

NATURE REPRESENTATION IN *THE CHILDREN'S BLIZZARD*:

AN ECOCRITICAL ANALYSIS

THESIS

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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AN ECOCRITICAL ANALYSIS

THESIS

Presented to
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2024

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled “Nature Representation in *The Children’s Blizzard: An Ecocritical Analysis*” is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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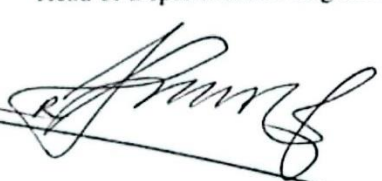
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MOTTO

“Whoever fights may lose, but whoever doesn't fight, surely loses.”

DEDICATION

This thesis is gladly dedicated to:

My beloved parents,

My father, Nasrah and my mother, Suarni.

My beloved brother and sisters

Parwis Warsito, Liza Pia Rahmawati, Lailatul Rizkiah, Azzahra Alisiya

Also, to my whole family, thank you for the love and prayer.

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ABSTRACT

Wardana, Roy (2024) *Nature Representation in The Children's Blizzard: An Ecocritical Analysis*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin, M.Pd

Keywords: *Ecocriticism, Nature Representation, The Children Blizzard.*

This research aimed to find the nature representation in *The Children Blizzard* Novel. This research also attempted to comprehend the ecological values that contained in the novel by using literary criticism method. While, the data was taken in the form of sentences in the novel, especially which was related with nature representation and its ecological values. This study applied Cheryll Glotfelty (1996) theory of ecocriticism, which primarily helped to find out the description of nature representation. This study found that the nature representation was presented through Blizzard phenomena against human in the Great Plains. This study also found out the ecological values in term of interconnectedness, environmental awareness, ethical responsibility, and activism. But the term of ethical responsibility was only found in form of human cared for each other. Whereas ethical responsibility basically refers to how human preserve nature after the blizzard by planting trees, and keep the tree alive without cutting them down. While activism was only found in form of how government played the role in improving the weather data policy, where humans should play a more important role in carrying out positive actions after a blizzard such by reforestation.

ABSTRAK

Wardana, Roy (2024) *Representasi Alam dalam Novel The Children's Blizzard: Analisis Ekokritik*. Skripsi. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin, M.Pd

Keywords: *Ekokritik, Representasi Alam, The Children Blizzard*

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan representasi alam dalam novel *The Children's Blizzard*. Penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk memahami secara mendalam tentang nilai-nilai ekologi yang terkandung dalam novel dengan menggunakan metode kritik sastra. Sumber data dari penelitian ini diambil dari novel *The Children's Blizzard* karya David Laskin. Sedangkan data dari penelitian ini diambil dari kalimat-kalimat yang ada pada novel, terutama yang berkaitan dengan representasi alam dan nilai-nilai ekologi yang terkandung di dalamnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori dari Cheryll Glotfelty 1996 tentang ekokritik, yang membantu untuk menemukan deskripsi tentang representasi alam. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa representasi alam dipresentasikan melalui fenomena badai salju yang berdampak terhadap penduduk di Great Plains. Ditemukan juga dalam penelitian ini bahwa nilai-nilai ekologi dalam kategori keterkaitan manusia dan alam (Interconnectedness), kesadaran lingkungan (Environmental Awareness), tanggung jawab etis (Ethical Responsibility), dan aktivisme (Activism). Namun, dalam kategori tanggung jawab etis hanya ditemukan dalam bentuk kepedulian manusia terhadap sesamanya. Sedangkan tanggung jawab etis pada dasarnya mengacu pada bagaimana manusia melestarikan alam pasca badai salju dengan menanam pohon, dan menjaga agar pohon tersebut tetap tumbuh tanpa menebangnya. Sedangkan aktivisme hanya ditemukan dalam bentuk bagaimana pemerintah berperan dalam memperbaiki kebijakan data cuaca, dimana seharusnya manusia lebih berperan dalam melakukan tindakan positif pasca badai salju seperti melakukan penghijauan.

مستخلص البحث

وردانا، روي (٢٠٢٤) تصوير تمثيلات الطبيعة في رواية: *The Children's Blizzard* التحليل النقدي البيئي. البحث العلمي. قسم اللغة الإنجليزية أدبها، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف: الدكتور مركي عفيف الدين، الماجستير

الكلمة الأساسية: النقد البيئي، تمثيلات الطبيعة، *The Children's Blizzard*

يهدف هذا البحث لوجد تمثيلات الطبيعة في رواية *The Children's Blizzard*. و يهدف هذا البحث إلى فهم القيم البيئية التي تحتويها الرواية باستخدام أسلوب النقد الأدبي. مصدر البيانات هذا البحث هي رواية *The Children's Blizzard* للمصنف ديفيد لاسكين. وأخذ البيانات على شكل جمل في الرواية، خاصة متعلق بتمثيلات الطبيعة وقيمها البيئية. يستخدم هذا البحث نظرية شيريل جلوتفيلتي (١٩٩٦) النقدية البيئية، وتساعد هذه النظرية في العثور على أوصاف للتمثيلات الطبيعية. وجد هذا البحث أن تمثيلات الطبيعة من العاصفة الثلجية له تأثير كبير على سكان *Great Plains*. ووجد هذا البحث إلى قيم بيئية متعلق بها والوعي البيئي والمسؤولية الأخلاقية والنشاط. و أهمية البحث هي يعطى علوما وفهما متعمقا في سياق العلاقة بين الإنسان والطبيعة والقيم البيئية في الرواية. ولذلك يقترح الباحث الى الباحث المستقبل أن يكتب البحث ببحث متشابه و نظرية مختلفة في رواية *The Children's Blizzard*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the explanation of the background of the study, problems of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Environmental degradation becomes one of the biggest challenges, which is faced by the world today (Ogboru & Anga, 2015). The environmental degradation impacts ecosystems, biodiversity and the quality of human life (Alfonso et al., 2017). In the context of ecocritical theory, the representation of nature in literature is a deep and complex topic, exploring how nature is depicted and interpreted in literary texts (Mishra, 2016). Ecocriticism, as an approach that connects literature with environmental issues, focuses on how literary texts represent nature and how these representations reflect and influence human attitudes and views towards the environment (Marland, 2013). As awareness of the global environmental crisis increases, the study of the representation of nature in literature is becoming increasingly relevant.

Literary works contain of the interpretation of reality that have been discussed throughout the history of literature and literary criticism (Davidsen, 2018). As it includes providing the important description that conveys the complexity of environmental which is faced by almost people all over the world,

the complexity itself is in the context of nature exploitation which results the consequences against human. This case is reflected in novel *The Children's Blizzard* by David Laskin, a novel that portrays how human are attacked by sudden blizzards. *The Children's Blizzards* was published on October 11, 2005. The novel depicts one of the most tragic natural disasters in the United States historical event, the blizzard that occurred on January 12, 1888, well-known as "*The Children's Blizzard*". The rise of immigration in the United States to get a better life that the society moves to the Great Plains. The main conflict in the novel involves how the blizzards occur as nature representation and how human struggle against the fierce power of nature.

Furthermore, the context of blizzard against human in Great Plains in *The Children's Blizzard* is mainly described in theory of nature representation which is proposed by Cheryll Glotfelty (1996). Natural conditions in the novel demand physical and mental endurance due to extreme weather and blizzard. Ecocriticism is defined as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. It explores how literature reflects, influences, or even responds to environmental issues and attitudes (Garrard, 2014). Therefore, it highlights how these representations shape human interactions with the environment, and fostering ecological awareness and activism through literary analysis. It takes the focus on nature representation through the phenomena of blizzards, and the ecological values contain in the novel.

Several studies have been conducted related to the analysis of nature representation. A study who analyzes human and non-human relationship in two

Indonesia and English selected picture books. The study applies Cheryll Glotfelty theory and Keraf's supporting theory. But, the nature representation through Cheryll discussion is not mostly talked and discussed (Junaid et al., 2023). Jihad (2022) also examines the analysis of nature representation in *On the Black Hill* novel by Bruce Chatwin. It shows that human and nature relationship is seen from environmental wisdom as in the novel is described as respecting nature, caring for nature, solidarity with nature, and no harm.

