Swift, entitled *Gulliver's Travel*.

Gulliver's Travel and how this work is known in Indonesia and people nowadays was through a film entitled *Gulliver's Travel*, released in 2010. It leads people to a world that people might not imagine before, where a human and *Lilliput* (Dwarves) could live together in one land with one condition. He was not allowed to harm their subject. This novel has a deep value that the researchers feeling are strong enough to describe the modern environment.

Four-part satirical work by Anglo-Irish author Jonathan Swift was published anonymously in 1726 as *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World*. A keystone of English literature since it was one of the series that gave birth to novel form. It did not yet have the genre rules as an organizing tool. A parody of then-popular travel narrative, *Gulliver's Travel* combines adventure with savage Satire, mocking English customs and the politics of the day (Britannica, 2011)

The story took place in 1726 as the time setting, *Gulliver's Travel*, and then is listed as one of the 100 best novels ever written in English (Robert, 2015). This Satire is frequently cited as the most excellent example of literary irony. Bringing the readers to a fictional land and creating such a monstrous character make it boundless toward many perspectives that could be analyzed through this novel. Fictional land leads the readers to natural land and beauty that is demanded by modern

people and the value of the Lilliputians who protect their environment. The impression might lead modern society to realize how the environment is essential.

Some events in this novel have shown how important the environment is. In the beginning, when Lemuel Gulliver was the prisoner for the Lilliputians, he promised not to damage the land or the Lilliputians. It shows that this work actually can lead people to a better society by protecting the environment through some lessons derived from this novel.

Another perspective in adapting to this novel is on the Lilliputians. The tendency to use the resource greedily in facing the specific situation in this novel confirms the concept of hedonism. As an example of the Lilliputians wanting to attack Gulliver, in this situation, they manage to utilize more than hundreds of arrows, but it feels only like a needle for Gulliver. This situation proves the concept of hedonism in which the Lilliputians greedily utilize their resources without considering what impact may result.

Literature is an art that brings emotional, cognitive, and social relief to the readers through words, which allows the readers to run away from the everyday life and dive into the fictive unlimited world, observe the problems and the wishes of the imaginary characters, enter the stage of development that he/she already has passed (Denkova, 2011).

The trend of Ecocriticism is currently rising due to the damage that exists around people. Garrard (Garrard, 2004), in his introduction, stated:

Following up on several individual developments in Ecocriticism, human-animal studies, environmental history, green cultural and media studies, and the respective disciplinary debates regarding topics, theories, and forms of interdisciplinary exchange and joint research, the twenty-first century has seen the consolidation of a joint endeavor known as the environmental humanities

This statement signals the emergence of the environmental humanities that started from the development of ecocriticism and many disciplinary studies. It may be indicated from the interaction among humans, or between animals and human. In his work, there were some concepts that introduced. Some of them were Animal Liberty, and Environmental Humanities. This study uses the rationale of environmental humanities as the basic ideology by interpreting the actions of the characters in the literary works studied. As some of the results of the literary research above are able to show the essence of the value that can be excavated from a literary work, this study discusses the value of environmental humanity that emerges from the figure of Gulliver in the literary work of *Gulliver's Travel*. By using an ecocritical approach, the researchers focus on the representation of the environment and the contemplation of the character's actions.

METHOD

This research was conducted from March to May 2022. This research is a qualitative descriptive study that uses literature as the object of its research. In placing literary works as objects of research, literature through multidisciplinary literature can become an approach by transferring the concept of the world and world rationality to literary works (Denise Eilen & Emily, 2015; MacNeil, 2009; Masadi & Zahro, 2020). The literary approach used in this research is Literary Ecology. A literary ecology is a literary approach that focuses on studying environmental representations

