DOI:10.21776/ub.icon_laterals.2016.001.1.57

**Human's Perspective toward Nature and Animals
in Aesop's Fables Entitled *The Man and the Wood*,
The Goose with the Golden Eggs, and *The Milkmaid and Her Pail***

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ABSTRACT

Humans, animals and nature are bound one another and can not be separated. As the creatures that live on earth and use natural resources, humans must be aware of environmental sustainability and also the survival of the animals. Unfortunately, there are still many people who do not understand about the importance of protecting environment, and have less attention toward animal's survival. This issue is often raised in a number of literary works, among which are some of Aesop's fables entitled *The Man and the Wood*, *The Goose With the Golden Eggs*, and *The Milkmaid and Her Pail*. The researcher finds that in those three fables, human figures are depicted using animals or nature in order to fulfill their own satisfactions, even to exploit them. By doing so, this research will be explored by using Ecocriticism approach and also Glotfelty and Fromm's theory regarding human's perspective on nature, those are anthropocentric and ecocentric. This study will focus on the perspective of the human figures toward nature and animals that are on the three of Aesop's fables. Through their behavior, the researcher finds that the human figures in *The Man and the Wood*, *The Goose With the Golden Eggs*, and *The Milkmaid and Her Pail* have anthropocentric perspective, in which humans make themselves as the center of living and do not consider themselves as part of nature.

KEYWORDS: Animal, anthropocentric, environment, human, nature

Every living creature has a dependency to one another. Humans are unable to live without the existence of animals and the natural environment. Similarly, nature needs maintainance and custody from human. Nature also needs animals to help maintain the fertility of the soil. While some types of farm animals need humans to take care of and breed them. Animals also need nature as a residence or a place to

find food. In other words, human beings, animals and nature are bound one another. They cannot be separated (Ajim).

As the creatures that live on the earth and use natural resources, humans must be aware that natural resources must be maintained continually. They also must maintain the survival of the animals. Just like humans, animals also need nature as a place to stay and to find food. Therefore, if the nature is damaged, not just humans who will suffer, but also the animals that are still alive in the wild. If the animals are endangered, human beings will also get trouble in finding their food. Unfortunately, there are still many people who do not understand about the importance of protecting the environment. There is still so much garbage strewn everywhere. The thing that is considered as trivial thing precisely can cause big problems such as flood or the decrease of marine animal populations as a result of sewage and garbage. In addition, as living beings who work with technology support, people can unconsciously do things that make a polluted environment. For example, a factory that produces waste or pollution can damage the survival of plants and animals. Liquid waste which is thrown away and carried over into a river can ruin the lives of animals and plants that live in the river, while the smoke coming out of the factory chimneys can damage trees and plants around the factory (Fatmah, 2015).

In addition to the lack of attention to environmental pollution, there are still many people were paying less attention to animal survival. It is proved through more reduction in the number of endangered animals which living in the wild due to the act of human who often hunt against them. Some Indonesian rare animals such as the Sumatran elephant and the Javanese rhinoceros were recorded in decrease, even almost extinct in 2015. It is not separated from human's behavior that often hunt and trade animals. Some animals even hunted for human's collection (TraveEsia).

Based on the events above, it can be seen that some people still do overexploitation toward animals and nature. In fact, as humans themselves, animals also need protection, especially endangered animals which numbers are getting fewer. The problem about human exploitation against nature and animals are still unsolved until today. It is criticized in many forms, not just through the news in the media, but also in the form of literature. Some authors create a literary work for the purpose as a form of reflection of society, a tool of social struggles, and also a tool to express ideas and aspirations (Faruk, 2015: 43-45). Of all the issues raised in the literature, one of which is the issue of the sustainability of nature and animals that need to be protected. This issue was also raised in some of Aesop's fables, among them are entitled *The Man and The Wood*, *The Goose With the Golden Eggs*, and *The Milkmaid and Her Pail*.

Through Aesop's fables entitled *The Man and the Wood*, *The Goose With the Golden Eggs*, and *The Milkmaid and Her Pail*, the researcher saw that the human figures in the three fables were equally had thoughts to exploit nature and animals for the sake of personal interests, without thinking of the continuity of the nature and animal. Therefore, in this study, the researcher will focus on examining the perspectives of human figures in the three fables toward nature and animals, by using Ecocriticism approach. Ecocriticism is a study that began to appear along with the establishment of ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and Environment), an association that accommodates researchers who have an interest in the relationship of nature and humans in the text, with a mission to promote the idea that a work of literature and nature have relevance (Glottfelty and Fromm, 1996: xviii).