Meanwhile, nature representation can also be viewed from disaster or phenomena, including climate change. For example, a research analyzes *The New Wilderness* novel by Diane Cook. It examines the interconnection between nature and human world. This research highlights the journey of Bea and Agnes from the city to the wilderness, in which the wilderness area is deconstructed by considering the balance of utopian and dystopian elements. This research also explains how a mother and her daughter try to survive in unstable situation caused by climate change. Therefore, this research emphasizes that *The New Wilderness* novel tries to provide significant warning about the possibility of environmental degradation (Sarıkaya-Şen, 2023). Apart from Sarıkaya-Şen (2023), a research also analyzes *The New Wilderness* novel by Diane cook. This reveals how wilderness is basically used and functioned as a savior to humanity rather than as a place to exile (Akbar et al., 2024).

Andika (2023) analyzes the ecocriticism in Imbolo Mbue's novel, *How Beautiful We Were*, it depicts the natural exploitation which is caused by oil mining. The research concludes that *How Beautiful We Were* novel is served as a powerful

narrative, which can bring an attention to environmental injustices and try to uphold human rights. This research also reveals that it can provide inspiration for real-world activism and change the policy to fight for ecological degradation and exploitation. Dwijaya (2021) also does a research that focuses on analyzing human and nature relationships which is mainly depicted in *Bird Box* novel. This research also analyzes the representation of the post-apocalyptic environment by using Ecocriticism theory.

In addition, in relation with nature representation, apocalypse is also an environmental issue faced by human. Prabawati (2023) analyzes the portrayal of apocalypse in *They Left Behind* by Jules Hogan. The research mainly analyzes the occurrence of apocalypse, pastoral, and pollution. The final results show that the apocalypse is caused by the great number of pollution and modernization. Human are sent to Ascent project in order to start their new life and change their lifestyle by considering the environmental and natural safety. Kaplan (2022) also examines three early British apocalyptic novels including, *Mary Shelley's The Last Man*, *Richard Jefferies's After London*, and *M.P. Shiel's The Purple Cloud*. The research reveal that each novel's construction is under of the truth of human history, especially in the interrelation to nature. With this research also shattering anthropocentric notions of nature, we can utilize it to combat the current climate crisis.

Al-Sammarraie (2022) explores eco-awareness which is presented in Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*, especially as a remedy for apocalyptic eco-phobia. The study takes the focus on apocalypse and eco-phobia as a motivation

of the characters' eco-awareness. The research finding emphasizes the characters engagement with nature since it increases their eco-awareness who are suffered from apocalyptic eco-phobia; whereby they stop exploiting nature in negative way. Further, the study also explores how Atwood's provides the description of the portrayal of natural apocalypse prompts the characters' eco-phobic feelings and how it could be reduced by their eco-awareness. While Nahdhiyah (2023) shows the harmonious relationship between humans, nature and God in the novel *The Alchemist* by Paulo. The results show that *The Alchemist* can contribute to give a new awareness in readers regarding with the relationship between humans and nature and God as the creator.

In brief, based on the previous studies mentioned and explained above, previous researchers mainly discuss about nature representation and its exploitation. While *The Children's Blizzard* by David Laskin was chosen because it highlights the environmental disaster faced by humans in Great Plains, United States of America because of sudden blizzard phenomena. Due to the phenomena of blizzard in Great Plains that impacts on human, it finally led the researcher to explore how nature is represented through the sudden blizzard phenomena and the consequences of blizzard on human.

This research takes the focus on finding nature representation through sudden blizzard and its consequences for human in the context of *The Children's Blizzard* novel. However, the researcher finds a gap in the previous studies that most research focuses only on nature representation, while this research takes the focus on how nature is represented and reflected through blizzard and the consequences that

impacts on human. Therefore, this research attempts to fill the gap by conducting the portrayal of blizzard while seeing the consequences for human.

B. Problems of the Study

In this study, the researcher attempts to explain the nature representation through the phenomena of blizzards. Therefore, there are two research problems have been formulated as follows:

1. How is nature represented in *The Children's Blizzard* novel?
2. What are the ecological values in *The Children's Blizzard* novel?

C. Significance of the Study

By providing the discussion on the ecocriticism analysis in the context of nature representation. This research can contribute to provide valuable insight to the analysis of Eco criticism in the novel *The Children Blizzard*. This result of the study also can add and give better understanding on the complexity of the relationship between human and nature, and it provides an understanding which can increase human awareness regarding with preserving environmental and natural safety.

D. Scope and Limitation

In this study, the researcher focuses on finding how nature is portrayed in novel *The Children's Blizzard* by following Cheryl Glotfelty (1996) theory of ecocriticism. It also focuses on the ecological values that contain in the novel.

Ecocriticism theory proposed by Cheryll Glotfelty is the most appropriate theory regarding with the data which are found in novel *The Children's Blizzard*. This study limits the issue occur in the novel only in case of nature representation and the ecological values. Therefore, the narrative text in the novel is also limited only in the context of nature representation.

E. Definition of Key Term

There are three key words that become the main point of this study, as follows;

1. Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is defined as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Taqwiem, 2020). Which means that ecocriticism examines how humanity's relationship with nature, the environment, and other living things.

2. Nature representation

In the context of ecocriticism, representations of nature include how the environment and natural elements are depicted in literary texts. This includes descriptions of scenery, flora, fauna, as well as interactions between humans and nature.

3. *The Children's Blizzard*

The Children's Blizzard is a novel created by David Laskin, and it was first published on October 11, 2005. *The Children's Blizzard* is a historical novel which

is inspired by the phenomenon of blizzard in the Great Plains, specifically on January 12, 1888. This novel describes the terrifying experiences of immigrant homesteaders, especially schoolchildren, who faced life-and-death decisions during the unexpected blizzards happening.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter aims at discussing some of the related literature reviews, which are used in this study. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the theories used in this study

A. Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is a critical approach in literary studies that focuses on the relationship between literature, culture, and the natural environment (Barry, 2020). It explores how literary works represent, shape and respond to human views of nature and environmental issues. Ecocriticism considers nature not just as a backdrop in literary texts, but as an important subject that has a great influence on human life and development. Further, Terry Gifford states that “ecocriticism is not only concerned with the attitude to nature which is expressed by an author in a text, but also with its interrelatedness patterns, both between the human and non-human, and between the different parts of the non-human world” (Siddiqui, 2015, p. 192).

Ecocriticism assesses how literary texts address environmental issues such as nature representation, ecological damage, pollution, climate change, exploitation of natural resources, or human understanding of nature (Love, 2003). It also encourages readers to reflect on the role of literature in shaping ecological awareness and human responsibility towards the environment. As such,

ecocriticism is often closely related to environmental ethics and socio-political critique, including how issues such as capitalism, colonialism and industrialization affect people's relationship with nature.

As a multidisciplinary movement, ecocriticism is not only limited to the analysis of literary works, but also includes the study of popular culture, film, visual arts, environmental philosophy, and contemporary issues such as the global climate crisis that causes some natural disasters, including storm and blizzard. The ultimate goal is to raise awareness of the importance of humanity's relationship with nature and encourage more sustainable and environmentally sound behavioral change.

Ecocritical theory is an approach in literary and cultural studies that examines the relationship between literary texts and the natural environment. It is an interdisciplinary field that combines literary analysis with ecological theory to understand how literature depicts, respond to, and shape understandings of nature and environmental issues. According to Buell (1995), "In analyzing ecocriticism should consider four main principles including, Sustainability, which means that considering nature representations in the context of environmental sustainability. Connectedness, means that understanding humans and nature relationship in a broader context, including social impacts. Intertextuality, which means examining how texts interact with other texts in the representation of the environment. Last, ecological awareness which is analyzing how texts raise awareness about environmental issues. Heise (2008) states that "ecocriticism should pay attention to how texts reflect local and global relationships with the environment".

Ecocriticism is an attempt to understand how literary works reflect, change, or influence human attitudes towards nature. It sees literature not only as a container that records human experiences of nature, but also as a tool to shape and strengthen ecological awareness. Ecocriticism involves reading literary works through an environmental lens, where nature is not just a backdrop or decorative element, but an integral part of the narrative and human experience. In *Song of the Earth*, investigates how literature, particularly poetry, describes the relationship between humans and nature. Bate (2001) says that “literature not only depicts nature but also has the potential to shape our understanding of and response to environmental issues”.

B. Ecocriticism by Cheryll Glotfelty

“Ecocriticism is defined as an interdisciplinary approach to literary studies that explores the relationship between literature and the natural environment” (Glotfelty, 1996, p. 229). This field of study emerged in the late 20th century and analyzes literary texts through an ecological perspective, with the aim of understanding how literature reflects, influences, and responds to environmental issues. Ecocriticism also combines insights from literary studies, environmental history, ecology, and cultural studies, among others (Cohen's, 2004). By highlighting the relationship between human culture and the physical world, ecocriticism aims to promote a deeper understanding of our environmental responsibilities and the ecological implications of human actions.