reflected in the literary world (Suwardi, 2016). In conducting the research, the researchers carried out the methodological steps of literary research: *Close Reading* and *Note Taking*. Close reading is a way to investigate a literary work by reading carefully, examining the details and providing feedback by asking questions and answering questions that is relevant to the research issues to the researcher himself in order to reflect the theories that will be implemented and in determining the meaning of the reading (Jabrohim, 2017). Meanwhile, note taking is a data collection method that is commonly used among journalists and researchers to collect information by writing an important point that is relevant to the topics. After the data were collected, the researchers highlighted based on data grouping to facilitate data classification, namely Environmental Representation data and Character Actions on the environment. After classifying the data, the researchers contemplated the relevance of the character's actions to the environment with the concept of Environmental Humanities. Two sub-discussions were obtained from the results of this contemplation, and elucidated in the discussion section, namely *War Protector* and *Abundant Resources of Energy*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The story of Gulliver was initially written in French, which might cause misunderstandings during translation (Colombo, 2014). Researchers use several literature studies to contemplate the relevance of *Gulliver's Travel* to the value of environmental humanities. First, Clark (Clark, 1989) considers this work relevant to an insult to particular religious groups that occurred when this work was born in France. It does not become relevant to the discussion because in the present study researchers focus on forms of interaction that intersect with the environment. However, Morvan's view (Morvan, 1993) regarding the Gulliver's act of urinating on a building that was on fire in the city of the dwarves was considered an act of protection or protection. This understanding is still considered relevant by researchers today. Even though the act of urinating is an inappropriate action, the action is still considered an act that saves the city. Furthermore, Morvan also assumes that Gulliver is a character who intervenes in the dispute between Lilliput.

Another perception of this *Gulliver's Travel* is that this work describes the voyages that Gulliver has gone through, but this work does not directly discuss the ecology depicted in the journey he goes through. (Donovan & Williams, 1984). If we look closer at today's post-modern society, this story depicts the *Utopia* world (Lee, 2018). Utopia is a socio-political system that is only an illusion or dream caused by the effects of the financial and ecological crisis on society. (Žuk, 2020). In this literary work, it can be seen that the utopian condition is reflected in the existing economic and ecological stability. Economically, Lilliput's condition is a prosperous society, and ecologically it is illustrated that the natural resources that are owned to accommodate Gulliver are very large.

Capital City of Mildendo

Mildendo, the capital city for the Lilliput, is a beautiful place depicted by how all of the Lilliput society and the kingdom interact. Such a place that keeps both the society and kingdom could live without any case of the poverty that exists or is depicted in this voyage. For a tiny creature like Lilliput, all of the resources might be abundant, but how the kingdom manages all of the resources for the society is depicted wisely since none of the Lilliput are struggling in living here.

Even the resource is pictured as a small resource for the Gulliver, and it brings a new question whether this Lilliput is that small, that I imagined as a creature that living in a human city might be equal to living in a continent. Having a tree in their kingdom and many more signals the society's

culture that cares about how they are supposed to treat nature Huggan (2019). The editorial board of Green Letter journal that issued the Environmental Humanity stated:

The basis for this defense to date has primarily been an appeal to culture: the capacity of the humanities to lend cultural breadth and historical depth to pressing environmental problems and issues; or the factoring of cultural differences into historical and contemporary environmental debates

The history of the Lilliput before the age of having a capital like Mildendo was provided in some narrations of this Satire. Once the Gulliver was found and brought to the capital, they pass an ancient place, which signals that this Lilliput had lived primitively before. Even though it is not clearly stated, Mildendo is a transitional age from ancient to the new age of Lilliput creatures. It can be concluded that how the new kingdom managed to have a canon to be involved in a war and how they understand some of the traditional technology in making a great wain to put Gulliver on it. Even though this old place was not specified how it is actually, it is already a signal that they had built a civilization before in a place before Gulliver came.

Moreover, this society adapted to nature appropriately is indicated by how the kingdom tried to put their work into taking the resource. Taking the resource might sound usual for the people who are living in the post-modern era, but Lilliput was a creature that provided an example of how they managed to take the resource in the amount of what was needed and not excessively. It also indicates how the Lilliput population is still under control compared to the earth nowadays, which is overpopulated and pushes humans to take as many resources as possible. Those who are winning the domination of the resource will win the competition.

Mildendo was never free from any threat since the Lilliput were still in war. This war also indicated that they were aware of the politics, and making diplomacy is an exciting aspect to be reviewed since how they negotiate with Gulliver and manage to benefit Mildendo is good. As a condition where many utopian countries believe that balance does not only come from one side but various sides in life, this is reflected in the world described in Mildendo, where prosperity is not limited to how the people in it can coexist with nature as they should. However, from a political point of view, there is no big turmoil, although later, we discuss how Gulliver's existence created this balance as one of the figures who built the utopia through the cessation of the war.