Human must pay more attention to their relationship with nature and animals. If humans are aware about their bound toward nature, then they will not see nature as

a different part of themselves. People should look at themselves and nature as an inseparable unity, so do animals (Bookchin, 1982:20-21).

Until the 19th century, some western societies still assumed that living creatures other than humans did not need to be treated in accordance with humanity and moral behavior that existed. People assume that other living creatures, like animals, can be treated as they want, used to fulfill their daily needs, even harmed without any sense of awareness to keep them. Animals were considered like inanimate objects which can be used and treated as human wanted (Francione, 2008:2).

In the end, a rule was made that humans are allowed to use animals to fulfill their daily needs, but they also had to maintain the survival of animals around them and treat them well. Like humans, animals are able to feel the suffering of poor treatment they received. Therefore, it is an obligation of humans to treat animals with kindness as a part of nature, just like humans treat each other (Francione, 2008:5). Thus, it can be understood that animals should not be treated differently from humans. They also have the right to live a decent life and maintained well.

There are two types of human perspective in dealing with nature and animals in their surroundings, the anthropocentric and ecocentric. Anthropocentric is a perspective in which humans make themselves the center of living surrounded by everything that is not a part of them, that is nature. Ecocentric is a perspective in which people feel that nature is the center of life and they feel they have a strong attachment to nature (Glottfelty and Fromm, 1996: xx).

From the explanation above, the researcher draw the formulation of the issues to be addressed in this study, that were the portrayal of animals and nature's position in *The Man and the Wood*, *The Goose With the Golden Eggs*, and *The Milkmaid and*

Her Pail and also the perspective of human figures toward nature and animals that are portrayed in all the three fables.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

This study is a qualitative research using close reading technique. First of all, the researcher read the fables carefully, then examined the position of the animals and nature depicted in *The Man and the Wood*, *The Goose with the Golden Eggs*, and *The Milkmaid and Her Pail* by Aesop. The researcher also examined the portrayal of human figures' perspective in the all three fables. After that, an approach that is relevant to the discussion is applied in this research, namely Ecocriticism, with a focus on theories regarding the position of humans and animals and also nature as well as kinds of humans' perspective toward nature and animals. By doing so, the researcher will be able to draw the finding of this study, that will be summarized in the conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Portrayal of Animals and Nature's Position in *The Man and the Wood*, *The Goose with the Golden Eggs*, and *The Milkmaid and Her Pail*

The three Aesop's fables depict about humans' treatment toward animals and nature. The fable entitled *The Man and the Wood* told about a man who came to the wood and begged to all the trees there to give him one of their branches. He said that he needed it for a purpose, as it is stated in the quotation below,

A Man came into a Wood one day with an axe in his hand and begged all the Trees to give him a small branch, which he wanted for a particular purpose (Aesop's Fables, 1993:49).

The good natured trees gave the man a branch from each of them. Unfortunately, the man who has got what he wanted then put out his axe and cut down all the trees, as it is stated below,

What did the Man do but put it into an axe head, and soon set to work cutting down tree after tree (Aesop's Fables, 1993:49).

The trees just realized that the man who have helped by them was actually their enemy. They felt guilty because gave the man a chance to destroy the,

Then the Trees saw how foolish they had been in giving their enemy the means of destroying themselves (Aesop's Fables, 1993:49).

Based on the description above, it was portrayed that the man was heartless toward the trees in the wood. He asked the trees to give him a branch from each of them, and when he already got what he wanted, he cut all the trees with his axe. The man exploited the trees for his personal interest, and he did not care about the sustainability of the wood. Therefore, the trees and the wood in this fable is positioned only as the things which is purposed only to fulfill humans' needs, and the man regarded himself not as the part of nature.

Meanwhile, in *The Goose with the Golden Eggs*, it told about a countryman who had a goose. One morning, he found a golden egg in the goose's nest,

One day a countryman going to the nest of his Goose found there an egg all yellow and glittering (Aesop's Fables, 1993:91).

At first, the man wanted to throw up the golden egg because he thought that the egg was just a trick. However, he took it home and soon found that it was a pure gold, which made him happy,

When he picked it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away because he thought a trick had been played upon him. But he took it

home on second thought, and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold (Aesop's Fables, 1993:91).

The same thing continued to happen every morning, which made him rich by selling the golden eggs. Soon, he became greedy and wants to get all the golden eggs inside the goose. He then decided to kill the goose. Alas, when he killed it, he found nothing inside the goose/ His own greediness made him loose his animal and also the treasure he could get. It is portrayed in the statement below,

Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs. As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it, only to find nothing (Aesop's Fables, 1993:91).