The origins of ecocriticism can be traced back to the environmental

movement in the 1960s and 1970s, which raised public awareness about ecological degradation and the need for sustainable practices. However, ecocriticism was only recognized as a distinctive academic discipline in the 1990s. Further, one of the important figures in the development of ecocriticism including, Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, who edited the influential anthology "The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology" (1996). This work laid the foundation for ecocritical analysis by collecting important essays that explore the interaction between literature and the environment (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996).

In analyzing ecocriticism, it is important to identify how nature is represented in the literary text being analyzed. Focus on elements of nature such as forests, rivers, mountains, animals, weather, or other ecosystems. In addition, Glotfelty emphasizes the importance of analyzing the relationship between humans and the environment in literature. Focus on the interactions between human characters and natural elements in the text including the representation of nature.

Ecocriticism study also emphasizes the importance of environmental awareness in reading and analyzing literature. He argues that literature has an important role in shaping people's understanding and attitudes towards the environment (Bhalla, 2012). As such, ecocriticism seeks to explore how literary texts can serve as tools to raise ecological awareness and promote more environmentally responsible actions. Therefore, ecocriticism includes analyzing how literary texts depict the natural environment, how literary works can shape attitudes and behaviors towards the environment, and how ecological issues are reflected in literary works (Garrard, 2004). In addition, ecocriticism is also the idea

that literature not only reflects but also shapes human perception of the natural world (Marland, 2013). Ecocritics analyze how different genres, periods, and cultural contexts depict nature and environmental issues. Ecocriticism itself explores themes such as wilderness, pastoral landscapes, urbanization, and the impact of industrialization on the environment (Garrards, 2004).

Overall, ecocriticism paves the way for a broader and deeper exploration of how literature can play a significant role in addressing today's ecological challenges. In the context of the global environmental crisis, ecocriticism offers an important analytical tool for understanding and promoting better environmental awareness and action. The future of ecocriticism, as anticipated by Glotfelty, may involve further integration of global and local perspectives, as well as interaction with various other disciplines to address the complexity of environmental issues facing the world (Glotfelty, 1996).

C. Nature Representation

According to Cheryll Glotfelty's theory in ecocritical studies, nature representation refers to the way nature is depicted, positioned and treated in literary texts (Gersdorf, 2006). Nature representation in literature involves more than just the physical description of the landscape or environment. Glotfelty (1996) argues that nature in literature should be seen as an active and significant entity, not just a static backdrop. In many literary works, nature plays a central role in shaping the dynamics of the story and reflecting humanity's relationship with the non-human world. Nature is often used to depict a range of human experiences, from spirituality

to ecological conflict. In this regard, Glotfelty encourages us to value nature as an important part of the narrative that helps us understand the complex relationship between humans and the environment.

Furthermore, Glotfelty views that nature in literature often serves as a mirror of the social, cultural and ecological conditions of a particular era. For example, representations of nature can reveal how humans see themselves as rulers or stewards of the environment, depending on the underlying cultural or historical context. In many cases, literature reflects real-world environmental crises or ecological degradation, such as pollution, habitat destruction or climate change. Literary works that represent nature in this way not only serve as reflections of reality, but can also serve as social critiques that challenge anthropocentric views (which place humans at the center) and encourage ecocentric views (which see all creatures and elements of nature as part of an interconnected system).

In addition, according to Glotfelty, representations of nature in literature also often reflect the emotional and spiritual dimensions of humans towards nature. Nature is depicted as a space where humans can experience peace, wisdom, or reconciliation with themselves and the world around them. On the other hand, nature can also be perceived as a threat, something wild and uncontrollable, reflecting human fear of the forces of nature that cannot be controlled. This relationship is often dialectical, where nature becomes a place of both conflict and healing, tension and escape. Through these rich and complex representations of nature, Glotfelty emphasizes that literary works have the potential to raise

ecological awareness, convey a critique of environmental exploitation, and offer moral insights into how humans should interact with nature.

Further explanation about some important points about the representation of nature according to Glotfelty's theory (1996) including, Nature as the main subject, not the background. Nature is treated as a significant subject in literary works, not just a passive background. This means that nature not only serves to support human narratives but also plays an active role in shaping the meaning of the story. Representations of nature can bring out a deeper connection between humans and nature, highlighting how human actions impact the environment and vice versa.

Glotfelty invites readers to consider whether the literary work reflects an anthropocentric view (which places humans at the center and excludes the value of nature) or an ecocentric one (which considers nature as part of a web of life intertwined with humans). In ecocentric representations of nature, nature is seen as having intrinsic value, regardless of its usefulness to humans. Glotfelty also argues that nature in literature is often a mirror of the social, cultural and ecological conditions of its time. Representations of nature may reflect the environmental crisis, ecological degradation, or ecological awareness that was developing in society at the time. In many cases, literature can serve as a critique of the overexploitation of nature and resources, and raise issues of sustainability and environmental preservation.

Nature in literature is often explored through the emotional or spiritual connection that characters have to their environment. According to Glotfelty, these

representations can reflect humanity's deep attraction to nature or even show humanity's alienation from nature due to urbanization and technological development. Representations of nature in this way can also express ethical values about how humans should treat nature. In many literary works analyzed with an ecocritical approach, nature is often depicted as a victim of human activities, such as habitat destruction, pollution, or climate change. Glotfelty emphasizes that literature can be an important medium to voice concerns about this ecological crisis and advocate for changes in the way humans treat the environment.

Representations of nature are often linked to socio-political critiques of human actions that damage the earth. In addition to being a mirror of ecological degradation, nature in literary works is also often depicted as a place of reconciliation and transformation. Nature can serve as a space where characters experience profound emotional or spiritual changes, whether through contemplation, redemption, or learning about the importance of maintaining ecological balance.

Overall, the representation of nature according to Cheryll Glotfelty's theory is vast and complex. Nature is seen as more than just a narrative element, but rather as a subject that has a significant influence on stories and ecological thinking. This approach seeks to understand how literature can influence human attitudes towards the environment and how literary works play a role in raising ecological awareness and environmental ethics.

D. Ecological Values

Ecological values in ecocriticism refer to ethical and moral principles that emphasize the importance of a harmonious and sustainable relationship between humans and the natural world (Garrard, 2004). In this context, ecology is not only a scientific discipline that studies the relationship between living things and their environment, but also a value framework that highlights the responsibility of humans to maintain the balance of ecosystems (Díaz et al., 2015). These values are often reflected in literary works that depict the interaction between humans and nature, and how humans should value and care for nature as part of a larger living system. In ecocritical analysis, these values are used to assess narratives that support or oppose destructive actions towards the surrounding nature.

In ecocritical studies, the ecological values become the basis for understanding the role of nature in literature and media, and how narratives or representations of nature can shape people's views on the environment. Ecological values lead to the realization that nature is not just a setting for human life, but an entity with its own rights and well-being. Thus, in literature and critical analysis, focus is given to how nature is depicted and how the relationship between humans and nature is articulated, including the positive or negative impacts of such interactions. As an important ecological value is harmony between humans and nature, which suggests that the balance of ecosystems should be maintained (Wu, 2013). In ecocritical literary texts, works often describe how ecological imbalances, such as environmental degradation or overexploitation, lead to natural crises that are detrimental to both humans and other living things. From all the importance of

ecological values above, there are also four aspects of ecological values that are indeed important including, interconnectedness, environmental awareness, ethical responsibility, and activism.

1. Interconnectedness

Interconnectedness is one of the core values in ecocriticism that emphasizes that all living things and ecosystems in the world are connected to each other (Oyeleke, 2022). In this view, humans are not a separate entity from nature, but rather an integral part of the entire ecological system. Every action taken by humans, whether against nature or the environment, will have an impact on the wider ecosystem (Moran, 2016). For example, deforestation not only affects the flora and fauna in the area, but also affects the balance of the global climate, the existence of clean water, and the quality of the air that humans breathe. Through this value, ecocriticism invites us to see how the relationships between humans and the environment affect the overall balance of nature.

In literary works analyzed with an ecocritical approach, interconnectedness is often explored through narratives that show the relationship between humans and the nature around them. For example, the illustration of how humans' environmentally destructive actions end up harming themselves. This literature aims to illustrate the interconnected and interdependent nature between humans and the ecosystems in which they live. This interconnectedness also reflects the larger concept of ecological solidarity, where every being has a role to play in maintaining the balance of nature (Iovino, 2010).

