

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Research

Nature is a natural media that creates just like that without being caused by people. In his article entitled *Construction of Nature* (2014), Jacques Pollini stated that nature had been created by God or itself or has always been like that (6). This statement is also supported by the definition of nature itself in the Collins dictionary, that nature is all the living things in this world such as animals, plants, humans, also the other things that is not made by people and not caused by people. With the existence of nature, Earth is a place for all living things to grow and develop all of God's creations that relate to each other between humans, animals, and plants. This statement relates to all the needs of living things on Earth, and there is a process called the environment. In literary work, this process can be understood in ecocriticism.

Ecocriticism is a term regarding literary criticism which has a relationship between nature and the environment. As mentioned in *Ecocriticism* by Greg 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." (5). From the social environment, people can learn new things and understand what it is. Many years ago, people could learn from nature and build a civilization and culture then create the social environment. People can create an environment to help

them to understand more things to do. There is no culture when there is no nature, but nature can stand alone.

From nature, there is an environment that helps people to build their characters and have some behaviors. In this case, children also have some behaviors that they learn from the social environment. The environment is also part of the support that creates children's behavior. As people with the closest relationship between their children and children's surroundings, parents will help them build their character and behavior. However, other people around these children will help them survive and find out new things to learn. Like Frédéric Ducarme and Denis Couvet said in their article *What Does 'Nature' Mean?* Mentioned, "Nature is a process of change, which can be conserved by a proper understanding of its mechanisms, including eventually an active participation in its dynamic." (4). In another case, humans can participate in the dynamics of nature to feel the process of change itself. As can be seen, humans, especially children, more quickly understand their environment and can adapt their behavior to the environment. This behavior happens because children's memory is still vital to remember and to learn new things from their surroundings. Still, they do not forget how the previous environment shaped their personalities. Every human being owns this way of survival, which is why humans own various behaviors and habits. It means that the social environment has some effects on human life.

Not only from the scientific side, literature also takes an action on the discussion about ecocritic. Regarding to an analysis from Suci Agustin and Eva Najma in their article entitled *William Faulkner's Environmental Awareness in His Go Down, Moses*

(2021), states that literary works are not just a result of the author's imagination, but also put the life phenomena as an important point to strengthen the author's literary works to convey to readers (38). This statement is also strengthened by a quotation from *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, by Hudson (1913), which also states 'that literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life', which is the most important element to create a literary work. "What they have thought and felt about those aspects of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is then fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language" (11). From these statements, that is why the writer uses a literary work that has the elements of the effect of the social environment on human life captured in the English novel *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. This novel was published in 1905. Frances Hodgson Burnett, the author of this novel, is a British novelist born on November 24, 1849, in Cheetham, Manchester, England. She was famous as an author of children's books. One of her famous literary works is *A Little Princess*. In this novel, Burnett describes how nature and the environment can influence children's behavior, from mindset to maturity, and a child's independence can be seen and assessed based on the influence of the environment. In the 19th century, the environment around Bombay was not very good due to colonialism. Many Indian children cannot feel free to get what they want. However, they have a suitable living environment because of farming. Nature around India - especially Bombay, is still beautiful and can be explored anywhere.

Many Indian children learn, play, and work by using nature as the media. Burnett describes that Sara Crewe, the main character, is more mature than other characters. This portrays that nature creates the social environment and helps Sara to develop her character. Burnett describes Sara as the strong main character in this novel. She creates Sara as a young-mature girl with her opinion and different thinking. Sara got her maturity when she was in India. She tends to take a look and analyzes everything around her; after that, she tries to understand and learn it from her perspective. It is very different from other children, especially children nowadays. It is hard to find out this kind of characteristic in children nowadays.

Meanwhile, in this novel, it can be analyzed that the social environment can influence human behavior, which affects children's behavior. Therefore, this is because the place of residence and the surrounding environment affect the way children act, as described by Garrard in his book *Ecocriticism*, "The figure of dwelling is crucial as it inflects nature as the troubled ground of work, knowledge, economy, and responsibility,..." (145). It is not common to see children play around with nature and the environment nowadays. Nowadays, people ignore the fact that humans and nature are fused together. The main character's experience with nature in this novel is not only background but also depicts that nature in real life has an essential role in humans, especially children. However, this kind of situation can be analyzed in today's conditions. In *A Little Princess*, the writer believes Burnett wants to show that nature and the social environment can influence and affect someone's behavior. Using this novel and finding out that children and the environment are related to this research, the



title of this research is "**The Effect of the Social Environment on Children's Independent Behavior in A Little Princess by Frances Hodgson Burnett.**"

## **1.2 Identification of the Problem**

*A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett is a novel about a seven-year-old girl named Sara Crewe who moves from Bombay to an academy in London. She is used to the natural environment in India and struggles in London because of her different way of thinking from other girls in the academy. This novel implies how literature interprets the effect of nature and the environment on children, including the relationship between children and the environment, also natural conditions both in Bombay and London. This situation is because the novel represents the effects of the social environment on children's behavior and also arises because of how Burnett views the influence of the social environment on children's behavior.

