



ECOLOGICAL CRISIS AND HUMAN RESILIENCE IN *CAMP ZERO: AN ECOCRITICAL STUDY*

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Abstract

This study examines Michelle Min Sterling's *Camp Zero* (2023) through the theoretical framework of ecocriticism, with particular emphasis on the representation of ecological crisis and human resilience. The study explores how the novel portrays the consequences of climate change, industrialization, environmental degradation, and anthropocentric exploitation of nature. Using qualitative textual analysis, the research analyzes the novel's language, imagery, metaphors, symbolism, and narrative descriptions to investigate the relationship between humans and the natural environment. The findings reveal that *Camp Zero* presents nature as a damaged yet significant force that reflects the long-term consequences of human negligence and unsustainable development. Images of polluted skies, contaminated water, melting ice, industrial expansion, and declining biodiversity highlight the severity of the ecological crisis and demonstrate the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic challenges. At the same time, the novel portrays human resilience through the characters' capacity to adapt, cooperate, and endure in the face of environmental uncertainty. Rather than depicting resilience as the complete triumph over ecological collapse, the narrative emphasizes adaptation, hope, and collective responsibility as essential for survival. The study concludes that *Camp Zero* functions as a powerful critique of environmental exploitation while advocating ecological consciousness and sustainable coexistence between humanity and the natural world. It contributes to contemporary ecocritical scholarship by offering a critical interpretation of a recent climate-fiction novel.

Keywords: *Anthropocene, Camp Zero, Climate Change, Ecocriticism, Ecological Crisis, Environmental Degradation, Human Resilience.*

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1. Introduction

There are numerous literary works that celebrate the power and beauty of nature. However, concern for ecology and the danger that the persistent exploitation of the environment poses to humanity have only comparatively recently attracted the attention of literary scholars and writers (Glottfelty & Fromm, 1996). This growing environmental concern and its representation in literary texts have led to the emergence of a new branch of literary theory known as ecocriticism (Glottfelty, 1996). This essay seeks to present a concise account of the evolution of ecocriticism as a contemporary approach to literary analysis.

Historical approaches have traditionally shaped literary studies. In recent decades, however, critics have become increasingly aware of the relationship between geography and literature and have developed a deeper understanding through the interdisciplinary study of these two fields (Buell, 2005). Nature and literature have consistently maintained a close association, as reflected in the works of poets and writers across different civilizations throughout history. Today, almost every field of knowledge and development recognizes and emphasizes the close interrelationship between the natural and social worlds. Literary critics therefore seek to explore how writers have represented this profound relationship between nature and human civilization in their literary works (Garrard, 2012).

The question of whether human culture belongs to the physical world has also been the subject of many discussions. All ecological critique, despite its wide range of inquiries, is predicated on the idea that human culture is intertwined with the physical world, both influencing and being influenced by it. Green cultural studies, eco-poetics, and environmental literary criticism are some of the popular titles for this relatively new field of literary criticism. It is a vast field. In general, literary criticism looks at how authors, texts, and "the world" interact. In most literary theory, "the world" is synonymous with society—the social sphere. Ecocriticism widens the definition of "the world" to embrace the entire ecosphere. Ecocriticism adopts an earth-centered approach to literary criticism. It now refers to both the theoretical approach to the interconnected webs of natural, cultural, and supernatural events and the application of ecological principles to the study of literature.

Ecocritics urge others to consider the moral and artistic conundrums raised by the environmental crisis, as well as the ways in which language and literature convey values with significant ecological ramifications. A new type of critical approach known as ecocriticism has been made possible by the significant rise in the number of eco-conscious writers in the postmodern age. In the field of literary criticism, it is a relatively new yet quickly evolving concept. It has emerged as a modern ecological literary study and is now accepted as an important critical approach. In addition to emphasizing the "harmony"

between humans and nature, ecocriticism discusses the devastation of nature caused by changes in the modern world, most of which are directly human-induced. It has established itself as a contemporary ecological approach to literary studies and is now widely acknowledged as an important critical methodology (Slovic, 2010). Besides highlighting the ideal of harmony between human beings and nature, ecocriticism also examines the destruction of the natural environment resulting from the transformations of the modern world, most of which stem directly from human activities (Clark, 2019).