In addition, interconnectedness challenges the idea of dualism between humans and nature that has dominated Western thought for centuries. Instead of separating humans from nature, interconnectedness promotes the view that humans are part of a vast and complex web of life. Humans depend on ecosystems for their resources, health and survival (Marten, 2010). By understanding this connectedness, ecocriticism promotes awareness of the importance of maintaining a harmonious and sustainable relationship with the natural environment (Mishra, 2016).

2. Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness refers to a deep awareness of the relationship between humans and the surrounding nature and the impact of human actions on ecosystems. It is not just a scientific understanding of ecology, but also an ethical and emotional awareness of the need to protect and maintain the natural environment. In ecocritical analysis, writers often raise issues such as the phenomena of nature representation including, climate change, pollution, and species extinction as a way to raise readers' awareness of the dangers facing the natural world due to human overexploitation. This awareness not only includes knowledge about environmental issues, but also emphasizes the need for a responsible attitude towards actions taken by individuals and society.

In the context of literature, environmental awareness is often expressed through works that depict ecological decay and how humans interact with nature in a destructive manner or attempt to protect it. These works can serve as tools to

criticize unsustainable development models, exploitative industrial capitalism, or human apathy towards the natural world. Ecocritical literature often features characters or narratives that show the consequences of a lack of awareness of the natural world, such as natural disasters, drastic climate change, or loss of biodiversity (Nayar, 2024). The aim is to awake readers about reality of the environmental crisis and to inspire more responsible action, both on an individual and collective level.

Moreover, environmental awareness also includes the recognition of the interconnectedness of all living things in an ecosystem (Otto & Pensini, 2017). This awareness emphasizes that small human actions can have far-reaching impacts on nature (Martin et al., 2016). In ecocriticism, this value is often linked to the themes of sustainability and ethical responsibility, where humans are seen to take steps to reduce their ecological footprint and live in harmony with nature. Thus, environmental awareness in ecocritical not only invites readers to understand environmental issues, but also encourages them to take concrete actions that can improve human relationships with nature and ensure the sustainability of ecosystems for future generations.

3. Ethical Responsibility

Ethical responsibility refers to the moral responsibility of humans to preserve, protect, and maintain the surrounding nature (Gardiner, 2011). This concept emphasizes that humans not only have the right to use natural resources, but also bear great responsibility for the welfare of the wider ecosystem. In an ecocritical

context, this ethical responsibility demands that every human action towards nature must be based on the principles of sustainability and respect for the rights of nature and other living things (La Follette & Maser, 2019). This means that actions that destroy, exploit, or underestimate the value of nature are considered to violate the ethical responsibility that is essential in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem.

Ecological values in ecocriticism emphasize the importance of ethical responsibility towards nature. Humans are not only seen as users of natural resources, but also as custodians of complex and interrelated ecosystems (Worrell & Appleby, 2000). In this context, acts of harming nature such as deforestation, pollution, or waste of natural resources are considered as violations of ecological values. Ecocritical literature often illustrates this theme by showing the adverse consequences of exploiting nature and conveying a message about the need for wiser and more sustainable actions. This value of responsibility also involves the realization that humans must design a way of life that respects the rights of nature and maintains ecological balance for future generations (Upreti, 2023).

Ethical responsibility also includes sustainable practices, which prioritize the long-term well-being of the natural world over short-term human gain. This requires a change in the way humans view nature-not as an unlimited resource, but as something that must be preserved and nurtured for future generations. The value of ethical responsibility in ecocriticism is not just theoretical but demands concrete actions that support harmony between humans and nature, while recognizing that our survival depends on protecting healthy and stable ecosystems.

4. Activism

Activism in ecological values refers to collective and individual actions that seek to bring about positive changes in the way humans interact with nature and address ecological crises. In ecocritical analysis, ecological activism is considered an ethical and political response to environmental degradation caused by unsustainable human behavior, such as overexploitation of natural resources, pollution, and climate change. This activism often involves efforts to change policies, public awareness, and industrial practices that damage nature. In ecocritically-focused works of literature and media, the theme of activism is often brought up to show the importance of real action in the face of threats to the environment and to encourage readers to be actively involved in protecting the earth.

In the context of ecocritical literature, activism is not only realized through concrete actions in the outside world, but also through narratives that function as advocacy tools. Writers who use this approach often depict characters or communities that fight against exploitative systems or oppose practices that damage nature. These works aim to inspire readers to realize the ecological crisis they are facing and encourage them to act in their own capacity. Through these narratives, ecocritical literature not only reflects on environmental issues, but also plays an active role in creating awareness and encouraging readers to participate in the global ecological movement.

Activism in ecocriticism also reflects the importance of sustainability and environmental justice as part of larger social change. Ecological activists often fight for a world where natural resources are not unfairly exploited and where all living things have the right to live in a healthy environment. Literature that emphasizes this theme often addresses issues such as climate change, deforestation, or ocean destruction, and depicts efforts to fight for the protection of nature. Thus, ecocritical activism emphasizes the role of humans as agents of change, who not only have a moral responsibility to protect the environment, but also have the power to influence policies and practices that can save the planet from ecological destruction.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter will discuss the methods used by researcher in conducting research. This chapter consists of several sub-chapters including research design, research instruments, data and data sources, data collection, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

In this study, the researcher uses a literary criticism with ecocriticism approach by following Cheryll Glotfrlty theory. It aims to get an in depth understanding in the context of nature representation, which is described in the novel *The Children's Blizzard*. This research method allows the researcher to find out and describe in detail the aspects of the nature representation, and the ecological values that occur in the story.

B. Data and Data Source

In this study, researcher aimed to collect the data from *The Children's Blizzard* novel. In which, the data source was taken from sentences written in the novel. In addition, the researcher collected, analyzed, and described the data by following Cheryll Clotfelty (1996) theory. The data was in the form of phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. This can include direct quotes, character, description, and dialog.

C. Data Collection

The researcher collected the data from *The Children's Blizzard* novel. This novel was created by Davin Laskin and published on October 11, 2005. The data were collected from the sentences written in the novel. In this study, the researcher attempted to do some steps to collect the data from the utterance in *The Children's Blizzard* novel including, close reading, which meant that reading the novel carefully and take the focus into elements such as nature representation and ecological values described in the story. The researcher also collected the data by using Ecocriticism theory by Cheryll Glotfelty (1996) in the context of nature representation and the ecological values occur in the story. Next, identifying the data needed by following Cheryll Glotfelty (1996). Last, the researcher combined the data related to nature representation and its ecological values.

D. Data Analysis

In the data analysis of the study, the researcher did some steps to analyze the data. After collecting and identifying the data according to the theory of ecocriticism by Cheryll Glotfelty (1996), the researcher analyzed the data of nature representation and its impacts on human. Next, the researcher described the data of nature representation and its impacts on human. Lastly, the researcher drew a conclusion in which the researcher concluded the results and findings of the research.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter explains the findings and discussions of the study. It is also presented the answers of the first and second research question. The provided data in this chapter consist of two categories. First, the data of how nature is presented in *The Children's Blizzard* novel by following Cheryll Glotfelty theory. Second, the data of *The Children's Blizzard* novel, in term of ecological values including, interconnectedness, environmental awareness, ethical responsibility. The research findings present how nature is presented through the phenomena of blizzard in *The Children's Blizzard* by David Laskin. The *Blizzard* is analysed through Cheryll Glotfelty theory regarding with how blizzards happened against surrounding human. Further, it is also found that the ecological values occur in the novel including, how human and nature are connected, the responsibility of protecting nature, human awareness, and efforts to prevent natural disasters.

A. Nature Representation in *The Children's Blizzard* novel by David Laskin

In David Laskin's *The Children's Blizzard*, nature is depicted as a force that not only serves as a setting, but also as an entity that dominates the characters' lives and directs the course of the narrative. Through in-depth and detailed descriptions, Laskin presents nature as an ambiguous force, both giving life and destroying it.

Nature, which is initially seen as full of potential and beauty by the settlers, turns into a huge threat that they cannot control.

First, nature in this novel is shown as a brutal and unpredictable force. The sudden snowstorm shows how unforgiving nature can be. The settlers living in the vast, open plains of the Great Plains region were unprepared for a storm of such scale and intensity. Laskin describes in great detail the strength of the winds, the extreme cold, and how the storm wrapped everything in chaos. Through this storm, Laskin seems to emphasize that nature does not care about human presence; it moves with its own power and indifference, destroying everything in its path.