The writer argues that the environment around the children can have an effect on developing their behavior. The writer wants to analyze how nature influences the independent behavior of the children described in this novel, as the problem of how two different environments and natural conditions can affect a child's behavior. This research focuses on analyzing the effect of the social environment on children's independent behavior, the history of the environment and humans in India and England, and the relationship between children, nature, and the social environment in reality.

## **1.3 Review of Related Literature**

Environmental issues have become a hot topic that modern people often discuss. Many issues are discussed by society in terms of new ideas for solving the

problem itself. Especially with the frequent discussion of environmental issues, preserving the environment is the main thing that needs to be considered by society. It has been for many centuries, and many natural events have occurred to be used as learning media for humans. For several issues that include the social environment, many people make the social environment a mediator to learn about life. Therefore, many discussions of issues about the environment and how the social environment can also affect humans. That can be found in *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Related to issues that occur on the topic of discussion in this thesis, the writer has found several articles and theses that refer to natural and human issues, specifically children. Some of them are related studies to this research. Some research on related articles and theses is used as a mediator to lead to further understanding. As a comparison media, the writer reviews several researchers' studies to find expert comparators and viewpoints. However, this research can be concrete research based on the many understandings from the experts. Meanwhile, it shows readers that this novel can find another issue that Andalas University must discuss.

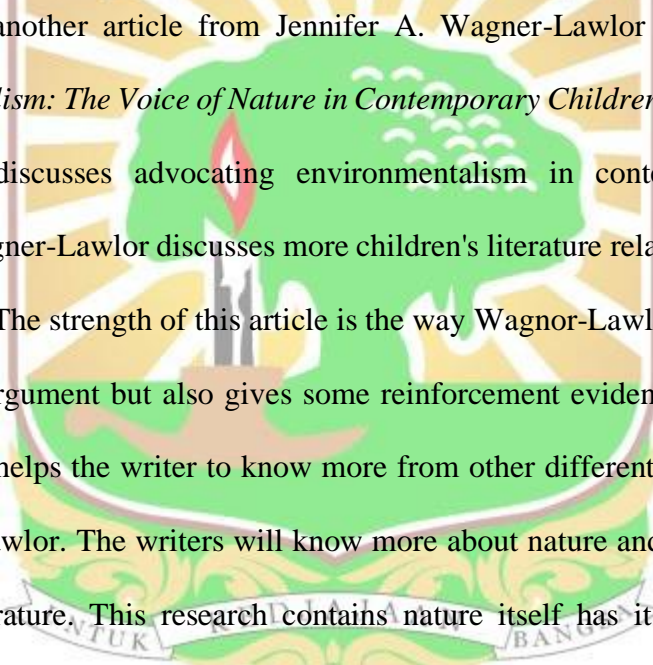
The first two articles from Ema Kartina, Muhammad Natsir, and Nita Maya Valiantien in their article entitled *The Self-Actualization of Sara Crewe in A Little Princess Novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett* (2019). Form two of their findings state that the characteristics of self-actualizing people in Sara's character are acceptance (self, other, and nature), spontaneity, simplicity, and naturalness. It means that acceptance is how the characters or people can take everything from socialization, which the example is how Sara accepts Becky as a friend instead of a servant. This

acceptance points to how people connect to others by accepting their status, ability, or habits so that they can have a relationship with each other. While spontaneity, simplicity, and naturalness in these characterizations find out that spontaneity's impulse can help people be more sympathetic and empathize with others.

Therefore, Bixler Koppes, in his article *Tradition and the Individual Talent of Frances Hodgson Burnett: A Generic Analysis of Little World Fauntleroy, A Little Princess, and The Secret Garden* (1978). Koppes states that Burnett's works are not just because of the main characters, but Burnett also discusses the environment in implied meaning. It means that Burnett creates her works for the quality and the moral lesson she wants to transfer to the readers. The writer agrees with his argument because it helps the writer know more about the characteristics of Burnett's writing style. This article's sources depend on three famous literary works from Burnett. Also, this article focuses on the main characters who are children from Burnett's works. Burnett wants to recreate her childhood memories in her works because they can be everlasting. However, the lack of this article is some of the explanations retelling the story, but it can still be understood because Koppes explains many aspects in detail.

