



Symbolism of nature in select American fiction

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Abstract

There are plenty of works in the American Fiction relating to Eco-criticism. *The Lorax* and *The Giving Tree* are widely famous in the literary world. *The Lorax* is written by Dr. Suess which showed the cycle of life and how taking one thing away from Mother Nature has a chain of events that follow closely behind it. In this book author tries to give a huge reminder for the part we play in the world. *The Giving Tree* is written by Shel Silverstein describes selfless love as beautiful, even if it's taken to an extreme or could the story even be a warning about greedily using Mother Nature's resources. These writers' fine sense of ecological awareness and consciousness, their works can be perceived as a powerful tool for eco-critical reading. Nature is the main protagonist that shapes and moulds man towards self-realization. The present paper aims at evaluating the narratives of *The Lorax* and *The Giving Tree* focusing on the aspects of symbolism of Nature.

Keywords: eco-criticism, deforestation, pollution, symbolism

Introduction

"We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our Future."

- George Bernard Shaw

It has been argued that unless something is done urgently to save it, the whole world will be destroyed. The degradation of the environment should be included in planning for the remedies for a better world and free from pollutions, global warming, green house gases, depletion of Ozone layer, diseases, flood, draught, deforestation, extinction of species and other environmental crisis.

It is about protection of our environment because we won't have a society if we destroy the environment. So this is the question of the whole existence of human kind. The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it. *The Lorax* teaches us that instead of viewing ourselves as separate from and superior to the rest of nature, we must see ourselves as part of a vast system. There is strong need for an eco friendly attitude and environmental awareness.

The Giving Tree is teaching us that literature cannot be approached in a way that sets man and nature in opposition to each other. Instead, it must be approached in a way that examines man as part of the ecosystem: he is neither a master nor a slave to it, but simply one part of an intricate system.

Eco - Criticism

Eco-criticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Eco-criticism is enabling us to analyze and criticize about the world in which we live, and about human's relationship with the world and with the other fellow inhabitants. Most of all, eco-criticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis.

Due to increasing global environmental crisis, issues concerning the relationship between humankind and the environment have become of paramount importance in order to build a new attitude on the part of the human being based on sustainability and respect. The urgency which surrounds environmental issues today is consequences in the realization that we might have reached the point of no return in our abuse of the environment, and that it is time we reconsidered our behaviors and beliefs.

All the readers need an eye to read the text with an eco-critical approach which is one of the ways to fight for the world in which they live. It maintains that literature may be approached in a way that examines man as part of an eco system and man being the first in the hierarchy has to protect and preserve the environment.

These novels present this interconnectedness very well. These works are nature oriented and tells humanity to go back to nature. Therefore, the writer holds great significance in ushering eco-critical or environmental awareness and beckons modern man to aim for sustainable environment.

Symbolism

The Lorax

In the book *Lorax* a tone of darkness can be measured in narrative. This is a story of Suess that pretty much just lays everything out for all to see without much masking. By the end, the reader has all the information the writer gives which is necessary for readers to come to a conclusion where one question arises for sure that are you for or against environment protection? The question about the nature of the Once-ler lingers: is he a complicated antagonist whose remorse carrying perhaps, but not definitely, too late to undo the gross violation of his impact on the environment or is he just a cartoon villain representing the ill-informed left wing of humanity who simply do not get just how essential and important business is to the planet?

Once-ler, the figure who has taken what was once a lush forest and is now a polluted wasteland. He is merely the Suessian ideal of the big, bad, greedy corporation. And yet, by the end, he is truly remorseful. He is seeking redemption. He is hoping for the comeback of the Lorax and all the wonderful creatures which his actions above away. What makes *The Lorax* one of the best books ever written by Dr. Seuss is precisely this aspect.

The Once-ler is pursuing his goal of business and that's not necessarily evil in and of itself. It is Once-ler's concerted desire to ignore the negative consequences of his pursuit of profit that makes him a metaphor for greed gone evil.

The symbolic meaning of the Lorax is directly expressed in the story. He is not the voice of the Once-ler, but the voice of that which cannot speak. Or, more precisely, the Lorax is the symbolic incarnation on environmental activism. Thneed is the story's symbol for every ridiculer item that nobody actually needs, but merely is made through the power of marketing to want that comes at the price of destroying some aspect of the natural world which is not just easily replaced. The examples would, of course, be too numerous to mention.

The Truffula trees are the symbol of everything that has gone extinct due to the intervention of man. The Brown Bar-ba-loots: the bear-like creatures are a symbol of the unforeseen effects of extinction. Because of the deforestation the Bar-ba-loots and other creatures suffer. After all, both creatures – man and animal – can be described as fauna that have done their fair share of "looting" flora to the point of extinction, but how many view the Bar-ba-loots as villainous and how many view the Once-ler in that way?

The Giving Tree

There are many themes in this book but one of the popular theme in this book has been represented is the relationship between the Earth and Humans. The tree would represent the Earth and the boy would represent the Humans.

In this days and age, humans tend to take and take and take form the earth without caring how they are affecting the earth. Overall, *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein, is an artfully crafted children's book that details the act of selfless giving and represent the relationships that all people have.

One of the major symbols of the story is the crown of leaves. With this crown upon his head, he proceeds to play a game in which he pretends he is king of the forest. This self – situation by the boy as king is a symbolic foreshadowing of a series of events which lead may readers to castigate the boy as utterly selfish in his relationship with the tree.

We can see Tree as an unconditional lover when the boy is a very conditional based on selfish desires. The Apples are also symbolic as the boy asks the tree for money, but since she has none, she suggests he takes his apples and sell them to raise money. The significance of the symbolism of the apples is shifted from an allegorical interpretation in which the tree represents the boy's mother to one in which the story is metaphor for the environmental movement. The apples here represent the capitalist exploitation of natural resources without regard to the environmental impact on those resources.

The boy may enjoy a short-term gain with the money earned by selling the apples, but at the expense of long-term appreciation of the other joys the tree can bring. Another popular allegorical interpretation of the story is one focusing on environmentalism in

which the tree is symbolic of all the planet's natural resources which are exploited by selfish human beings for short – term goals and needs.

Conclusion

Today, due to heavy industrialization, carbon emission, pollution, etc. the environment has become a burning issue. The recent reports revealed that internet videos and associated cloud services, information and communication technologies, aviation industries etc. have a major role in the emission of carbon dioxide that are detrimental to human health. It seems that it's right time to burn the candle at both ends to save humanity by protecting environment.

Changing the world is easier said than done but its duty of mankind to undo the harm done to an ecosystem. The paper is just tossing around an idea to all who are eco – sensitive and wants to do something for the universe. It's time to draw the line to age long explanations of resources and kick start a new era of eco-friendly and sustainable environmental practices. Thus, the paper would be handy to ignite the minds that are on the same page regarding eco-critical perspective.

As most of the works of these writers illustrate that if we want to preserve the nature, we need to love the world as our own. Environmental knowledge is not enough for inculcating a sense of respect and responsibility, love and empathy are more important when it comes to preserving the environment.

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