In addition, the vast plains where the characters settled are also presented as symbols of the duality of nature: open and full of promise, but also empty and full of threats. The early settlers, who mostly came from Europe, saw the plains as fertile land that promised a better life. However, Laskin describes how quickly this illusion was shattered when the weather changed drastically. The natural beauty that initially seemed promising became a deadly trap when the storms came. The emptiness and vastness of this land, previously thought to be limitless potential, turned into isolation and a place where humans had to struggle to survive.

On the other hand, the representation of nature in the novel also highlights human vulnerability in the face of uncontrollable natural forces. Laskin describes how the snowstorm brought panic and helplessness to the settlers. The technology and knowledge they possessed turned out to be unable to keep up with the powerful forces of nature. This emphasizes how fragile humans are when faced with natural

disasters. In the worst moments of the storm, nature becomes the absolute ruler, while humans can only try to survive, with no control over their own destiny. On the other hand, the representation of nature in the novel also highlights human vulnerability in the face of uncontrollable natural forces. Laskin describes how the blizzard brings panic and helplessness to the settlers. The technology and knowledge they possessed turned out to be unable to keep up with the powerful forces of nature. This emphasizes how fragile humans are when faced with natural disasters. In the worst moments of the storm, nature becomes the absolute ruler, while humans can only try to survive, with no control over their own destiny.

Finally, *The Children's Blizzard* presents nature as an entity that not only tests the physical limits of humans, but also their emotional and mental strength. Laskin presents the story of the characters' struggle not only to fight the storm, but also to deal with the fear, loss, and trauma caused by the disaster. Through this narrative, nature is not only portrayed as a physical threat, but also a force that shapes character, resilience, and human relationships. Nature in this novel, although cruel, also creates a space for humans to demonstrate their strength, courage and endurance. Below is the data and analysis regarding with the nature representation, which are presented through the phenomena of Blizzard in *The Children's Blizzard* novel.

The worst storm came on January 28, 1887, with seventy-two hours of fiercely blowing snow and arctic temperatures. (p.62).

In the ecocritical analysis based on Cheryll Glotfelty's theory, extreme weather such as the blizzard on January 28, 1887 is included in the representation

of nature because it illustrates how nature and weather phenomena affect human life deeply. Ecocriticism, particularly in Glotfelty's view, focuses on the interaction between humans and nature and how nature often acts as an uncontrollable force that has a great impact on human life (Glotfelty, 1996).

A 72-hours storm with heavy snow and arctic temperatures shows that nature has tremendous power, which cannot be overcome by technology or human endeavor. In this sense, the blizzard is a representation of nature as an unpredictable force that affects humans directly, whether through transportation disruptions, threats to safety or other impacts. This phenomenon also exposes human powerlessness in the face of natural forces, a theme often discussed in ecocriticism.

As such, this narrative fits Glotfelty's ecocritical approach as it highlights the impact of extreme environments on humans and emphasizes the role of nature as an important element that cannot be ignored in textual analysis. Nature, in this case, is not just a setting or context, but an active agent that determines events and human lives. Nature representation is also a part of natural disaster that happens through process, for example is in the data below.

With the advance of the cold front, all of the elements of the storm suddenly began to feed off each other, bloating up hugely with every bite. As the contrasting air masses slammed together, they caused the upper level winds to strengthen, which served to strengthen the low. As the low deepened, the surface winds increased, causing the temperature differences between the air masses to spike. The greater the temperature difference, the faster the low deepened. The deeper the low, the stronger the front. It was a self-reinforcing and accelerating cycle. (p.119)

The description of the development of the storm in this narrative falls under the representation of nature because it describes the dynamic and complex

interactions between natural elements that work together in a mutually reinforcing pattern. The focus of ecocriticism is on how nature is not just a passive setting, but an active agent that influences, and in many cases, dominates human life.

In this description, natural phenomena such as contrasting air masses, winds in the upper layers, and temperature differences show how nature has independent forces and works through almost autonomous processes. The self-reinforcing cycles between the various elements of nature reflect the concept that nature can form very powerful forces that cannot be stopped by humans. These cycles amplify storms, showing how environmental conditions can move from one state to another more extreme state without human intervention.

Nature is depicted as an entity that not only directly impacts humans, but also works independently, sometimes suggesting human powerlessness in the face of natural forces (Clark, 2005). This description also emphasizes the intertwined relationship between natural elements and how they reinforce each other, which reinforces the ecocritical view that nature is an active agent and plays an important role in shaping events in a narrative. Further, the representation of the blizzard phenomena is described through the following data.

The cold front was now so strong and so well defined that it was like a curtain of ice separating two radically different climates, a curtain that was hurtling in two directions simultaneously-down from the sky and horizontally across the surface of the earth. (p.119)

This description of a strong and vivid cold front falls under the representation of nature because it portrays nature as a dominant and uncontrollable force, which directly affects and changes the environment and human life.

Ecocriticism in this context focuses on how nature and weather phenomena are treated as active and influential agents in a narrative.

In this description, the cold front is depicted as an “ice curtain” separating two very different climates, which moves vertically (down from the sky) and horizontally (across the earth's surface). This visualization emphasizes the power of nature that is not only immense, but also all-encompassing-controlling space in the sky and on the earth simultaneously. The cold front is depicted as if it has an autonomous nature that is able to “drive” and separate territories with an irresistible force.

In ecocriticism view, nature is often the central character or force in narratives, and here it is represented by a cold front that acts with an almost character-like force of its own (Glotfelty, 1996). This representation emphasizes how nature can take an active role in shaping human events and lives, while also underlining the powerlessness of humans in the face of overwhelming natural phenomena. Nature, in an ecocritical perspective, is not something that can be controlled by humans, but rather an inescapable agent that affects human reality and nature itself.

My brother and I were out snowballing on a bank, remembered Allie Green, a fifteen-year-old boy in Clark County in eastern Dakota Territory. "We could see the blizzard coming across Spirit Lake. It was just as still as could be. We saw it cut off the trees like it was a white roll coming. It hit with a 60 mile an hour wind. It had snowed the night before about two or three inches. It just sucked up that snow into the air and nearly smothered you." (p.128)

The data above includes to the representation of nature as it illustrates how extreme weather phenomena, such as snowstorms, can dramatically affect the

human experience and highlights the uncertain and powerless relationship humans have with nature. Glotfelty's ecocriticism focuses on how nature acts as an active force that is often beyond human control, while underlining its impact on everyday life.

In this description, the approaching snowstorm is described with strong visuals, like a “white roll” that comes suddenly and forcefully. Allie Green's observation of the storm “cutting trees” and “sucking snow into the air” shows the terrifying power of nature, which not only destroys but also threatens human life (“almost suffocates you”). The depiction of the storm coming on suddenly, changing the environment instantly, emphasizes how nature can be so unpredictable and powerful, an important theme in ecocriticism.

The air, when they finally got outside, was a shock. The air itself seemed to be streaming sideways in billows of grit. The snow felt like frozen sand against their eyelids and nostrils and lips. They couldn't face into the wind or open their eyes, even for a second. The wind was blowing so hard that if you fell you couldn't get up again. But to the kids it didn't matter. Being out in a storm powerful enough to shut down school and bring ten men out from town to rescue them was a tremendous lark, and the children fairly poured outside and down the rickety schoolhouse steps, everybody shouting over the wind and shoving and edging sideways or back-ward toward the drays. (p.133)

The description above falls under the representation of nature because it depicts natural forces so extreme that they directly affect human behavior, both physically and emotionally. Ecocriticism emphasizes the interaction between humans and nature, and how nature is often an active agent that determines the conditions of human life, especially in challenging situations such as storms.

In this description, the strong winds and sharp snow like “frozen sand” highlight the power of nature beyond human ability to endure without difficulty.

Nature is depicted as an almost unstoppable force: the wind is so strong that a person who falls may not be able to get up again. This highlights the vulnerability of humans when faced with the overwhelming power of nature. However, there is a contrast in the reactions of the children, who see the storm as an experience of adventure and excitement despite its danger. This reaction highlights how the human relationship with nature can be complex, with a mixture of fear and excitement.

Further, nature plays a role in shaping human behavior, experiences and narratives. Here, the storm not only creates extreme conditions that humans must face, but also affects psychology and social dynamics, such as children's fun amidst the chaos of nature. The forces of nature, in this case, become significant figures in the story, influencing and shaping the characters' actions and emotions.