The study of literature that focuses on how people interact with non-human nature or the environment is known as ecocriticism (Glotfelty, 1996). The distinction between human and non-human nature has inevitably become more blurred in the modern era due to the growth and development of ecocritical studies (Clark, 2019). Thus, when subjected to ecocriticism, literature of all periods and places—not simply ecocentric or environmental literature or nature writing, but all literature—is examined in terms of place, setting, and environment (Buell, 2005). Ecocriticism is intrinsically interdisciplinary (Garrard, 2012). When there is a substantial connection between an author and place, or a character and place, ecocriticism is best applied to a work where the landscape itself is a dominating character. Ecocritics raise a number of issues regarding the connection between literature and the environment, but one seems to be the most crucial. An ecological reading of literature is provided by literary ecocriticism (Glotfelty, 1996).

Set in a near-future world devastated by climate change, a visionary architect is developing a utopian settlement known as Camp Zero. A young woman called Rose is recruited to spy on the architect by joining the Blooms, an exclusive group of companions who entertain the workers, while an idealistic academic, Grant Grimley, believes he is arriving at the camp to serve as a professor. At the same time, a team of women scientists live and carry out climate research at White Alice, an isolated research facility in northern Canada. Camp Zero (2023) provides a powerful image of what the future may be like, based upon environmental decay, socio-economic disparity, and rapid technological progress; this vision of the future is provided via environmental literature. The story takes place within a climate-devastated world where temperature increases, resource scarcity, and ecological instability have significantly changed the way humans live and interact with one another. This depiction of the impact of environmental deterioration on both individual and society are explored throughout the novel. Unlike many other writers that depict climate change as a possible eventuality, Sterling depicts a world where the effects of ecological collapse are now part of daily life. The inter-connectedness of its multiple stories along with vivid depictions of each landscape provide insights into how environmental catastrophes can redefine political structures, economic systems, gender relationships, and personal identity. Thus Camp Zero offers a rich terrain for ecocriticism

because it demonstrates the complex relationship between humanity and nature as well as challenges the viability of current models of development and consumption.

1.1. Research Questions

1. How is the ecological crisis represented in Michelle Min Sterling's Camp Zero from an ecocritical perspective?
2. How does Camp Zero portray human resilience in response to environmental degradation and climate change?

2. Literature review

Contemporary literary study has been greatly affected by the rapidly expanding environmental challenges of the 21st century. Thus, there is growing scholarly interest in examining the connection between literature and its surrounding environment. As a result of many of today's environmental issues (climate change, the loss of biodiversity, deforestation, pollution, species extinction, and overexploitation of natural resources), the concern now extends beyond the scientific community into all areas of the humanities. Because literature mirrors human experiences, values, and societal realities, it has developed an enhanced ability to represent the complicated interrelationships between humans and their natural surroundings. Therefore, ecocriticism has emerged as one of the most popular critical approaches among literary scholars who seek to examine how authors depict nature, environmental degradation, and ecological awareness through their use of literary devices.

Eco-critics have used ecocriticism to analyze how stories influence reader perception of ecological issues and the level of environmental accountability or responsibility they feel towards these problems. Eco-critics also recognize that literary works are not just creative expressions of artistry, but are cultural documents that help shape our perceptions of nature and promote self-reflection about our roles in ecological systems. Over time, ecocriticism has moved from an initial focus on nature writing and wilderness literature into a broader multidisciplinary field of inquiry. Contemporary ecocritical scholarship includes such fields as environmental humanities, climate fiction, eco-feminism, post-colonial ecocriticism, animal studies, and the Anthropocene. Contemporary ecocritically oriented research does not solely examine how landscapes are represented in literature. Rather, it examines the politics, cultures, ethics, and economies associated with the various types of environmental crises we face.

