

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nature is a place where the living things live and doing the activities. It contains diverse material world and produces magnificent creation. Nature was created for creatures, hence they can live and interact with each other. In fact, nature and human have an inseparable relationship because they relate to each other. Nature is the most important resource for living things because it provides everything. Human is necessary to keep relationship toward nature. On the other hand, human can damage and destroy the ecosystem in the nature. However, natural disaster occurs on earth is not merely the factors which caused by human activity, but it caused by nature itself such as earthquake, tsunami, storm and heavy rain. It means that earth has unexpected power. Nature disaster which occurs on earth has inspired the authors to create literary work.

Based on information from literary journals about the study of nature and the environment, the environmental studies was discussed in some universities on literary study, like at the University of Nevada. It was created the first academic position in Literature and the Environment. In 1992, an organization New Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was formed and Scott Slovic was elected first chairman (Glottfelty and Fromm, 1996: xviii). Ecological literary criticism and definition of ecocriticism are interconnected in the ASLE. In 1993,

Patrick Murphy was published a new journal entitled ISLE (Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment) which the forum to critical studies of literary and performed arts (Glottfelty and Fromm, 1996). ISLE is aim to provide international scholarship to scholars. The study of literature and environment appear as a form of concern about the nature and environment which is worsen through writing such as essays, journals, books and other information about literary and environment (Glottfelty and Fromm, 1996).

Nowadays, literature has been developed. The authors create new literary work which is reflected issues and phenomena on earth. Many cases of natural phenomena and environment being worst, the authors express their ideas and creativity through writing. They have been publishing books and novels about nature and environment in the most modern form. In relation to the nature and environment, the books and novels related to living creature's activities. Hence, the writer is interested to analyze the novel entitled *The Age of Miracles* by Karen Thompson Walker. The novel is published in 2012. Karen Thompson Walker is an American author. She was born and raised in San Diego. She was graduated from UCLA and the Columbia MFA program (Walker, 2012: 285). The novel entitled *The Age of Miracles* was awarded as New York times bestseller and a Publishers Weekly Best Book of the year. It has been published and translated into twenty-nine languages. She gets

inspiration from an incident of earthquake and tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia in 2004 which caused the earth's rotation (Walker, 2012).

The novel entitled *The Age of Miracles* is a science fiction novel and contains elements of dystopia. Dystopia is a term coined later to designate an imaginary horrible place (Pope, 2002: 163). The characteristic of dystopia is authoritarian government and natural disasters. The novel tells about rotation of the earth begin to slow down which makes days become longer and starts from a matter of minutes to hour.

Julia is twelve years old girl. She tries to adapt and survive in California as dangerous city. Julia and her family were struggling to live in an extraordinary time. The day and night were so long. The slowing time gave an impact for students at Julia's school. They should go to school in uncertain time, sometimes at the noon or midnight. In Julia's life, she got some conflicts involving an external conflict like the conflict between her parents and broken friendship between Julia and Hanna. Thereafter, Julia met Seth. They survive together in the city that almost chaotic. Slowing time also gave an impact for adults in terms of behaviour of people against slowing rotation of the earth. Consequently, the impact on the human mind that decided suicide because they are not surviving toward distracted natural condition. Slowing time is cause adverse effect, even dangerous for creatures, including earthquake, gravity growing strong, disruption of the magnetic field and danger of ultraviolet radiation. People did suicide because it did not forceful to effect of earth slowing. The experts often

appear on television and provide their opinion in scientific. Eucalyptus trees and other plants are dying because of day and night is being longer, for example birds fall and die, whales are stranded on the beach because they are loss of navigation. Even though the rate of the slowing had reduced during the years, slowing of the time had never stopped.

Many cases of nature and environment are occurring on earth. Natural disaster occurs in the earth was caused by unexpected power of the earth. In this case, some authors have the inspiration to write and create a literary work. Literary works as an author's media to express the idea and opinion. It is created from experience's author, surrounding environment and the news from everywhere in the world. Ecocriticism theory finds nature and environment issues, its principle developed by Greg Garrard. According to Garrard, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term 'human' itself (Garrard, 2004: 5). Ecocriticism focuses on the relationship between literature and physical environment. Based on the novel entitled *The Age of Miracles*, this study analyzes natural phenomena that disturb human activities and damage the life of animals and plants. Nature is one of the main cases in this novel, it is considered as a serious problem and the impact on human activities. Besides, in this novel depicted by the main character who tried to survive toward changing of the nature and environment. If human can survive on

earth which experience slowing time, it can live and face a severe disaster in the future.

1.2 Statements of Research Problems

Based on background of study, this study discusses Natural Phenomena in Karen Thompson Walker's Novel *The Age of Miracles*. This study as formulated as the following questions:

1. What kinds of natural phenomena are portrayed in Karen Thompson Walker's Novel *The Age of Miracles*?
2. What are the impacts of destroyed nature toward the characters in Karen Thompson Walker's Novel *The Age of Miracles*?

1.3 Objectives of The Study

The objective of this study is to describe the answer of the question in the statement of research problems. The objectives of the study including:

1. To explain about kinds of nature phenomena are portrayed in Karen Thompson Walker's Novel *The Age of Miracles*.
2. To explain the impacts of destroyed nature toward the characters in Karen Thompson Walker's Novel *The Age of Miracles*.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The significance of the study provide people's understanding about natural phenomena as theoretical and practical. Theoritically, the study based on Ecocriticism theory which focuses on nature and environmental issues reflected in Karen Thompson Walker's Novel *The Age of Miracles*. The result of this study is provide information and awareness related to

Ecocriticism especially about relationship between literature and environment. The purpose of analyzing this novel is to show the readers deep analyze and raises the issue of nature and environment. The analysis of this novel is the characters, especially characters who survive toward natural.

Practically, this study provides awareness about natural and environment occurring in the earth, especially about natural phenomena in Thompson Walker's Novel *The Age of Miracles*. This study also contributes as a reference of literary research for University of Trunojoyo Madura students in understanding how Ecocriticism theory can be used to analyze natural phenomena in literary works. Therefore, the writer hopes this study can be a reference to analyze the same topic in the future.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The object of this research is Karen Thompson Walker's Novel *The Age of Miracles*. The writer applies Ecocriticism theory by Greg Garrard to provide the answer of research problem. The scope of this study is the concept of Ecocriticism theory. This study focuses on natural environment that is portrayed in Karen Thompson Walker's Novel *The Age of Miracles*. It discusses about the interaction between Julia and natural enviroment, especially representation about natural phenomena. In addition, this study is limited on character's utterances and the narrator.