After noon, about 3:30, we heard a hideous roar in the air, remembered Austin. "At first we thought that it was the Umaha train which had been blocked and was trying to open the track. When he looked up at the sky, Austin saw the snow descend as if it had slid out of a sack. A hurricane-like wind blew, so that the snow drifted high in the air, and it became terribly cold. Within few minutes it was as dark as a cellar, and one could not see one's hand in front of one's face." (p. 154)

The data reflects a rich and complex representation of nature, describing the interaction between humans and the environment that dominates their experience. The initial description of a terrifying “roar” in the air shows how natural phenomena can disrupt human routines, creating uncertainty and fear. In this case, the sound misidentified as that of a train demonstrates how humans often attempt to explain and understand the forces of nature by using references from their technological

world, ultimately revealing human powerlessness in the face of the greater forces of nature.

The depiction of the snow falling “as if sliding out of a sack” creates a strong visual image of the power and beauty of nature. However, as the snow begins to fly through the air due to the strong winds, there is a transition from beauty to threat. This reflects how nature can function as a dual force: it can be a source of both beauty and fear. The instability Austin faces, with the darkness coming on quickly and the temperature suddenly dropping, shows that nature is not an entity that can be predicted or controlled by humans.

In addition, this quote also hints at the broader theme of human dependence on their environment. As the situation becomes increasingly dangerous and unpredictable, the realization that “one cannot see the hand in front of the face” underscores human vulnerability in the face of unpredictable natural forces. In the context of ecocriticism, this emphasizes the importance of understanding and appreciating the complex relationship between humans and the environment, as well as the need for ecological awareness in dealing with the challenges faced by humans due to natural changes and possible disasters.

And outside the weather was turning fiercer by the minute. The warm chinook wind that had blown out of the southwest all day was now howling out of the northwest at a velocity approaching 50 miles an hour. (p.116)

In ecocriticism, nature is seen as an active element in literature that not only serves as a setting, but also shapes the story and influences people's lives. The description of the weather changing drastically in this excerpt - from warm chinook

winds to dangerous gales - shows how nature has tremendous power and cannot be controlled. This reflects the ecocritical view that nature has its own agency, which can pose a great threat to the humans who coexist with it.

The quote also emphasizes the connection between nature and human experience. The strong winds and sudden deterioration of the weather not only illustrate the changing environmental conditions, but also create an atmosphere of tension and danger for the characters involved in the story. In *The Children's Blizzard*, extreme weather becomes a central theme that reveals human helplessness before the forces of nature. Ecocritical analysis examines how nature influences narrative and character, and in this case, the weather functions as an overwhelming force that humans cannot ignore.

From an ecocritical perspective, this paragraph also reflects the vulnerable relationship between humans and nature. The strong wind described not only represents a dangerous nature, but also symbolizes the uncertainty that humans face when having to live in extreme natural conditions. Glotfelty emphasizes that literature can show how humans must adapt to an often-inhospitable nature, and this novel powerfully illustrates that tension.

B. Ecological Values in *The Children's Blizzard* novel by David Laskin

In David Laskin's *The Children's Blizzard*, ecological values are implied through human interaction with the harsh and unpredictable natural environment. One prominent ecological value is the limited control humans have over nature. The deadly blizzard of 1888, which is at the center of the story, illustrates how little

control humans have over the forces of nature. It highlights that, although humans can try to understand and predict the weather, great natural forces are often inevitable. Extreme conditions such as the storm in the novel show how the environment can be an unexpected threat to human life, reminding us that nature has dynamics and forces that cannot always be controlled.

In addition, the novel emphasizes the importance of ecological awareness and adaptation. Immigrants who migrated to America in search of a better life were often unprepared for the climate and environmental challenges of the Great Plains. They were not accustomed to extreme weather changes and harsh environmental conditions. This value highlights the need for humans to pay attention to the environment, understand the signs of nature, and learn to adapt to existing conditions. Ecological adaptation is the key to survival in new and unfamiliar environments, as experienced by the characters in the novel.

Finally, the novel also implies the value of the vulnerability of the ecosystem and the impact of natural disasters on human communities. The blizzard event not only causes individual deaths but also affects the community at large, destroying the social and economic life of the community. This shows how the environment and natural disasters can affect the sustainability of a community and create a deep social crisis. The novel implicitly reminds us of the importance of maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature for survival and social well-being, and how damage to nature or disasters can lead to the destruction of human communities collectively.

1. Interconnectedness

In ecocritical analysis, interconnectedness is a core concept that emphasizes that all elements in an ecosystem, both human and natural, are interconnected and influence each other. Interconnectedness reflects the idea that human life is not separate from the natural environment, but rather part of a larger fabric of life. Humans depend on nature for basic needs such as water, air, food, and raw materials, while human actions also impact the environment, both positively and negatively. This approach highlights that any disturbance or change in one element of an ecosystem, such as forest destruction, pollution, or climate change, will resonate and affect other elements, including human life itself.

In an ecocritical framework, interconnectedness also implies an ethical responsibility for humans to maintain ecological balance. When humans damage or over-exploit nature, they not only destroy ecosystems, but also disrupt the balance of life of which they are a part. This approach reminds us that environmental sustainability and human well-being are inextricably linked. Therefore, ecocriticism emphasizes the importance of understanding and appreciating these reciprocal relationships and promoting actions that support the balance of nature, maintain environmental sustainability, and consider long-term impacts on the entire ecosystem. The following data describe how interconnectedness is presented in the novel.

The snow was so deep by January 1881 that train service was almost entirely suspended in the region. The railroads hired scores of men to dig out the tracks, but it was wasted effort. "As soon as they had finished shoveling a stretch of line," wrote Osten Rollog, "a new snowstorm arrived, filling up the line and rendering their work useless." The blizzard of February 2, "a terrible storm with thunder and lightning and very soft snow," according to Osten, halted rail traffic to Sioux Falls completely. (p.58)

In the above data, extreme weather such as persistent snowstorms and heavy snowfalls have a significant impact on human activities, such as the closure of railroad lines and futile human attempts to overcome the forces of nature. This depiction shows how natural conditions can control or even stop modern human life (for example, stopping transportation), illustrating the power of nature that technology and human efforts cannot overcome. This is in keeping with ecocriticism's focus on the relationship between humans and nature, and the dependence of humans on stable environmental conditions. In this case, the snowstorm in the story functions as an agent that disrupts human life and underscores the unpredictable power of nature.

It was the row of spindly trees that saved them. Andreas's father had planted the trees soon after he settled in Dakota. Most of the Schweizer farmers did the same an orchard of fruit and nut trees near the house, just like the ones they had in the Ukraine. For an instant, the air cleared enough for them to see the end of a row of his father's fruit trees. (p.142)

The concept of interconnectedness emphasizes that nature and humans interact with each other in an interdependent relationship. Historically, in 1880 America depended on farming while the weather was so bad that there was economic instability so that the sense of helping each other made them survive. In this description, the interconnectedness between humans and nature is realized through Andreas' father's actions of planting trees to protect their family from

storms. These trees, planted with the pragmatic goal of survival, also symbolize the connection between humans and the natural environment they manage and care for.

The trees that “saved” them show how humans and nature can work together in harmony. These trees are not just passive backdrops, but they also play an active role in providing protection in the midst of harsh weather. The human act of planting trees also reflects ecological values, such as respect for the land and the maintenance of a sustainable environment. The trees planted by Andreas' father serve as a physical and emotional link between them and the natural environment, as well as a reminder of the traditional practices they brought with them from Ukraine.

Ecocriticism emphasizes the importance of seeing nature as an interconnected network of human life. In this case, the trees represent ecological connectedness, where human actions to plant and care for nature provide reciprocity in the form of protection in times of crisis. This narrative affirms an important ecological value, namely that humans and nature are inseparable and influence each other in an ongoing cycle.

The lack of oxygen made their bodies unable to complete the metabolic cycle, causing lactic and pyruvic acids to accumulate in their tissues; the buildup of these acids made their hearts beat even more feebly and erratically, which in turn spiked levels of the acids. (p.190)

This quote reflects the principle of interconnectedness in critical analysis according to Cheryll Glotfelty's theory, which emphasizes the complex relationship between humans and the environment (Glotfelty, 1996). In this context, the lack of oxygen not only affects the individual's body, but also indicates the interaction

between environmental factors (oxygen availability) and biological processes occurring within the body. The build-up of lactic and pyruvic acids due to oxygen deprivation shows how changes in a single element-in this case, oxygen levels-can have a wide-ranging and cascading impact on the health and function of the body's organs, illustrating the dependence of humans on healthy environmental conditions.