Unlike seeing nature as simply a passive backdrop against which human activities occur, ecocriticism emphasizes the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman existence. It questions anthropocentric perspectives that hold human interests superior to those related to ecological well-being and promotes a more balanced view of co-existence between people and their natural environments. By emphasizing interconnectedness, ecocriticism has widened the scope of literary analysis by providing researchers with the

opportunity to investigate how narratives represent environmental justice, ecological sustainability, and the effects of human intervention in natural ecosystems.

The concept of ecological crisis plays a major role in ecocritical discourse. An ecological crisis refers to the accumulation of various environmental problems caused by unsustainable developmental practices including industrialization, high rates of consumption of natural resources, technological growth, and other similar factors. The problems contributing to ecological crises include climate change, loss of habitats, decline in biodiversity, water shortages, pollution, and extreme weather conditions threatening both natural ecosystems and human societies. Ecocritically-minded scholars believe that ecological crises are not separate and distinct natural events but rather are closely tied to social, political, and economic structures that support unending economic growth at the expense of ecological sustainability.

Literature serves as an effective means by which ecological crises can be conceptualized, understood, and critically evaluated. Fictional narratives provide readers with opportunities to experience the emotional, ethical, and social ramifications of environmental change in ways that scientific reports alone do not. In addition to ecological crisis, the emergence of climate fiction (also known as cli-fi) is also closely associated with ecocriticism. Cli-fi narratives describe the future results of climate change through depictions of environmentally unstable societies. Cli-fi stories often illustrate dramatic increases in sea levels, extreme weather, environmental migration, food shortages, environmental disasters, and the collapse of ecosystems. While sci-fi typically depicts futuristic worlds that are drastically different from those we currently inhabit today, cli-fi maintains strong connections to real-world environmental issues and uses realistic extrapolations based upon scientific knowledge regarding environmental issues that exist today.

By creating imaginative worlds that reflect possible outcomes of current climate policies, cli-fi encourages readers to contemplate the long-term ramifications of current environmental policies and challenge the sustainability of the social, political, and economic systems responsible for creating environmental degradation. Cli-fi operates simultaneously as both a form of literary imagination and an environmental cautionary tale illustrating the need for urgent action regarding climate change before it may no longer be reversible. The literature on climate fiction is large, and it offers many examples of ways that climate fiction represents the reality of the Anthropocene. In addition to depicting a wide range of consequences associated with unsustainable human behavior – including ecological collapse, biodiversity loss, environmental migration, and resource scarcity – these studies demonstrate how contemporary climate fiction novels offer models for alternative and sustainable futures. These studies demonstrate that climate fiction expands the focus of ecocriticism by considering not just environmental ethics but political,

cultural, and economic considerations as well. Further, according to the author, recent Anglophone novels present the idea that there exists a reciprocal relationship between human societies and ecosystems, and they encourage readers to think about alternative and sustainable futures.

In addition to this focus on the representation of the relationship between human societies and ecosystems in climate fiction, researchers have also been studying representations of environmental justice in contemporary literature. Ryan (2020) writes that recent ecocritical scholarship has moved away from the more traditional studies of landscapes and wilderness that were common in ecocriticism toward broader studies that consider climate justice, postcolonial ecocriticism, environmental inequality, and the disproportionate burden of ecological risk that falls upon marginalized populations. The recognition that environmental crises fall disproportionately on already disadvantaged populations creates an understanding of ecological damage as intertwined with issues of class, race, gender, and political power. Thus, literary texts are increasingly being evaluated as culturally relevant responses to environmental injustices as opposed to mere descriptions of nature.