This country that was built like Mildendo does not only appear in *Gulliver's Travel's* literary works, but also other canon literary works can open the readers' horizons regarding the beauty of their environment. Although some of these depictions in Mildendo world are greatly influenced by the wishes of the translator (Colombo, 2014), the relevance of this world is closely related to the depiction of utopia. It is the same with Narnia which gives the readers many descriptions to raise awareness (Taylor, 2008). One of the points of awareness that is highlighted is the beauty of the country's environment which is depicted in these two stories. These two countries are described as a world of imagination filled with pleasure for the readers when in direct contact with an environment that is still very natural with a stunning depiction of the arrangement of trees and becomes the desire of every living being to live in it. In these two stories, the environment interaction of imaginary living things is also described which is free, unfettered, as one of the points of Ecocriticism is Animal Liberty Narnia is better able to provide space for imaginary animals to live freely, as well as the world in *Gulliver's Travel* which gives space to Dwarves, or dwarves who in the story are called Lilliput (Garrard, 2004). Lilliput has complete freedom to manage existing resources. Lilliput is also able to build a government-based system of government to manage

existing resources. It indicates a very balanced non-human environment. There is no threatening friction, although before the emergence of Gulliver there had been a war between Lilliput, the war was stopped and peace returned after Gulliver stopped it

The situation before the emperor acknowledged Gulliver was a condition that he was a threat to Lilliput. His big body may harm the Mildendo even for each of his steps. This paper divides the discussion of the features of the Gulliver as a giant in adapting to the ecosystem of the Lilliput into several parts.

The Giant as Environmental War Protector

Despite the balance condition in the Mildendo, there was a war threat for the environment that may cause massive damage if it was not stopped. In this case, the war had begun far before Gulliver came. Assuming that more of the resource might have been taken to fight in this war, Mildendo's resource is still far enough, and no such crisis was caused.

In the beginning, the Lilliput had shown their military power in tackling down Gulliver and making such a perfect-sized creature that could not deal with them. Here Gulliver was more adaptable and trying to not even make the condition worst by trying to fight them back. Since he knows there is no such way to run in this condition, the best alternative is to gather information about what creatures they are.

Military power is sometimes associated with criminal acts. In Margie Orford's work, a place or, in this case, spatial concepts can influence criminal acts committed by characters (Martin & Murray, 2014). Although Orford's work takes place in Africa, where there is a significant social gap, this shows that there are spatial differences that can encourage criminal acts. In the world that appears to Gulliver, there is a striking difference in body size, where Gulliver is a giant figure, but the differences here do not encourage criminal acts. Therefore, Gulliver is a figure who maintains peace and is the leading actor in the success of the utopian world on Mildendo.

The ongoing war between Lilliput, as depicted in *Gulliver's Travel*, is one of the most striking human problems and is the most significant conflict between Lilliput. It is a driving force for literary characters in literary works to better place themselves as heroes or perpetrators of crime (Bianchi, 2018). In the context of Gulliver's Travel, there are two perspectives in seeing Gulliver's character. First, Gulliver can be assumed to be the perpetrator of criminal acts in exploiting natural resources (Anggawirya & Prihandoko, 2020). This exploitation occurs in terms of the use of existing natural resources. Gulliver does not directly use the advantage in terms of its larger body size to carry out the exploitation, but the treatment given by Lilliput to accommodate the existence of this Gulliver is a problem for natural resources. In the end, Gulliver Lilliput faced a financial crisis which proved that there was excessive use of resources due to the existence of this Gulliver. From the second side, it can be seen that Gulliver is a figure who is a hero figure who can stop the protracted war between Lilliput. Previously, when the Gulliver had not yet reached this Mildendo island, wars continued to occur due to the thin difference in military strength between one side of the camp. The emergence of Gulliver is a big military gap for one side of Lilliput, so this shows Lilliput's overpowering side and silences the intentions of the other camp to launch attacks on the other Lilliput side.

In conclusion, on the war protector, the heroic side that Gulliver brings up in opening the gap in military power is the solution and Protector of the war, and also Gulliver plays a significant role in

protecting the environment from any damage that may happen, it is due to his enormous size, and none of the enemy's side could deal with him. This idea leads to the concept that Gulliver is a savior for Lilliput environment. If he was not there, it might cause extensive damage since the enemy came with a big fleet of ships attacking the Mildendo. Gulliver manages to use his big body to protect the capital.