Furthermore, this chain effect shows how vulnerable human life is to changes in external conditions. When the heart functions weakly and irregularly, it creates a vicious cycle in which acid build-up worsens, making clear the connectedness between human physiological conditions and environmental factors. As such, this excerpt underscores the importance of understanding how ecosystems and human health are interconnected, and reminds us that an individual's well-being is highly dependent on the health of the surrounding environment.

2. Environmental Awareness

In ecocritical analysis, environmental awareness refers to a deep understanding of the relationship between humans and the environment and the impact of human actions on ecosystems (Aminrad, 2013). This awareness includes an understanding of how humans affect nature through activities such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change, as well as how nature provides basic needs and sustainability for humans. With increasing environmental awareness, humans are expected to be more sensitive to signs of ecosystem damage and more responsible in making decisions related to the use of natural resources. This awareness also leads to the recognition that everything in nature is interconnected,

and human actions have consequences that affect not only the environment but also social, economic, and political life.

Environmental awareness in ecocriticism encourages efforts to build sustainable mindsets and actions. This means prioritizing changes in lifestyle, industrial practices, and public policies to minimize environmental damage and preserve it for future generations. Ecocritical analysis often reveals how literary or cultural works depict environmental issues and can serve as tools to spread awareness of the importance of protecting nature (Marland, 2013). Literature and art can be powerful media to instill the understanding that humans must live in harmony with the environment, maintain its balance, and contribute to restoring damaged ecosystems. The following explanation provide the data related to environmental awareness contain in the novel.

Children were the unpaid workforce of the prairie, the hands that did the work no one else had time for or stomach for. The outpouring of grief after scores of children were found frozen to death among the cattle on Friday, January 13, was at least in part an expression of remorse for what children were subjected to every day—remorse for the fact that most children had no childhood. This was a society that could not afford to sentimentalize its living and working children. Only in death or on the verge of death were their young granted the heroine funds, the long columns of sobbing verse, the stately granite monuments. A safe and carefree childhood was a luxury the pioneer prairie could not afford. (p.269)

The quote can be analyzed through the lens of Cheryll Glotfelty's environmental awareness, because it reflects an awareness of the social and economic conditions that are shaped by harsh and hostile environments. In this case, many children going home from school became victims of the blizzard. The environmental awareness includes an understanding that environmental conditions

force humans to adapt in ways that sacrifice the most vulnerable segments of society—in this case, children.

Environmental awareness in this context includes an acknowledgment that the environment affects not only the physical world but also the social and cultural dynamics of humans. In societies that are unable to protect childhood due to the demands of harsh environments, we can see how ecological factors create social injustice and sacrifice the well-being of certain groups. Thus, while this quote focuses more on social critique, it does contain elements of a broader environmental awareness, namely an awareness of how ecological conditions can shape social structures and human decisions in contexts that are not always ethical or just.

“It’s time for us to acknowledge one of America’s greatest mistakes,” wrote Nicholas D. Kristof on the op-ed page of the New York Times, “a 140-year-old scheme that has failed at a cost of trillions of dollars, countless lives and immeasurable heartbreak: the settlement of the Great Plains. (p.270)

Nicholas D. Kristof’s quote about the failure of settlement in the Great Plains in the last 140 years can be analyzed through the lens of environmental awareness. This sentence shows the awareness that the human settlement project in the Great Plains was not only a failure economically and socially, but also had a major ecological impact. This settlement ignored the limitations of nature and assumed that the land in the Great Plains could be cultivated without considering the local ecosystem, including extreme weather, dry soil, and inhospitable natural conditions. Environmental awareness also includes the understanding that human actions that ignore the characteristics of nature will have detrimental consequences, not only for the environment, but also for the humans who try to utilize it.

In addition, Kristof's statement illustrates environmental awareness because it criticizes the long-term failure of natural resource exploitation that does not take into account local ecological conditions. In an ecocritical context, this reflects a failure to respect the ecological limitations of the Great Plains, which ultimately triggers severe environmental damage, resource loss, and immeasurable human losses. This analysis emphasizes that large projects that underestimate the carrying capacity of the environment not only fail economically, but also result in widespread social suffering, such as loss of life and destruction of communities. Thus, this quote supports Glotfelty's perspective on the importance of understanding and respecting the interconnectedness of humans and the environment in social and economic decision-making (Glotfelty, 1996).

3. Ethical Responsibility

In ecocritical analysis, ethical responsibility refers to the moral obligation of humans to maintain, protect, and restore the ecosystems in which they live. This responsibility arises from the understanding that humans are part of a larger ecosystem and that their actions have a direct impact on the balance of nature (Steffen et al., 2007). This ecological ethic emphasizes that humans should not only view nature as a resource that can be freely exploited, but as an entity that must be valued and treated with respect. By preserving the environment, humans also ensure the sustainability of natural resources for future generations and prevent the destruction of ecosystems that are vital to the survival of various species, including humans themselves.

Ethical responsibility in ecology also includes a more sustainable and equitable approach to interactions with nature (Leach et al., 2018). This means rethinking the way we use resources, reducing negative impacts on the environment, and considering the long-term impacts of our actions on the earth. Ecocritical analysis often highlights how overexploitation of nature and pollution caused by human activities can cause ecosystem damage that is difficult to restore. Therefore, humans have a moral responsibility to play an active role in maintaining the ecological balance and ensuring that their actions do not damage the survival of the earth and all the creatures on it.

In the context of ecological values, ethical responsibility refers to the responsibility of human towards nature. It means how human can preserve nature by planting trees, and caring for trees without cutting them down. By that, it shows how human takes a role in being responsible for nature. Besides, in the children's *Blizzard* novel reflects human focused more on caring other humans without thinking their responsibility of caring for nature. Whereas, by caring for the tress, it will help human when they are faced by a disaster like blizzard that they have once experienced

In relation with ecological values, in term of ethical responsibility, there is no data belong to its category. The story of *The Children's Blizzard* novel does not tell about how human protects, takes care, and is responsible to nature. But the novel tells more about how human cares for each other. Therefore, some data in the novel reflects as ethical responsibility, in the context of human cares for human. Here are

the examples of the data related with ethical responsibility in the context of human cares for each other.

A couple of the boys helped Minnie get the door back up, whereupon it blew in again. This time she had them nail it shut all around. Minnie knew she had enough coal to heat the soddie schoolhouse all night, and she was determined to stay put and keep the children inside. (p.147)

Minnie's action in the quote, deciding to close the school door tightly and ensure the children stay inside, reflects ethical responsibility in ecocritical analysis. In this situation, Minnie is faced with very dangerous environmental conditions, and she takes clear and wise steps to protect the children under her supervision. Her decision to stay inside the school by utilizing sufficient coal supplies shows her moral responsibility to prioritize human safety when faced with dangerous natural threats, such as snowstorms. Environmental ethics emphasizes the importance of making decisions that consider human and environmental welfare, and in this case, Minnie is trying to protect the children from external threats, namely extreme weather.

In ecocritical analysis, Minnie's actions can also be seen as part of human responsibility to act wisely in the face of environmental crises. Minnie shows an attitude that is aware of the limitations of nature and understands that rash actions, such as leaving shelter, can be fatal. This illustrates that in the face of environmental threats, humans have an ethical responsibility to protect themselves and others from avoidable risks, by using existing resources wisely. Further, actions driven by moral considerations such as these affirm the close relationship between humans and the

environment and the need to take responsible action in maintaining the well-being of communities amidst harsh natural challenges.

The teams came one behind the other, just as they had set out, only now the drays behind them were solid with huddled gray shapes. The horses labored, their noses clogged with melted and refrozen snow, their breathing rough. They moved up Main Street so slowly that the children had no trouble dropping off as the drays came abreast their houses. One by one, the kids landed on their buried feet, got their balance, and then waded, staggering through the drifts and bent nearly double in the wind, into the arms of relieved parents. Slow as they were, the horses didn't take long to cover the few blocks of town. And of course, the loads got lighter as the kids peeled off. Every child was safe now. For the men who had volunteered to rescue the kids there was still the business of getting the horses unhitched, awkward to do with frozen hands, stowing the drays so they didn't get buried under snowdrifts, and putting the horses under shelter for the night. A nasty job in a storm like this, but it wouldn't be any easier tomorrow. (p. 166)

This data reflects ethical responsibility in ecological values because it describes how humans show moral responsibility towards others in the midst of extreme natural conditions. In the context of ecology, ethical responsibility involves people's awareness of the impact of their decisions and actions, both on the environment and on other people living in that environment. Here, the men who volunteered to save the children from the blizzard took moral action to protect the most vulnerable members of the community even though they had to face great risk, bad weather and physical discomfort.

