

Environmental Apocalypse and Human Survival in *The Death of Grass* by John Christopher

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ABSTRACT

*Environmental crises have increasingly become a major concern as they threaten both ecological systems and human survival. Literary works often portray these concerns by imagining the consequences of environmental collapse and its impact on human behavior. This research examines the portrayal of environmental apocalypse and its impact on human survival behavior in *The Death of Grass* by John Christopher. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method and applies Greg Garrard's (2004) ecocritical concept of apocalypse to analyze the representation of ecological catastrophe and survival behavior in the novel. The findings reveal that environmental apocalypse in the novel is portrayed through three major aspects: the spread of the Chung-Li virus, the inability of human institutions to control the crisis, and the collapse of natural and food systems. Furthermore, the environmental catastrophe significantly shapes the characters' survival behavior through acts of violence, distrust, moral division, and self-preservation. The study concludes that the novel portrays environmental apocalypse not only as the destruction of nature but also as the transformation of human behavior and morality under conditions of extreme scarcity and social collapse.*

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1. Introduction

Human life is fundamentally dependent on the natural environment. Our own well-being and that of future generations depend on ecosystems (Buceta-Albillos & Ayuga-Téllez, 2025; Utari et al., 2026). Air, water, land, and other living organisms form an interconnected system that sustains human existence. However, this dependence also makes humans vulnerable when ecological systems are damaged. Environmental problems such as climate change, air pollution, deforestation, and resource depletion have increasingly been recognized as a serious threat to human survival and global stability (Mishra, 2016). In recent decades, growing environmental crises have shown that environmental collapse can endanger not only individual lives but also whole civilizations (Tso & Joyce, 2024; Sari et al., 2019; Rahman & Lewa, 2021).

Writers have long explored these environmental issues as a theme in literary works. Literature not only reflects human life but also portrays the relationship between humans and the Natural environment (Vijayalakshmi, 2025; Mahdori et al., 2025; Junaid & Andini, 2026; Weda et al., 2022). As (Buell, 1995) argues in *The Environmental Imagination*, literary works do not simply reflect environmental issues but also shape how people perceive and respond to ecological crises. Through literary narrative, readers are able to imagine the consequences of environmental destruction and reflect on the ethical and social implications of human interaction with nature. Engaging with literature allows individuals to become more educated members of society by reflecting on the nature of the environment and how characters are shaped by their surroundings (Akhter & Bhat, 2022). Therefore, literature becomes an important medium for understanding how environmental changes affect human life, especially in situations where survival is threatened.

As Nature can be seen from various perspectives, it is important to examine the literature closely to understand how Nature is portrayed (Kang, 2021; Junaid et al., 2026; Puspita et al., 2026). A fitting example of this exploration is a post-apocalyptic novel entitled *The Death of Grass* by John Christopher. This novel portrays a global ecological disaster caused by the Chung-Li virus, which destroys grass and cereal crops, leading to famine and the collapse of social order. According to (Matthews, 2016) in *What We Think About When We Think About Triffids: The Monstrous Vegetal in Post-war British Science Fiction*, the representation of plants in literature encourages readers to understand Nature not merely

as a resource for human exploitation, but as an essential part of life itself. In this way, the novel not only points to ecological catastrophe but also implicitly critiques human-centered attitudes toward the environment.

In post-apocalyptic literature, ecological catastrophe is closely linked to changes in human behavior, particularly in relation to survival. Etymologically, 'survival' comes from the Latin term *supervivere*, meaning "to continue living after." Merriam-Webster describes survival as "the continuation of life or existence" and "the act or fact of living or continuing longer than another person or thing." (Merriam-Webster, 2026). Taken together, survival refers to the act of enduring beyond expected limits. Hence, survival is not limited to only staying alive physically, but also reflects humanity's struggle to endure within those collapsing world. When natural systems fail, humans are forced to adapt to conditions of scarcity and instability (Alt, 2023). In this context, the concept of ecocriticism becomes particularly relevant.

Ecocriticism is widely recognized as a term for the study of literature and other expressive media that focus on environmental concerns (Buell et al., 2011). Through this perspective, ecocriticism focuses on the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Glottfelty & Fromm, 1996). Among the key ecocritical concepts introduced by (Garrard, 2004), including pollution, pastoral, wilderness, dwelling, animals, and the Earth, the concept of apocalypse is particularly relevant in narratives that portray ecological disaster and the collapse of civilization. Apocalyptic narratives are "radically dualistic, deterministic and catastrophic," and have historically produced extreme responses in human behavior, including what he describes as "suicidal, homicidal or even genocidal frenzies" (Garrard, 2004). Rather than describing the end of the world in a literal sense, the apocalypse trope in ecocriticism captures the end of civilization as it was known — a condition in which people may physically survive, but the social and ethical frameworks that once governed their lives do not. Therefore, the use of Garrard's ecocritical concept of apocalypse is important for examining themes of environmental collapse and understanding how humans respond to ecological disaster in their struggle for survival.