Based on the description of the fable above, it was portrayed that the goose is used by the countryman as the tool to get money. The countryman treats the goose inhumanly and every golden egg he got would be sold, so he could get much money from it. To get more money, the countryman decided to kill the goose. He thought that there would be more golden eggs inside the goose's stomach. Then, without caring about the goose's feeling or life sustainability, he killed it. However, after killing the goose, he never found what he wanted. The death of the goose made him lost. The man also did not regard himself as the part of nature, and felt that he could do anything toward the goose.

Meanwhile, *The Milkmaid and Her Pail* told about a Milkmaid who was heading to market by carrying a pail of milk in her head. While bringing the milk, she daydreamed and imagined the amount of money she would get from the selling of the milk, and what she could buy with it, as it is stated in the fable below,

A Milkmaid was walking to market carrying her milk in a pail on her head. As she went along she began calculating what she would do with the money she would get for the milk. "I'll buy some fowls from Farmer Brown," said she, "and they will lay eggs each morning, which I will sell to the parson's wife. With the money that I get from the sale of these eggs I'll buy myself a new dress and a new hat; and when I go to market, won't all the young men come up and speak to me! Polly Shaw will be that jealous...but I don't care. I shall just look at her and toss my head like this." (Aesop's Fables, 1993:120). Suddenly the pail fell off from her head, and the milk was split. She could not sell it anymore and go home without get any money. When she arrived, she told everything happened to her mother, who advised her not to daydream too much about anything that has not happen yet, as portrayed in the statement below,

As she spoke she tossed her head back, the Pail fell off, and all the milk was spilt. So she had to go home and tell her mother what had occurred. "Ah, my child," said the mother. "Do not count your chickens before they are hatched." (Aesop's Fables, 1993:120-121).

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen that the Milkmaid used the fowls only to get money. She imagined that she could buy every things she wanted by selling the eggs. To get what she wanted, she would sell the milk. By doing so, she also regarded the cow, which produced the milk, as the tool to get money. For the Milkmaid, the milk from the cow and the fowls she imagined were positioned as the things to fulfill her wants. It showed that she did not regard herself as the part of nature.

Based on the descriptions of fables above, it can be seen that animals and nature in the fables do not have the same position as human figures in the three

stories. In fact, animals or nature also could suffer by the bad treatment they got from humans. It supposed to be humans' responsibility to treat animals and nature well and gently. Humans also must realize that they owe animals to fulfill their needs, so humans must treat them well, as the statement by Francione below,

...animals are able to suffer whether or not they have souls or some human like cognitive characteristic. Therefore, we may use animals because they are different from us, but we nonetheless are obligated to treat them "humanely" and not to cause them "unnecessary" suffering. We must use animals "gently." Moreover, this is a moral obligation that we owe directly to the animals and is not one that merely concerns animals but is really owed to other humans (Francione, 2008:5).

The Portrayal of Humans' Perspective in Aesop's Fables Entitled *The Man and the Wood*, *The Goose with the Golden Eggs*, and *The Milkmaid and Her Pail*

In the three Aesop's fables above, each of the human figures has the same perspective toward animals and nature. It can be seen in *The Man and the Wood* that the man is portrayed as a cunning person who used the trees in the wood to fulfill his wants. When he met the trees for the first time, he begged to them to give him one of their branches. When his request has already fulfilled, the man took his axe and cut all the trees one by one, as it is stated in the quotation of fable below,

A Man came into a Wood one day with an axe in his hand and begged all the Trees to give him a small branch, which he wanted for a particular purpose. The Trees were good-natured and gave him one of their branches. What did the Man do but put it into an axe head, and soon set to work cutting down tree after tree. Then the Trees saw how foolish they had been in giving their enemy the means of destroying themselves (Aesop's Fables, 1993:49).

From the quotation of *The Man and the Wood* above, it was portrayed that the man did not have a heart toward nature. He did not regard himself as the part of nature, and did not care about the sustainability of the wood. Even though he depended on nature, he still destroyed it for his personal interest, and broke his own promise that he only asked for one branch from each tree in the wood. In the end, he cut all the trees which have given him their branch. From the statement above, it can be seen that the man in the wood has anthropocentric perspective. As it is stated that anthropocentric is a perspective where humans regard themselves as the center of life, surrounded by everything that not the part of them, that is nature (Glottfelty and Fromm, 1996:xx).