This ethical responsibility is shown through the sacrifice and dedication of the rescuers who continue their task of getting the children to their homes, even though their horses are exhausted, their hands are frozen, and the storm continues. Such actions demonstrate their concern for the safety and well-being of the community. This ethical responsibility is also linked to human awareness of their vulnerability before the forces of nature. Humans are required to make wise and

empathetic decisions in the face of environmental challenges, and to act to reduce suffering and risk for others.

Furthermore, the data also illustrates how the men are not only responsible for the safety of the children, but also for their horses, which are part of the safety support system in the midst of the storm. They made sure the horses were placed in a safe and secure place despite the deteriorating weather. This action shows that their ethical responsibility extends not only to humans, but also to other living things that play an important role in human-nature interactions. As such, this paragraph represents ethical responsibility in a broader ecological context, where humans are expected to respond to the challenges of nature with greater empathy, responsibility and awareness of the life around them.

4. Activism

In ecocritical analysis, activism includes proactive and organized action to protect, preserve, and restore the environment. This activism is often rooted in environmental awareness and ethical responsibility that urges individuals and communities to act against the overexploitation of nature, environmental degradation, and ecological injustice. Ecocriticism recognizes that literature, art, and culture can be tools for promoting social awareness and change (Phillips, 1999). Activism in this context refers to how human takes a role in protecting nature after the phenomena of blizzard.

Furthermore, activism refers to how human takes action for improving nature after being attacked by blizzard. It can be done by doing such reforestation.

After a blizzard that damages natural habitats and ecosystems, activism often focuses on restoration. People may initiate others to replant forests, repair damaged ecosystems and protect affected flora and fauna. In this case, the act of activism highlights the fragile relationship between humans and nature. Unfortunately, the novel does not tell about how human does it. But it presents how government plays a role in anticipating blizzard or other disasters by creating new policies.

Based on *The Children's Blizzard* novel, activism is often depicted in the form of how government attempts to give solution and improve the weather data information. Activism in ecocriticism focuses on the urgent need to take concrete action to protect the earth and human from the negative impacts of human behavior itself. In addition, there are no data related with activism that reflects how human takes a role in keeping nature after the blizzard incident. But the novel reflects how the government plays a role in improving the weather data as the way for informing the residents about weather condition. The following explanation is the data related to activism that the government does that in the novel.

*January 13, 1888 12:15 AM
Signal Office War Department Saint Paul
Indications for 24 hours commencing at 7 AM today*

For Saint Paul and Minneapolis: Snow colder with a cold wave, fresh northerly winds For Minnesota: Colder with a cold wave, snow followed in northern part by fair weather, fresh northerly winds For Dakota: Local snows, colder with a cold wave, fresh northerly winds becoming variable. (p. 179)

This weather data from 13 January 1888 provides an overview of atmospheric conditions in the Minnesota, Saint Paul, Minneapolis and Dakota regions following a severe snowstorm. In the context of *The Children's Blizzard*,

this information serves to show how unexpected natural phenomena can significantly affect human life. The role of the environment in literature is important for understanding the relationship between humans and nature and how it can raise ecological awareness. This weather data is not just technical information, but also serves as a symbol of how environmental changes can bring disasters, which are often ignored or underestimated by humans.

This report highlights the importance of ecological awareness by showcasing extreme weather conditions and their effects on human life. In the novel *The Children's Blizzard*, the inability of the society at that time to accurately predict the weather and the inability to adapt to environmental conditions shows the dependence of humans on nature. Through this discussion of weather data, it highlights the importance of ecological understanding, where humans must be more sensitive to the signs of nature to avoid tragedies like the one depicted in the novel. This underscores a critique of the lack of awareness and attention to potentially deadly environmental changes, which is one form of ecological activism.

In addition, ecological activism in this novel can be seen in the way the author uses weather data to show human unpreparedness in the face of natural threats and how the author informs human to be vigilant and prepared. The snowstorm that occurs is not just a story setting, but also a warning about the importance of respecting and understanding the forces of nature that cannot be fully controlled by humans. Thus, the weather data not only provides information about atmospheric conditions, but also becomes a medium to convey messages about the

need for ecological awareness and human responsibility in maintaining the balance between humans and the environment.

Finally, in December 1889, President Benjamin Harrison formally recommended that the responsibility for weather forecasting and data gathering be moved from the Army Signal Corps to the Department of Agriculture, and this time both houses of Congress, having repeatedly blocked the measure in the past, swiftly agreed. (p. 261)

The example of the data above reflects ecological activism as it shows an attempt to make institutional changes to address the adverse environmental impacts on society. In this context, President Benjamin Harrison's recommendation to transfer the responsibility of weather forecasting from the Army Signal Corps to the Department of Agriculture is an important step that shows awareness of the need for better environmental management, especially regarding weather forecasting that can save lives and prevent disasters.

The idea can be considered a form of activism as it highlights policy changes aimed at improving the weather prediction system, which was previously considered ineffective and often unable to provide accurate early warnings to the public. The inability to foresee extreme weather conditions, such as the blizzard of 1888 that serves as the backdrop for the novel *The Children's Blizzard*, resulted in many fatalities and heavy losses. By transferring this responsibility to the Department of Agriculture, the government is demonstrating a commitment to better manage weather information and ensure that the public can prepare for natural disasters. This move reflects ecological activism as it is driven by a desire to improve public safety through more efficient environmental management.

Moreover, the swift approval of both houses of Congress after repeatedly blocking the measure shows that there is a change in awareness of the importance of a better understanding of environmental conditions. It is a form of political response to the social pressures and disasters that have occurred, motivating the government to act faster and more decisively. This change is not only technical, but also reflects how government decision-making and policy can be guided by a deeper ecological understanding, which ultimately serves to protect people and the environment from dangerous natural threats.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter provides the conclusion and suggestion of the research. First, the researcher concludes the finding of the research. Second, the researcher provides suggestion and recommendation for future researcher, who intends in analyzing similar topic of ecocriticism with *The Children's Blizzard* novel by David Laskin in various context.

A. Conclusion

Based on the findings, nature representation in *The Children's Blizzard* novel is viewed from how a blizzard happens against people in Great Plains. Nature is portrayed as a powerful, unpredictable and almost malevolent force. It can turn from calm to chaos in an instant. The narrative captures the intense violence of the blizzard through vivid descriptions of how the storm evolves and feeds on itself, creating an accelerating cycle of destructive weather patterns. The blizzard is also presented as a physical barrier, a "curtain of ice" that divides climates and sweeps across the land with terrifying speed and force. Personal recollections, such as Allie Green's recollection of seeing the storm approach like a 'white roll', emphasizes the overwhelming impact of the blizzard on human life.

In *The Children's Blizzard*, the ecological value according to Cheryll Glotfelty's theory is reflected through the relationship between humans and the

environment which is depicted very clearly in various disastrous events, life struggles, and people's inability to understand and respond to extreme weather. Through narratives of blizzard that stop trains, trees planted by European settlers that become markers and saviors highlight the interconnectedness between human and nature. The awareness shows how people felt regret with the past blizzard phenomena that takes many lives. The ethical responsibility is usually presented by human such planting trees after blizzard, but in the novel, it is shown how human cares for other humans during and after the blizzard. Last, activism is also not presented by human, who is usually responsible preserving nature after facing blizzard such doing reforestation, but it is shown by the government who plays a role in improving the weather data information through the changes in weather policy, which first is handled by Army Signal Corps, then move to the Department of Agriculture.

B. Suggestion

For further research on David Laskin's *The Children's Blizzard* using Cheryll Glotfelty's ecocritical theory, the researcher suggests that researchers further explore the role of nature as an active agent that shapes the narrative and characters in the novel. The research can focus on how Laskin depicts the relationship between humans and the environment, and how nature plays a role not only as a destructive force, but also as an entity that shapes ecological values in social, cultural, and historical contexts. Researchers can compare the representation of nature in this novel with other literary works that also highlight natural disasters as a central theme to see a broader pattern of ecological representation.

In addition, it is also suggested that further researchers can use an interdisciplinary approach by combining ecocritical studies with other disciplines such as environmental history, cultural geography, or climate change studies. This will provide a richer dimension to the analysis of the representation of nature in the novel, especially in the context of current climate change. Further research can also explore how this work can be used as a reflection material to understand human responses to natural change and disasters caused by ecological unpreparedness.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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