There would be a significant loss in terms of the environment if the Gulliver were not there. Even in the worst case, if the Mildendo fall, it means the occupation will be started, and the occupier will start not only in taking the whole kingdom but also what Lilliput of Mildendo had already struggled with before in maintaining their resource and managing to have a beautiful capital.

The Giant as Abundant Resources

Contemporary Fiction gives the author complete authority to play his imagination in experimenting with Fiction (Stockwell, 2022). This freedom from fiction also gives birth to extraordinary characters in a literary work. Gulliver was born with the freedom to determine a larger body size than the people around him. Generally, the term giant is used for those with a body size that is more than average. Giant's House uses the term giant for someone above average height (Burns, 2000). However, in the representation shown by Gulliver, Travel is a Giant, which generally appears in mythology or previous beliefs. Some of the Giants represented in mythology are identical to the apocalypse (Huang, 2019). Apocalypse is an unwanted condition that occurs in an environment or ecosystem, but this arises from assumptions on the existing indications. In *Gulliver's Travel*, these indications appear in several narratives, but the most visible sign of an apocalypse indication is the occurrence of a crisis in Mildendo's finances and resources.

Optimistic assumptions about the use of resources owned by Gulliver or, in this case, the benefits of abundant energy resources are beneficial in the world of Lilliput. Considering that all of the Lilliput had their limit in managing the available resource, Gulliver is an excellent alternative in making sure that they could manage their resource without wasting many of their human resources, even they could save some of the human resources for doing another thing that still related to the interest of the kingdom. In this case, Gulliver as a giant, could do much better compared to hundreds of the Lilliput in managing their resource. Therefore, the kingdom regulates the Gulliver in storing some of the specific amounts to achieve the kingdom's trust. It is also meant to make sure that even if Gulliver takes some of the resources, there will be a beneficial exchange for the kingdom

This section concludes that Gulliver's profits have been maximized by Lilliput, but unfortunately, this condition is not directly proportional to the costs that must be incurred by Lilliput to accommodate Gulliver to remain in Mildendo. Assuming that Gulliver survives in Mildendo, the most relevant condition is the post-human condition, where Lilliput will find it difficult to survive with the economy and resources that are right for the Lilliput people but not suitable for Gulliver.

Literary works like *Gulliver's Travel* are literary works that are close to Young Adult readers. To the world's young adult readers, Mildendo is already very representative of beauty. However, Mildendo, with ten years with Gulliver, will undoubtedly experience a very significant difference. The world of Mildendo, which has entered the post-human era, will also be fascinating to discuss, considering that this work has offered precious value as a literary work. Talks about Climate Change, Androids, and Robots (Tarr, White, Donna R., 2020) would be an important topic while Gulliver was still at Mildendo.

Nevertheless, Gulliver's final decision to return to his world is one part of the decision to save Mildendo from the apocalypse. The ending offered in *Gulliver's Travel's* story provides an implicit meaning for readers who contemplate the value of inequality, both the power gap and military strength. However, in closing the discussion about the canon story that was popular at the time, the value of environmental humanity played a role in helping save Mildendo both from the destruction of long-term war and apocalypse in the environment that could occur if Gulliver survived in Mildendo.

CONCLUSION

Gulliver is a famous character for young adult readers in that time. He may have represented how humans need to adapt well to the environment. How the issue on the adapting to the environment is applied in this Satire is separated into two parts, the first is how the Gulliver as a giant for the society in Mildendo protects the environment from any damage that may be caused by the impact of the war between the Lilliput. Moreover, the second is in point of how this giant can manage to become an abundant human resource for the Lilliput kingdom. Overall, *Gulliver's Travel* offers a variety of values in it, but the issue that can be highlighted the most from the perspective of readers in this era is environmental humanity which shows how Gulliver can exchange advantages while in Mildendo for the short-term and long-term assumptions. In the short term, it can be seen that from a humanist perspective, Gulliver is a Hero who can give peace to the two warring Lilliput camps. The gap in military strength possessed by the Gulliver camp will force the attacking enemy to stop invading. However, in terms of resources, the presence of Gulliver is like a double-edged sword, which in the short term can provide benefits in terms of employment, but in the long term will encourage Lilliput to enter the post-humanist era and even apocalypse if Gulliver survives in Mildendo.

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