



Extended Abstract

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Representation of the Elements of Environmental Conservation in the Novel *Ghosts of the Burnt Forest*

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Introduction

Eco-criticism is an interdisciplinary approach in literary studies that examines the interactions between humans and nature in literary works. This approach, particularly in children's and young adults' literature, plays a crucial role in raising environmental awareness and sensitizing the younger generation to environmental concerns. *Ghosts of the Burnt Forest*, a novel by Mahdi Rajabi, is one of the prominent examples of young adult literature that explores eco-critical themes and aims to depict the reciprocal effects between humans and nature through its narrative.

Given the increasing environmental crises in the contemporary world, analyzing the role of literature in enhancing children's and adolescents' environmental awareness has become even more significant. In this regard, studying literary works that emphasize human-nature interactions can contribute to creating effective educational and pedagogical foundations. This study aims to analyze this novel from an eco-critical perspective and to represent the elements of environmental conservation within its narrative.

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Methodology

This study employs qualitative content analysis with a descriptive-analytical approach. Data were collected through note-taking from library sources and analyzed using theoretical frameworks of eco-criticism. Comparative analysis with other relevant literary works was also considered to strengthen the findings. Additionally, this study examines narrative elements, environmental symbols, and the ways in which eco-critical messages are conveyed within the text.

Discussion

Analysis of *Ghosts of the Burnt Forest* indicates that the novel conveys its environmental messages to young readers through four key elements:

1. Consequences of technological dominance over nature: The novel vividly illustrates the adverse effects of urban expansion, deforestation, and irresponsible exploitation of natural resources, highlighting resulting crises such as climate change and habitat destruction. Through its narrative, the novel warns young readers about the irreversible consequences of unbalanced technological development.
2. Conflict between knowledge and superstition in environmental conservation: Through character development and storytelling, the novel examines the challenges communities face in addressing environmental issues and illustrates how superstitious beliefs can hinder effective conservation efforts. This section emphasizes the importance of scientific education and raising awareness among adolescents regarding environmental impacts.
3. Role of character naming in conveying environmental messages: The author reinforces the connection between human identity and nature by selecting character names derived from nature (e.g., Oak and Toska). Comparative studies of similar literary works suggest that the symbolic use of natural elements in children's and young adult literature significantly fosters a sense of environmental responsibility.
4. Role of atmosphere and setting in reinforcing environmental messages: The novel's detailed descriptions of natural settings and character interactions with the environment encourage readers to empathize with nature and develop an eco-centric perspective. By employing immersive world-building, the novel underscores the significance of preserving natural resources.

The analysis of this novel reveals how the author utilizes narrative elements to convey environmental messages. The use of natural symbols such as the oak tree and the tawny owl reflects the deep influence of cultural beliefs on environmental attitudes. Additionally, the conflict between characters representing scientific knowledge (such as Toska) and those adhering to superstitions illustrates contemporary challenges in environmental policy implementation. Furthermore, spatial descriptions and environmental imagery effectively create a sense of connection between readers and nature.

Conclusion

Findings indicate that *Ghosts of the Burnt Forest* serves as a successful example of eco-critical literature for children and adolescents, effectively conveying environmental concepts in an engaging and tangible manner. By emphasizing the negative effects of unsustainable development, critiquing technological dominance over nature, and highlighting the importance of scientific knowledge over superstition, the novel contributes to enhancing environmental awareness among young readers. Character naming and environmental setting descriptions also serve as effective techniques in transmitting these messages. Overall, this novel can be considered a valuable model for environmental education through children's and young adult literature.

Keywords: eco-criticism, *Ghosts of the Burnt Forest*, environmental conservation

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