A third key area of research includes the ethical implications of climate fiction. Contemporary novels do not simply represent potential environmental catastrophes; they also prompt readers to reflect upon their own ethical obligations to nature (Parveen et al, 2026). Mukherjee (2025) writes that climate fiction offers nature as an actor rather than a backdrop to human action and thus challenges historical views that have legitimized environmental destruction through a human-centered view. Through ecocritical reading of literary narratives, scholars can uncover the long-term consequences of industrialization, excess consumption, and ecological negligence while also promoting increased awareness and sustainability of our environment.

Shamim et al. (2025), like others mentioned above, contend that ecocritical analyses of contemporary fiction show how literary narratives integrate ideas related to climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental justice, and sustainability into character development and plot structures. Their survey shows that many recent works of fiction have portrayed environmental crises as multifaceted problems that involve both ethical and political and cultural conflict, whereas many previous works portrayed environmental crises as primarily single ecological events. Additionally, they write that ecocritically oriented literature promotes awareness among readers regarding the interrelatedness of human lives with larger ecosystemic processes and challenges anthropocentric ideologies that contribute to ecological damage.

Human resilience is another topic that has gained considerable academic interest within ecocritical research. Research suggests that resilience may be viewed as extending far beyond physical survival to include aspects such as emotional resilience, social

cohesion, ethical decision-making, and adapting to rapidly evolving environmental contexts. Dystopian depictions of ecological disaster in fiction often display communities working to rebuild social connections in response to ecological disasters and unknown futures. Many contemporary works do not depict resilience as recovery from an ecological disaster but rather as coping with new realities resulting from ecological changes while maintaining hope and shared accountability for those changes. These interpretations reflect broader trends in environmental humanities toward coexisting with, adapting to, and stewarding environments rather than controlling them.

Recent research also indicates that climate fiction increasingly integrates ecological concerns with technological issues, capitalist issues, and political authority. Environmental disasters are depicted as results not solely of natural disasters but also of economic systems, governmental decisions, and technological intervention. Studies demonstrate that current authors portray climate change as a socially complex phenomenon which requires ethical obligation and systemic transformations rather than technological fixes. These findings demonstrate that ecocriticism has grown beyond its original environmentalist roots to include an array of disciplinary topics including sustainability, governance, environmental justice, and humanity's future.

Although ecocriticism has developed at a rapid pace since its inception, very few studies have provided specific analyses of Michelle Min Sterling's *Camp Zero* (2023). Most of the available literature focuses on known climate-fiction writers such as Margaret Atwood, Kim Stanley Robinson, Barbara Kingsolver, Richard Powers, Amitav Ghosh, etc., while much newer novels receive considerably less attention (Thompson, 2024). Moreover, most studies provide examinations of general climate fiction concepts such as climate fiction, the Anthropocene, environmental ethics, or ecological justice without offering a comprehensive evaluation of how ecological crisis is depicted in relation to human resilience in *Camp Zero*. This gap demonstrates a need for targeted research from an ecocritical framework on Sterling's work. As such, this study will attempt to fill the gap by evaluating the depiction of climate anxiety in relation to human resilience in Sterling's *Camp Zero*.

3. Methodology

Ecocriticism is the interdisciplinary examination of literature and the environment, in which various disciplines collaborate to analyze the environment and investigate potential solutions to the current environmental crisis. Ecocriticism examines the connection between humans and the natural environment in literature. It investigates the manner in which environmental issues, cultural issues related to the environment, and attitudes toward nature are conveyed and analyzed. Ecocriticism is primarily concerned with the examination of the behavior and responses of individuals in society to ecological concerns and nature. In recent years, this form of criticism has garnered significant

attention as a result of the increasing social emphasis on environmental destruction and the rapid advancement of technology. Consequently, it is a novel approach to the analysis and interpretation of literary texts that introduces novel dimensions to the field of literary and theoretical studies. Ecocriticism is a deliberately multifaceted methodology that is also referred to as "green (cultural) studies," "ecopoetics," and "environmental literary criticism.