In the second fable, *The Goose with the Golden Eggs*, it can be seen that the countryman also used the goose for his personal interest. He became greedy after got the golden eggs from the goose everyday, and wanted to get more golden eggs. Thus, he decided to kill the goose, thought that in its stomach there would be more golden eggs. He did not care about the goose's life and its feeling when it got killed. He only wanted to be richer and did not realize that the goose and him were bounded one another. It was portrayed from the quotation of fable below,

One day a countryman going to the nest of his Goose found there an egg all yellow and glittering. When he picked it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away because he thought a trick had been played upon him. But he took it home on second thought, and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold. Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs. As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it, only to find nothing (Aesop's Fables, 1993:91).

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen that the countryman did not regard the goose as something valuable. He only used the goose as the tool to get more money and did not realize that he still depended on the goose. It shows that the countryman has anthropocentric perspective, as it is said that in this perspective, humans regard themselves as the center of life, surrounded by everything that not the part of them, that is nature (Glottfelty and Fromm, 1996:xx). By looking the portrayal of the countryman above, it can be seen that he saw that the goose was inferior and he could do anything to it. In *The Goose and the Golden Eggs*, the countryman also did not have awareness to treat the goose well, as it is said that until the 19th century, people still thought that animals can be treated inhumanely. They thought that animals can be used to fulfill their needs and can be treated as they wanted (Francione, 2008:2).

The same with the two fables above, the third Aesop's fable entitled *The Milkmaid and Her Pail* also has a human figure that treats animals as something which can be used to fulfill her wants. It can be seen from the Milkmaid's thought about what she could achieve from the selling of milk she brought. She also has already thought that she would buy fowls that would give her eggs everyday, and she could sell the eggs to get more money and bought fancy clothes, as it was stated in the quotation below,

A Milkmaid was walking to market carrying her milk in a pail on her head. As she went along she began calculating what she would do with the money she would get for the milk. "I'll buy some fowls from Farmer Brown," said she, "and they will lay eggs each morning, which I will sell to the parson's wife. With the money that I get from the sale of these eggs I'll buy myself a new dress and a new hat; and when I go to market, won't all the young men

come up and speak to me! Polly Shaw will be that jealous...but I don't care. I shall just look at her and toss my head like this." As she spoke she tossed her head back, the Pail fell off, and all the milk was spilt. So she had to go home and tell her mother what had occurred. "Ah, my child," said the mother. "Do not count your chickens before they are hatched." (Aesop's Fables, 1993:120-121).

Based on the statement above about the Milkmaid's act toward animals and everything they produce, it is portrayed that the Milkmaid has anthropocentric perspective. She used animals and the things they produced, such as milk and eggs, to fulfill her wants. She only took their advantage, without care about their sustainability. Her thoughts to use them as the tools to get money portrayed that she positioned the animals as inferior creatures. She did not think to treat them well because she did not regard herself as the part of nature who were also depended on animals. As it is said that in anthropocentric perspective, humans make themselves as the center of life who are surrounded by everything that are not the part of them, such as nature and animals (Glotfelty and Fromm, 1996:xx).

In the end of the three fables, it was portrayed that all the human figures treated animals and nature badly. They only took the advantages of nature and animals for their own needs, but they never thought to treat nature and animals well. It proved that the three human figures in the fables still thought animals and nature as inferior creatures that can be treated inhumanly and did not want to maintain their sustainability. By doing so, it can be seen that the three fables have anthropocentric perspective, which are portrayed from the act of the human figures that do not regard themselves as the part of nature and do not have any bound to animals and nature, so they think that they can use animals and nature without taking care of them. Animals

and nature's position in the fables also portrayed as inferior creatures which treated rudely by humans. It strengthens the finding in this research that Aesop's fables entitled *The Man and the Wood*, *The Goose With the Golden Eggs*, and *The Milkmaid and Her Pail* have anthropocentric perspective.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, it is found that in Aesop's fables entitled *The Man and the Wood*, *The Goose with the Golden Eggs*, and *The Milkmaid and Her Pail*, animals and nature are positioned by humans as inferior creatures. All the three fables have the same perspectives that are portrayed by the human figures, namely anthropocentric.

Through the portrayal of animals and nature's position in the fables and also the humans' acts who exploit animals and nature. The man who cut down all the trees in the wood, the countryman who killed the goose to get more golden eggs, and also the milkmaid who thought to sell the milk and the fowls she would get to fulfill her wants about clothes portray that the three fables contains anthropocentric perspective. The fables portray that the human figures there regarded themselves as the center of life and they werenot the part of nature. They also did not rgard the nature and animals in the fables as equal creatures with them. In fact, they still needed the animals and nature to fulfill their needs. Those things prove that the human figures have anthropocentric perspectives and only want to use nature and animals, without maintain its sustainability.

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