Previous studies have examined environmental themes in literature using ecocritical approaches. The first article, entitled "The Portrayal of Apocalypse in Jules Hogan's *Those They Left Behind: An Ecocritical Analysis*" by (Prabawati, 2023), examines the short story through ecocriticism, focusing on environmental issues and their impact on characters. Using Greg Garrard's framework, the analysis explores pollution, apocalypse, and the pastoral life in the story. The article argues that the story reflects humanity's harmful relationship with nature and urges readers to change their behavior to prevent ecological catastrophes.

The second article, "The Struggle to Stay Alive: A Comparative Study of the Survival Strategies in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven*" by (Tiwari & Bisht, 2024) explains that post-apocalyptic narratives commonly portray catastrophic events that create chaos, scarcity, danger, and the breakdown of social order, forcing characters to rely on different survival strategies in order to stay alive. It argues that each literary work presents survival differently, depending on nature of disaster, such as viral outbreaks or natural catastrophes. Through this analysis, the study explored the resilience of humanity, the collapse of societal values, and the persistence of hope under extreme conditions.

The third article is "Ecological Apocalypse in the Three Poems: *We Think We Are Less Foolish*, *Crossing a City Highway*, and *Epithalamia*" by (Wijaya & Wahyuni, 2020) examines three poems to explore how human actions lead to ecological disaster, using ecocriticism. The analysis shows that the poems address issues like climate change, resource depletion, and environmental imbalances, all caused by human activities. The study concludes that the ecological apocalypse is driven by human-centered thinking, which prioritizes human needs over nature. It emphasizes the importance of preserving nature and fostering a balanced relationship between humans and the Natural environment.

Despite the growing global concern over environmental degradation, the way ecological catastrophe is represented in literary works and its impact on human survival behavior remains underexplored. In particular, *The Death of Grass* by John Christopher presents a powerful representation of environmental apocalypse. Yet, limited studies have examined how such a collapse reshapes human behavior under conditions of extreme scarcity and instability. After reviewing previous studies, this research identified a gap in the analysis of how environmental crisis not only reflects ecological destruction but also influences the transformation of human survival behavior. Therefore, this study aims to examine both the portrayal of environmental apocalypse and its impact on the characters' survival behavior in *The Death of Grass*. Accordingly, this research addresses the following questions: (1) How is environmental apocalypse portrayed in *The Death of Grass*? (2) How does environmental apocalypse shape the characters' survival behavior?

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the representation of environmental apocalypse in John Christopher's *The Death of Grass*. Qualitative research is a plan or strategy detailing how the research will be conducted, specifying the approach based on the nature of the research question (Creswell, 2014). This study applies an ecocritical approach using Greg Garrard's concept of apocalypse to examine how environmental catastrophe is portrayed in the novel and how it influences characters' survival behavior. Since this study focuses on literary representation and meaning within the text, textual analysis design is used to interpret the narrative events, character actions, and environmental conditions presented in the novel. Textual analysis allows researchers to understand the language, symbols, and narrative elements within cultural and literary texts (Arya, 2020). Through this design, the study aims to show the characters' experiences within the larger context of an environmental apocalypse and survival.

The researcher is the main person collecting data by reading the novel, interpreting its meaning, and identifying key themes about the environmental apocalypse and survival. The data collection involved reading the novel carefully and analyzing its story structure and how the characters respond to the environmental apocalypse based on Greg Garrard's Ecocriticism theory. The researcher uses a note-taking strategy to organize and keep track of the data for easy reference during the analysis.

In analyzing the data, this study employs data analysis framework proposed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman. According to (Miles & Huberman, 1994), data analysis consists of three interconnected and simultaneous activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Hardani MSi et al., 2020). In this study, data reduction is done by selecting important passages from *The Death of Grass* by John Christopher that show environmental collapse and the characters' survival actions. Next, in the data display stage, the selected data are organized into categories, such as forms of environmental apocalypse and types of survival behavior, to make the analysis clearer and easier to understand. Finally, drawing conclusion involves interpreting the data by relating it to Greg Garrard's ecocritical concepts. This step helps explain how environmental collapse influences the characters' decisions and survival instincts. This analytical process enhances the precision and credibility of the study by ensuring that interpretations are systematically derived from the data and theoretically grounded (Nowell et al., 2017).