Western thought has frequently maintained a utilitarian perspective on nature, which primarily regards it as a resource for the purpose of fulfilling human needs. In the aftermath of the eighteenth century, a number of academicians and philosophers advocated for a reevaluation of the relationship between humans and the environment, as well as their perception of nature. Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher, introduced the concept of "Deep Ecology," which underscores the fundamental interdependence of all life forms and natural features and advocates for a symbiotic and holistic worldview, as opposed to an anthropocentric one.

The primary criteria and subjects of critical analysis in older theories of literary and cultural studies were issues such as class, ethnicity, gender, and region. The late twentieth century witnessed an increase in the recognition of a novel threat: ecological disaster. The nuclear war, depletion of valuable natural resources, population expansion, the spread of exploitative technologies, the exploration and potential exploitation of space as a garbage dump, pollution, and the extinction of species are the most significant environmental issues that humanity is currently confronted with. Literary and cultural theory has initiated an essential component of academic discourse by addressing these concerns in this context. Throughout the world, a multitude of green movements have emerged, and some have even secured representation in government institutions.

This study uses a qualitative, textual analysis research methodology to evaluate the selected literary text using an ecocritical methodology. Textual analysis is common in literary research as it enables researchers to find meanings, themes, images, and ideologies within texts. Qualitative research does not use statistical methods to measure variables or test hypotheses but rather examines how individual components of the text influence the reader's interpretation of the author's intended message. For example, if you were to do a study about how literature relates to environmentalism, qualitative research would be ideal due to its ability to allow the researcher to analyze in-depth how ecological issues are presented through narration, characterization, description, symbolism, and imagery.

The principal source of data for this research project is the selected novel. The analysis will only consist of material found in the selected text; this includes the structure of the story (e.g. plot), characters, descriptions, dialogue, and symbolism. Relevant secondary sources (books, peer-reviewed journals, and scholarly studies on ecocriticism) are referenced throughout the research to provide support for the theoretical positions and

context of the literary text. While these materials will aid in placing the literary text within the realm of ecocriticism's current body of knowledge, the focus will remain on the selected novel.

This research follows the guidelines for textual analysis, which involves an objective and structured analysis of the literary work in order to identify repeating trends, themes, and messages. In order to obtain a thorough comprehension of the content of the selected novel, the selected novel has been read several times. The readings have occurred repeatedly, enabling the identification of sections of the book that depict critical ecological issues. The qualitative textual analysis methodological design utilized in this study provided flexibility and comprehensiveness when evaluating the selected novel. It allowed the investigator to uncover explicit and implicit meanings while maintaining constant awareness of the language and structural aspects of the text. Therefore, it is ideally suited for realizing the aims of this study by allowing investigators to acquire a detailed understanding of how selected novels portray ecological crisis and human resilience from an ecocritical viewpoint.

4. Analysis

An ecocritical reading of *Camp Zero* shows that in this novel, environmental degradation is caused by long-term human exploitation of the earth. Unlike in other novels, where the natural world is represented as either peaceful or restorative, Michelle Min Sterling presents environments visibly scarred by both industrial activity and climate change. In addition, the environment is presented as a narrative voice that communicates ecological imbalances through the use of damaged natural elements and the presence of pollutants. The initial representation of the sun as a "patch of red" immediately deviates from typical representations of warm and vibrant light. Instead of representing hope or renewal, the changed appearance of the sun indicates that even celestial bodies have been affected by ecological damage, and therefore climate change affects all aspects of the natural world.

In addition to illustrating a world under constant assault from air pollution, the recurring image of "fog so thick," which can be described as looking like "the tail of a brush fire," demonstrates the transformation of natural occurrences into human-created disasters. This comparison also illustrates the blurred lines between man-made and natural disasters. Fire has traditionally been representative of catastrophe; however, when used metaphorically to represent commonly occurring weather phenomena, this representation signifies that catastrophic environmental degradation is currently the norm. When examining these representations through the lens of ecocriticism, they illustrate how industrial emissions and environmental instability have altered typical climate patterns to provide a visual manifestation of ecological decline.