Another understanding from an article by Judith Chen-Hsuan Cheng and Martha C. Monroe entitled *Connection to Nature: Children's Affective Attitudes to Nature* (2010). From the research findings, the researcher states that "...learning, understanding, experiencing nature, and living close to nature can positively influence the development of children's affective attitudes towards nature." (2010, p. 46). The writer believes that the way children learn and know more about nature from their

perspective, it is better for them to learn it from practice. Meanwhile, this article discusses children's affective attitudes toward nature more clearly. This article's strength refers to how researchers observe children from various points of view. This statement helps the writer to understand more about nature and the environment around the children. The environment around the children helps them to maintain their behavior. Children can learn and understand new things from both sides: their environment and the things around them. It depends on children's knowledge to learn about nature itself.



Also, another article from Jennifer A. Wagner-Lawlor entitled *Advocating Environmentalism: The Voice of Nature in Contemporary Children's Literature* (1996). This article discusses advocating environmentalism in contemporary children's literature. Wagner-Lawlor discusses more children's literature related to nature and the environment. The strength of this article is the way Wagner-Lawlor not only gives her opinion and argument but also gives some reinforcement evidence to strengthen her arguments. It helps the writer to know more from other different perspectives shown by Wagner-Lawlor. The writers will know more about nature and the environment in children's literature. This research contains nature itself has its character to build children's behavior. The writer believes that the environment and nature have their part in human life, especially children's.

The fifth article from Alireza Sardari, entitled *The River Exists, Therefore I Am: Ecocriticism, Nature and Human Nature in Willa Cather's The Enchanted Bluff* (2020). Sardari states that the relationship between humans and nature 'requires constant care'



because 'humanity and nature are interdependent' (138). It means that between humans and nature, it cannot be separated from anything. Sardari's statement in this article reinforces this. Sardari states, "...nature and humanity have an inseparable relationship; besides, nature, with its inherent harmony, deepens friendships between humans." (144). This balanced relationship between humans and nature, nature will not be marginalized because this continuity of relationship allows nature and humans to live side by side.

Lastly, this article from Capaldi et. Al entitled *Connectedness to Nature: Its Impact on Sustainable Behaviors and Happiness in Children* (2014) because the writer discusses and researches children's behavior in nature. The writer needs this article to find out more about the valid preference to strengthen her argument in this research. The researchers state that "children are important agents who could mitigate some of these environmental challenges; in their actions and the relationship they have with the natural environment lays the opportunity to solve those problems." (1). It means that every act child does part of their character development based on the place they learn from the surrounding nature and environment. Capaldi et al. ran the research by using some of the determinants, which are six first-order factors that were pre-specified: (1) connectedness to nature, (2) happiness, (3) altruism; selfless help behaviors to other people, (4) equity; equality between sexes, ages, socioeconomics condition, and races, (5) frugality; behaviors on money management, and (6) pro-ecological behavior; frequency of bound to care for the natural environment and called as sustainable behavior. The researchers find out that every child with a relationship with nature tends

to have sustainable behavior, resulting in happiness. Children who think they are connected to nature tend to have sustainable behavior and protective behaviors in the environments rather than children who are not that into nature. This article is a fundamental source for the writer because *A Little Princess* novel's characters are mostly children from 5 to 12 years old. This research helps the writer to comprehend her arguments and theory on this topic related to children and nature.

From these related studies mentioned above, many points of view from various understandings of experts can help explain the direction of the discussion of this research. It can be concluded that this research, *A Little Princess*, refers to ecocriticism related to nature and the environment. It means this research is new research to this novel.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

The focus of this research is to observe the effect of the social environment on children's behavior captured in *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. The questions to observe are:

1. How does Burnett portray the relationship between children and the social environment in *A Little Princess*?
2. What lesson children can learn from the social environment in *A Little Princess*?

#### 1.5 Scope of the Research

This research will combine the main character's behavior and other figures that influence this research. On the other hand, this research also focuses on the effects of

the social environment that shape children's behavior in *A Little Princess*. This research will develop and examine the correlation between the influence of children's independent behavior traits, which can be seen from several sides presented in this novel. The author analyzes from the point of view of Frances Hodgson Burnett that the social environment is one of the reasons for reasoning a human attitude which in this case is shown from the child's behavior. In this research, the writer will analyze and understand what lessons children can learn about the social environment, as offered in the novel *A Little Princess*.

### 1.6 Objectives of the Study

This research aims to analyze children and the social environment also determine what affects children's behavior in *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. The characters in this novel are only the object and an example of how the social environment has its part in building children's character. The way the characteristics can be built is because of the social environment. This novel's set-up of the characters is the object of this research. It can be seen that the characters are a reflection of humans in real life, especially children. This research aims to discover that humans and the social environment are interrelated. Hence, humans cannot live without the social environment, and this research also tries to discover that humans depend on the social environment.