3. Results and Discussion

In this section, the researcher explores the main findings from ecocritical analysis of the novel *The Death of Grass* by referring to Greg Garrard's apocalypse concept. The story primarily follows three major characters: John, Ann, and Roger. The three of them were the ones who initiated the group to run away from famine. They faced problems and difficulties staying on the famine that will slowly kill them and their families. The following analysis describes two interrelated dimensions of the novel's ecocritical significance, which is the portrayal of environmental apocalypse and its impact on characters' survival behavior, being interpreted through Garrard's notion of apocalypse.

3.1 The Portrayal of Environmental Apocalypse

Apocalypse refers to the representation of extreme and dire conditions affecting the natural environment, including issues like climate change, environmental harm, biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and an increasing in natural disasters (Jamilah & Ayiz, 2024). Apocalypse in the novel is portrayed as an impending doom marked by the possible eradication of humanity. This doomsday emerges through both human actions and the destructive power of nature (Azizah & Sa'adah, 2017). Garrard, drawing on Stephen O'Leary, distinguishes between comic and tragic forms of apocalypse. Comic apocalypse emphasizes uncertainty, human agency, and the possibility of resolution, whereas tragic apocalypse presents catastrophe as inevitable and irreversible. In *The Death of Grass*, this tragic mode of environmental apocalypse is reflected in the spread of Chung-Li virus, the inability of human institutions to manage the crisis, and the collapse of global food and natural systems.

3.1.1 The Spread of Chung-Li Virus

The first and most direct cause of the apocalyptic environment is the Chung-Li virus itself. The early stages of the crisis can be seen in the conversation between John and Roger about the situation in Hong Kong—"Nothing official. It's supposed to be in flames. And at Hong Kong, they've had to repel attacks across the frontier." (p.12)

At first, the virus appears to be only an agricultural problem that affects rice fields in China. However, it quickly develops into a global ecological disaster that threatens human survival. Garrard adopts O'Leary's theory of tragic

apocalypse, explains that this type of apocalypse portrays catastrophe as inevitable and beyond human control. As the virus spreads, the novel increasingly shows that society is moving toward unavoidable collapse:

Data 1

"A genteel way of putting it," John said grimly. "Did you ever see those old pictures of the rabbit plagues in Australia? Wire-netting fences ten feet high, and rabbits—hundreds, thousands of rabbits—piled up against them, leapfrogging over each other until in the end either they scaled the fences or the fences went down under their weight. That's Hong Kong right now, except that it's not rabbits piled against the fence but human beings." (p.12)

The comparison dehumanizes the victims and reflects Garrard's discussion of neo-Malthusian discourse, where humanity itself becomes represented as an ecological threat. The scene also reflects the tragic mode of apocalypse because fear spreads even before the complete collapse of society occurs. Although England has not yet fallen into chaos, the image of Hong Kong foreshadows the same destruction that will eventually spread across the world. The apocalypse therefore begins psychologically before it becomes fully physical.

The scope of the apocalypse expands further when Roger explains that the virus attacks all grasses, as explained below:

Data 2

"Phase 5 is rather less discriminating. It thrives on all the Gramineae.' 'Gramineae!' Roger smiled, not very happily. 'I've only picked up the jargon recently myself. Gramineae means grasses — all the grasses.' John thought of David. "We've been lucky." 'Grasses,' he said, — that includes wheat.' 'Wheat, oats, barley, rye — that's a starter. Then meat, dairy foods, poultry. In a couple of years' time we'll be living on fish and chips — if we can get the fat to fry them in.'" (p.23)

This moment transforms the virus into a total ecological catastrophe. The destruction of all grasses means that livestock can no longer survive, and the food chain begins to break apart. This reflects Garrard's explanation that tragic apocalypse moves toward an inevitable and catastrophic conclusion. Human beings are no longer able to control the crisis because the virus attacks the very systems that sustain life.