Additionally, through continued reference to industrialization as a primary source of environmental degradation via visually impactful illustrations in the novel, there are multiple examples of this concept being illustrated. For instance, one smokestack releasing a "black stream of smoke" serves as a vividly illustrative representation of perpetual environmental pollution. In addition to providing a visual representation of pollution, the black color of the smoke indicates contamination, toxicity, and ecological decay. The smokestack itself provides another visual representation of industrial systems that prioritize production over environmental sustainability. Historically, many have emphasized the beneficial aspects of technology. However, the novel illustrates that it can have detrimental environmental implications. From an ecocritical perspective, the smoke stack provides a representation of anthropocentrism because it serves as a symbol of humanity's belief that nature exists for humans to exploit with industrial intentions.

In addition to illustrating the anthropogenic source of environmental problems portrayed throughout the novel, the degradation of water further supports the ecological crisis portrayed in Camp Zero. Typically associated with purity, life, and regeneration, water is depicted as "brown water" coming from a faucet. This simple yet visually powerful depiction illustrates pollution and ecosystem degradation. The change in color represents the penetration of pollution into what is typically considered one of the most vital resources necessary for human existence. Ecocritical theories illustrate the interdependence of all systems within an ecosystem, and the pollution of water illustrates a larger breakdown of ecological balance. The polluted water also depicts the failure of human technological systems to preserve the natural resources necessary for human survival.

Furthermore, the loss of forests provides additional evidence supporting the author's ecological vision. The description of "a forest alive with flames" before being "reduced to ash" illustrates the extreme detrimental effects of both environmental exploitation and climate instability. Traditional associations with forests include biodiversity, ecological resilience, and the continuation of life. The transformation of "alive" to "ashes" illustrates not only physical destruction but also extinction at an ecological community level. The stark contrast between "alive" and "ashes" clearly illustrates a fast transition from ecological vitality to death in an ecosystem. The ecocritical critique illustrated by this imagery argues against human practices which contribute to deforestation and exacerbate climate-related catastrophes while also illustrating the vulnerability inherent in natural systems.

Camp Zero highlights devastating results of environmental degradation on nonhuman species. Images such as "dead fish festering on a shore" illustrate collapsed aquatic ecosystems along with the widespread effects of pollution. Since fish provide an indication of overall ecological health, their death symbolizes pollution extending beyond

landscapes to affect biodiversity. The verb "festering" increases this effect by implying decomposition and extended periods of environmental harm. Rather than simply portraying wildlife as background imagery, the story places nonhuman species as victims of human indifference, thereby providing resistance to anthropocentric views that favor human interests above those of ecological integrity.

The impact of losing our woodlands is further evidence of the authors' ecological view point. The "forest alive with flames," then reduced to "ash," presents a vivid picture of the extreme negative effects of both environmental exploitation and climate instability. Traditionally, we associate forests with biodiversity, ecological resiliency and continued life. The word "alive" used in conjunction with the word "ashes" shows a drastic shift from physical destruction to the extinction of an entire ecosystem at an ecological community level. The extreme contrast between "alive" and "ashes," demonstrates a rapid decline from ecological vitality to death in an ecosystem. This ecocritical critique of the image shows how destructive human actions are to deforestation and other forms of pollution which will lead to catastrophic climate events; it also portrays the vulnerability present within all systems.

Lastly, Camp Zero emphasizes the devastating effects of environmental degradation upon non-human species. Pictures like "dead fish rotting on a shore" demonstrate collapsing aquatic systems due to pollution, as well as the large-scale impacts of pollution. Fish serve as indicators for the overall health of an ecosystem, therefore when they die it indicates pollution has spread beyond landscapes into ecosystems affecting diversity. The use of the word "rotting" extends the damage caused by pollution beyond short-term effects and implies extended duration of environmental harm. Instead of using wildlife images to simply create a backdrop for a human-centric narrative, Camp Zero positions non-human species as victims of human apathy thus challenging anthropocentric viewpoints that prioritize human interests over the interest of ecological integrity.