The final impact of the virus is visualized through Roger's description of Central China, as presented in the following passage:

Data 3

"All that bare earth and clay. Do you know — in its way, it was more frightening than the famine pictures used to be?' The waiter padded up and gave them their lagers in slow and patient ritual. When he had gone, John queried: 'Frightening?' 'They frightened me. I hadn't understood properly before quite what a clean sweep the virus makes of a place. Automatically, you think of it as leaving some grass growing. If only a few tufts here and there. But it doesn't leave anything. It's only the grasses that have gone, of course, but it's surprising to realize what a large amount of territory is covered with grasses of one kind or another.'" (p.38)

The image of land without even a single blade of grass presents apocalypse as total ecological destruction. Nature no longer appears alive, but empty and barren. This reflects Garrard's idea of the "blank apocalypse," which he describes as "an eschaton without a utopia to follow." Unlike traditional apocalyptic stories that promise renewal after destruction, this world will only become an empty, fearful, and irreversible loss.

3.1.2 The Inability of Humans to Control the Crisis

The second portrayal of environmental apocalypse in *The Death of Grass* is shown through the failure of governments, scientific institutions, and political authorities to control the disaster. Instead of protecting society, these institutions worsen the crisis through secrecy, and violence.

The crisis begins with the Chinese government's refusal to admit the seriousness of the outbreak:

Data 4

"God knows. At least, they've got some warning. It was the Chinese government's unwillingness to admit they were faced with a problem they couldn't master that's got them in the worst of this mess.' Ann said: 'How did they possibly imagine they could keep it a secret?' John shrugged. 'They had abolished famine by statute — remember? And then, things looked easy at the beginning. They isolated the virus within a month of it hitting the rice-fields. They had it neatly labelled — the Chung-Li virus.'" (p.13)

Although the government successfully isolated the virus at first, it prioritized maintaining political image over transparency. Officials believed they could solve the crisis privately while continuing to present themselves as a nation that had "abolished famine by statute." Garrard argues that apocalyptic rhetoric often divides society into moral oppositions between responsible figures and "faceless bureaucrats." In the novel, the government becomes exactly this kind of distant institutional force whose secrecy allows the crisis to grow worse.

The ultimate institutional collapse appears through the revelation of Welling's plan to bomb Britain's own cities:

Data 5

"On learning of this situation, Welling put forward a plan which was eventually approved by the Cabinet, all of whom must share responsibility for it. Welling himself became Prime Minister for the purpose of carrying it out. The plan was that British aeroplanes should drop atomic and hydrogen bombs on the country's principal cities. It was calculated that if half the country's population were murdered in this way, it might be possible to maintain a subsistence level for the rest." (p.93)

The government decides that half the population must die so the remaining citizens can survive on limited food supplies. At this stage, the state no longer functions as a protector of society but as an agent of destruction. The proposal resembles the neo-Malthusian "triage" principle discussed by Garrard, where certain populations are abandoned so others may survive. At this point in the novel, the apocalypse has completely destroyed moral and political order.

3.1.3 The Collapse of Natural and Food Systems

The final portrayal of environmental apocalypse appears through the destruction of agricultural systems and the collapse of food distribution. The collapse first becomes visible internationally after the existence of Phase 5 is leaked to the public:

Data 6

"The news of Phase 5 of the Chung-Li virus leaked out during the summer, and was followed by widespread rioting in those parts of the Far East that were nearest to the focus of infection. The Western world looked on with benevolent concern. Grain was shipped to the troubled areas, where armoured divisions were needed to protect it. Meanwhile, the efforts to destroy the virus continued in laboratories and field research stations all over the world." (p.27)

Food is no longer treated as a humanitarian necessity, but as a militarized resource that must be defended through violence. The tragic nature of the apocalypse becomes visible because society no longer believes the crisis can be solved collectively. Fear and violence replace solidarity, showing how ecological collapse also destroys human relationships and social order. The crisis soon expands into a global civilizational collapse:

Data 7

"As autumn settled into winter, the news from the East steadily worsened. First India, then Burma and Indo-China relapsed into famine and barbarism. Japan and the eastern states of the Soviet Union went shortly afterwards, and Pakistan erupted into a desperate wave of Western conquest which, composed though it was of starving and unarmed vagabonds, reached into Turkey before it was halted. Those countries which were still relatively unaffected by the Chung-Li virus, stared at the scene with a barely credulous horror. The official news accentuated the size of this ocean of famine, in which any succour could be no more than a drop, but avoided the question of whether food could in fact be spared to help the victims." (p.30)

The phrase “ocean of famine” portrays starvation as overwhelming and uncontrollable. Garrard argues that apocalyptic rhetoric often transforms complex environmental problems into a single overwhelming crisis. In the novel, the Chung-Li virus becomes the central force behind famine, social disorder, migration, and the breakdown of governments across the world. This strengthens the tragic mode of apocalypse because the disaster expands continuously without any real possibility of recovery.