Camp Zero provides an example of how ecocriticisms show that environmental degradation occurs as a result of industrial growth and development, increased reliance on fossil fuels, and the growing impact of climate change. In contrast to the idea that ecological devastation occurs suddenly as a single catastrophic event, author Michelle Min Sterling shows that environmental devastation occurs as a culmination of economic systems that value profits above sustainable use of the environment. Industrial processes and climate-driven changes shape not only natural landscapes, but also human experiences, illustrating the close relationship between human well-being and ecosystem health.

Sterling identifies one of the primary ecological issues addressed in the work as our continued reliance on the fossil-fuel-based economy. The early description of the "precarity of the oil industry" conveys instability, fragility and impending collapse in the

ability of an economy reliant on oil to provide long-term economic or environmental security. From an ecocritical standpoint, this phrase portrays the fragility of those development models reliant on the large-scale extraction of limited natural resources. As opposed to representing oil as a source of wealth, the work calls into question the sustainability of oil through highlighting both its environmental constraints, and its limitations economically.

Further evidence of rising environmental and economic costs related to extracting fossil fuels comes from Sterling's comment that it was becoming "expensive ... getting the bitumen to market". Bitumen, which is a highly carbon intensive petroleum product, serves as a symbol of our continued exploitation of the earth at a time when there are clearly escalating environmental costs to doing so. Furthermore, the focus on the increasing expense of transporting bitumen highlights more than just monetary expense; it also highlights the increasing environmental burden that results from industrial activities in fragile ecosystems. Ecocritically, the extraction and transportation of bitumen exemplify the continuous commercialization of nature, where landscapes are primarily valued for their economic potential rather than their ecological importance.

The phrase "in such an extreme climate", while seemingly unrelated to the discussion of industrial activity, adds additional layers of irony to the narrative. The same climate conditions being exacerbated by industrial emissions are making industrial operations increasingly difficult. The reciprocal nature of this relationship represents another fundamental tenet of ecocriticism: humans will create environmental outcomes that will eventually have some level of negative impact on human society itself. Therefore, climate change is presented not as a separate entity threatening human populations, but as a direct consequence of anthropogenic actions. Additionally, the work challenges the notion that advancements in technology do not exist in tandem with environmental accountability.

Additionally, industrialization is represented through changes in urban environments. Jane's studio is situated in "an industrial building" that once housed workers from a "long-shuttered" textile factory. These two settings illustrate the environmental legacies of industrial capitalism. The use of "long-shuttered" connotes decline, abandonment, and obsolescence of prior industrial systems. While factories may be seen as symbols of progress, they stand as reminders of industries that consumed vast amounts of natural resources while creating decaying physical and environmental landscapes. Ecocritically, buildings serve as monuments to unsustainable forms of economic development and their environmental consequences continue long after industrial production ceases.

The immediate environment around Jane's studio also illustrates the proximity between human existence and infrastructure used for transportation. Jane's studio "faces

the turnpike", placing human experience adjacent to highways associated with air pollution, fossil fuel usage and rapid urban expansion. It is clear in Sterling's work that even home environments are linked to unsustainable forms of industrialized development and thus illustrate that modern life exists inextricably tied to environmentally damaging forms of development.

Perhaps the greatest criticism made towards human ecological relationships throughout Camp Zero comes through its portrayal of climate change and its disastrous effects on natural ecosystems. The observation that "large patches of sea ice had disappeared" represents visible effects of global warming. Ice typically represents a stable component of polar ecosystems; however, its disappearance indicates that ecosystems' climatic balances are being rapidly disrupted. Ecologically speaking, melting ice is representative of planet-wide vulnerability and illustrates that even remote environments cannot avoid negative consequences resulting from anthropogenic climate change.

Ecological disruption does not occur solely in physical environments or ecosystems. Ecological disruption impacts all forms of nonhuman life. For example, the comment about animals having access to food sources for extended periods and migrating at times when it is difficult to predict if their route will be safe exemplifies disruptions to natural ecological systems. Migration patterns evolved over long periods of time, thus making the current migration pattern disruptions caused by climate change a major threat to the continued success of the migrations of wild animals. Ecocritics support the position that all living organisms form a web-like structure of interconnectedness with each other. Wild animal struggles demonstrate that the problems they experience result from large-scale ecological imbalances and are therefore representative of the negative impact of environmental degradation on the entire ecosystem. In addition to demonstrating that humans and nonhumans share the fate of extinction as a result of environmental degradation, Sterling presents an argument against anthropocentrism.

Camp Zero illustrates that climate change is a global event and not a local issue. Climate change has resulted in blistering summer temperatures, less precipitation, and long-term drought in the South. Therefore, there has been a complete alteration of regional climate conditions. The South's current environmental situation (i.e., water scarcity, crop failures) illustrates that the environmental crisis described in Camp Zero is a regional concern. Furthermore, the environmental crisis illustrated in Camp Zero is an economic and humanitarian concern.

Sterling reinforces her argument concerning the dangers of climate change through descriptions of wildfires, unprecedented storms, crop failures, and pervasive heat. These environmental disasters exemplify various dimensions of ecological collapse. Collectively, these environmental disasters create a world in which climate change negatively impacts all aspects of human and natural existence. Additionally, Sterling states

that “large portions” of America will be “uninhabitable.” Thus, Sterling describes the final outcome of neglecting the environment as the disappearance of habitable land itself. Environmental degradation directly dictates where people may live and how they will live in the future; thus, human civilization cannot remain separated from ecological processes.

In addition to describing ecological collapse, Camp Zero portrays the ability of human beings to exhibit resilience in the face of environmental adversity. Unlike depicting its characters as victims of climate change, the novel shows that its characters continue to adapt to changes in ecological conditions in order to preserve hope, dignity, and purpose. The author portrays resilience as a reflection of the characters' ability to endure under adverse environmental conditions while developing new survival skills to help them adapt to resource-scarce and environmentally unstable conditions. The author emphasizes that human beings' ability to resist environmental degradation includes more than just the physical ability to survive; it also includes emotional strength, mental adaptability, and the will to maintain social relationships in extreme conditions.

Additionally, Camp Zero portrays that resilience is a group effort and not simply an individual endeavor. Resilience occurs within communities when community members cooperate with one another, share responsibilities, and rebuild social relationships during periods of environmental uncertainty. At the same time, Sterling refuses to glamorize resilience by showing that adapting to environmental degradation is rarely without some personal sacrifice. While its characters continue to be threatened by the effects of climate change, they do so without giving in to feelings of despair. Ultimately, from an ecocritical standpoint, Camp Zero suggests that true human resilience develops when humans recognize their dependence upon nature and adopt practices that promote sustainability rather than degrading the environment.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, ecocritically interpreting Camp Zero shows how Michelle Min Sterling presents environmental degradation as the direct result of extended human utilization of nature and the ongoing pursuit of industrial and economic development at the expense of ecological sustainability. With the use of repeated images of polluted environments, degrading ecosystems, extreme weather conditions, and destroyed animal habitats, the novel exemplifies that climate change is an ecological fact that is happening now and is influencing all aspects of human and nonhuman existence. The ecocritical perspective of the novel is aimed at anthropocentric views in which nature is viewed as a limitless resource. The novel emphasizes the interrelatedness of the various environmental, social, and economic crises. The novel also emphasizes the resilience of human communities adapting to an increasingly unstable world by illustrating that survival will depend on technology and collective responsibility for environmental protection. Ecological collapse and human perseverance reinforce the novel's central point that

mankind's future depends on the health of the earth. Therefore, Camp Zero acts as a cautionary tale about the consequences of unsustainable environmental practices and as an appeal for increased ecological awareness.

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