3.2 The Impact of the Apocalypse on the Characters' Survival Behavior

The need to survive is a basic human instinct. Every aspect of one's personality comes from this single need, shaping behavior in ways that allow individuals to endure circumstances threatening their continued existence. Humans and nature also share a deeply interconnected relationship, in which human actions can either preserve or destroy the environment, while nature itself possesses the power to force human to adapt and struggle for survival (Azizah & Sa'adah, 2017). In *The Death of Grass*, this drive is tested at every level, psychological, social, and moral. Garrard explains that apocalypse contains a form of social psychology characterized by paranoia and violence, extreme moral dualism, and the tendency to canonize those considered as “believers.” As they live within the apocalyptic condition, the characters gradually embody these characteristics through acts of violence, distrust, moral division, and survival-driven actions.

The earliest transformation in survival behavior appears through David's decision to stop planting grain crops:

Data 8

“They must be confident things are going to be all right.” David said grimly: ‘They can be as confident as they like. Next spring I'm planting potatoes and beet.’ ‘No wheat, barley?’ ‘Not an acre.’ (p.32)

Unlike the others, David no longer trusts institutional optimism about defeating the virus. His decision demonstrates what Garrard describes as the apocalyptic believer, someone to whom “the veil of history is rent” (Garrard, 2004, p. 86). David recognizes the coming collapse before others fully understand it, and his behavior changes accordingly. His preparation is not driven by hope for recovery, but by the expectation of irreversible ecological disaster. Garrard further argues that apocalyptic thinking is inherently “proleptic,” meaning that future catastrophe already shapes present action (Garrard, 2004, p. 86). David's farming decisions illustrate this perfectly. The apocalypse has not yet fully arrived, but it already determines his behavior.

The narrowing of social responsibility appears more explicitly through Roger's statement:

Data 9

“We're in a new era,” Roger said. ‘Or a very old one. Wide loyalties are civilized luxuries. Loyalties are going to be narrow from now on, and the narrower the fiercer. If it were the only way of saving Olivia and Steve, I'd man one of those planes myself.’ Revolted, John said: ‘No!’ ‘When I spoke about murdering bastards,’ Roger said, ‘I spoke with admiration as well as disgust. From now on, I propose to be one where necessary, and I very much hope you are prepared to do the same.’ (p.49)

Roger openly rejects broad social responsibility and replaces it with loyalty to a small survival group. This reflects Garrard's description of apocalypticism as producing “extreme moral dualism that divides the world sharply into friend and enemy.” The group now defines who deserves protection, while outsiders become potential threats. Roger therefore accepts violence and selfishness as necessary ways to survive in the new world created by the apocalypse.

This mentality appears when John decides to leave London without warning others:

Data 10

“John said: ‘I don't know. I don't know anything, except that we've got to save ourselves and save the children.’ ‘Save them for what?’ ‘We can work that out later. Things seem brutal now — leaving without saying a word to all the others who don't know what's going to happen — but we can't help it. When we get to the valley, it will be different. We shall have a chance of living decently again.’ ‘Decently?’ Things will be hard, but it may not be a bad life. It will be up to us what we make of it. At least, we shall be our own masters. It will no longer be a matter of living on the sufferance of a State that cheats and bullies and swindles its citizens and, at last, when they become a burden, murders them. ‘No, I suppose not.’” (p.54)

John recognizes that his actions are “brutal,” yet he still considers them necessary. The apocalypse therefore narrows the characters’ moral concerns until they care only about those closest to them. Apocalyptic situations often divide people sharply into insiders and outsiders. In the novel, this division becomes stronger as resources become scarce and social order collapses.

As the apocalypse progresses, violence gradually becomes accepted as a necessary way for survival.

Data 11

“She shivered. ‘Surely there’s another way of getting out?’ He stared ahead into the dim shadowy road. ‘I can’t think of one.’ She looked at him. ‘You aren’t the same person, are you? The idea of quite calmly planning murder... it’s more grotesque than horrible.’” (p.64)

The significance of this moment lies in Ann’s recognition that violence is becoming ordinary. The word “grotesque” is important because it suggests that violence is no longer shocking, but disturbingly familiar. Garrard explains that apocalyptic environments are often shaped by paranoia and violence. John does not become violent because he enjoys cruelty, but because the apocalyptic environment gradually reconstructs violence as rational behavior. This process reaches its clearest expression when Roger declares:

Data 12

“You’re not starting to develop scruples, are you, Johnny? Because if you are, then the best thing you can do with Pirrie’s rifle is shoot yourself. I didn’t like the way those bastards down there treated us, but I have to admit they had the right idea. It’s force that counts now. Anybody who doesn’t understand that has got as much chance as a rabbit in a cage full of ferrets.’ Only this morning, John thought, his reasons might have been based on scruples; and along with those scruples would have gone uncertainty and reluctance to impose his own decision on the others.” (p.103)

Roger’s statement explain that society is no longer governed by morality, law, or compassion, but by strength alone. Garrard warns that tragic apocalypticism tends to “polarise responses” and encourage “confrontation and even violence” (2004, p. 105). Roger becomes the clearest example of this polarisation.

This quotation below is the final closure of the moral world to a single group and a single objective.

Data 13

‘No,’ John said. ‘You were right There’s no place for pity now.’ (p.145)“He shook his head. ‘I have to do what’s best for us. There are millions of others — these are only the ones we see.’ ‘Charity is for those we see.’ ‘I told you — charity, pity... they come from a steady income and money to spare. We’re all bankrupt now.’” (p.146)

Here, compassion is treated as a luxury that only exists under stable social conditions. John says that while refusing to help starving strangers and abandoned children they encounter on the road. Garrard’s ultimate argument (p. 107) is that “the real moral and political challenge of ecology may lie in accepting that the world is not about to end, that human beings are likely to survive even if Western-style civilisation does not. Only if we imagine that the planet has a future, after all, are we likely to take responsibility for it.” John’s rejection of pity represents the destruction of moral. The environmental apocalypse, therefore, destroys not only ecosystems but also the ethical structures that once held society together. More importantly, Ann later notices that this mentality is also changing John:

Data 14

“I’m a killer, too.’ He glanced at her. ‘A lot of people are, who never thought they would be.’ ‘I don’t need reminding. Pirrie’s different.’ John shrugged. ‘We need him — until we get to Blind Gill.’ ‘Don’t keep saying that!’ ‘It’s true.’ ‘John.’ Their eyes met. ‘It’s the way he’s changing you that’s so dreadful. Making you into a kind of gangster boss — the children are beginning to be scared of you.’ He said grimly: ‘If anything has changed me, it’s been something more impersonal than Pirrie — the kind of life we have to lead. I’m going to get us to safety, all of us, and nothing is going to stop me. I wonder if you realize how well we’ve done to get as far as this?’” (p.158)

The apocalypse, therefore, reshapes survival behavior not only externally, but psychologically. Violence changes how the characters think, feel, and define themselves.

Based on the discussion above, the environmental apocalypse defines as not only as the destruction of nature, but also the collapse of human morality. Through Garrard's concept of tragic apocalypse, the novel presents ecological catastrophe as an irreversible force that changes both the physical environment and human behavior. As food systems collapse and institutions fail, the characters increasingly abandon compassion, collective responsibility, and moral in favor of survival-driven violence and self-preservation.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that *The Death of Grass* by John Christopher portrays environmental apocalypse as an ecological disaster that destroys natural systems, food supplies, and human social order. Through the spread of the Chung-Li virus, which wipes out all grasses and cereal crops, the novel illustrates how environmental destruction can lead to mass famine, the collapse of governments, and the breakdown of civilization. By applying Greg Garrard's concept of apocalypse, this study finds that the environmental catastrophe in the novel is portrayed as tragic because the destruction is shown as unavoidable and irreversible.

Environmental collapse significantly affects the characters' survival behavior throughout the novel. Threats of starvation, death, and social collapse make the characters more selfish, distrustful, and increasingly willing to accept violence as a means of survival. Moral values such as compassion, solidarity, and social responsibility gradually disappear as the characters prioritize the safety of their own families and groups. Thus, the novel not only portrays the physical impacts of environmental crisis, but also demonstrates how ecological disaster can transform human psychology and morality.

This study contributes to literary and environmental studies by offering an understanding of how environmental apocalypse in literature represents the connection between ecological destruction, survival instincts, and changes in human morality. It offers readers a perspective on how literary works portray the impact of environmental crisis on both society and individual behavior, particularly in post-apocalyptic narratives. Nevertheless, the analysis is limited to a single literary work and mainly focuses on Greg Garrard's concept of apocalypse in ecocriticism. Future studies may broaden this discussion by comparing *The Death of Grass* with other post-apocalyptic novels or by exploring perspectives from another environmental studies, psychology, or socio-political approaches to ecological disaster.

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