

Daring as A Natural Value in "Where the Sidewalk Ends" and "A Light in the Attic" by Shel Silverstein

Diana Budi Darma
Universiats Negeri Surabaya
Surabaya, Indonesia
dianabd@unesa.ac.id

Mamik Tri Wedawati
Universiats Negeri Surabaya
Surabaya, Indonesia
mamikwedawati@unesa.ac.id

Abstract—Children literature arrived to the trend where humans exist as an actor who is superior among others. Shel Silversteins' Collected Poems in *A Light in the Attic* (1981) and *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1974) are two representations of different perspective of children literature that consist of provocative meanings; more influential comparing to traditional one. The research will focus on how the interpretation of children's texts representing human's perspectives and how these perspectives reveal ideological symbols in story books. Answering these phenomena, descriptive qualitative research was done to 262 titles of poems by categorizing, collecting information, and documenting. Part of environmental values, the concept of antropocentrism is being used to get clear description and understanding to the problems. The themes of daring, fantasy, death, and creation are humans' perspectives which are employed to interpret the text of children literature. Two qualities of maanhood as the representation of ideological symbols are logical and illogical facts, since daring and fantasy are logical facts, while death and creation are part of illogical facts.

Keywords—*antropocentrism; logical; illogical.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Children's literature has gained a great progression from simple traditional values to contemporary expressions. From this vast information, recently certain works have been representing superiority. Therefore, the major problem is broken down into detailed questions:

1. How interpreted children's texts are representing human's perspectives?
2. How these perspectives reveal ideological symbols in story books?

Nowadays, children's literature has become a trend in literature. Controversies were viable through comparing fantasy and contemporary ideas. Children's texts contains of dictation from the environment especially people's perspectives, which was uttered by Ferguson that the growing perspepective between traditional realism and early contemporary fantasy was further boosted by the advocacy of such an influential writers as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, and Charles Lamb, who argued in favor

of the child's right to stories that fostered their imaginative potential; a movement that found strong opposition from Rationalists who worried such flights of fancy were inherently disadvantageous to both the moral and spiritual growth of a child. [1] Both manhood and childhood must aware of expectation of children's books goes beyond traditional values, which was caused of human domination in nature. Moreover the domination among nature by human including the its ecosystem. [2].

Meanings are divided into two perspectives, which are nature destruction and human dominance. Meanwhile, literacy as a standard for understanding life obliged writers to produce varied literary works in fulfilling society's expectation. Books were not only categorized in genres but also ranked into simplicity levels. Therefore, superiority of human beings has been above nature and causes non holistic feature of a text, which are characteristics of children's books. [1]

Shel Silversteins' poems are bold and substantial. He opens a different side of children text and one his characteristic was expressing provocative meanings. Traditionally, stories were told in motherly nuance to nurture young readers in understanding love. Silverstein's works were exposing opposite values that were intrigued for readers. This transition is an example of human's perspective of nature, which meanings were constructed to convey strong intention in life [3].

This phenomenon identifies human's dominance through *A Light in the Attic* (1981) and *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1974) by Shel Silverstein. His collections of poems were not published recently but meanings were illustrating present issues. Many interpretations of the poems were expressing adventurous, daring and freedom by applying simple dictions. Therefore, the purpose of this study is identifying human's perspective in interpreting text and identifying the ideology symbols that are chosen in building the meanings.

Childhood is a realm that provides resources for environmentalism. Forty years ago nature and human beings were separated in interpreting life. This phase has been a great interest for researches in understanding ethical environments. In certain points, childhood is compared to adulthood to explore and analyze ethical matters. [4].

Nevertheless, issues on nature destruction have revealed human role in the situation. Human being known as the center of the environment has been a discussion in literature such as Karl Marx, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, etc. [4] Superiority is introduced through class society, truth and language. Therefore, power is created through society and texts that controls others by human dominance.

Presently, Anthropocentrism is concept that specifically positioned human being as the center of the universe [4]. This concept emerged because manhood created disability in nature. Practically, writers are aware how to document and motivate readers in the trend. Several of the topics that are favorable are multiculturalism, translation and education studies.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

A. Anthropocentrism

Environmental values have been introducing two contemporary concepts, which are Eco criticism and anthropocentrism. After a controversial statement from Manning "...Christian teaching illicitly placed humans in a cosmologically privileged position, one in which we were seen as a created fundamentally separate from and superior to the rest of the natural world" [5], human beings have become the center of the universe whereas there are harmonization with the nature [6]. Ideas and creations have been evidence of their dominance. Later was considered as the main cause of nature destruction since 1967. The hierarchy of man and nature was defined through man's actions toward environment. This approach has been a discussion, which human being has taken an important role in its development. Those that recognize and admit the control of human being toward nature would consider that power and dominance influence their surroundings. Moore states that anthropocentrism considers human beings to be the most important life form, and other forms in life to be important only to the extent that they affect humans or can be useful to humans [7]. Koprnia argues that as civilized Man's power over the natural world has grown, so by the same token has his blindness to the wonder of the biosphere's existence as well as to the grievous violence he has unleashed within it [4]. This statement defined the supremacy of human toward non-human.

The figure below will be given the description what anthropocentrism is since it's still related with biocentrism, ecocentrism, and universal consideration. Anthropocentrism, as the human beings whom the only one has moral than other human; all other beings and wholes matter for their instrumental value to humans [4].

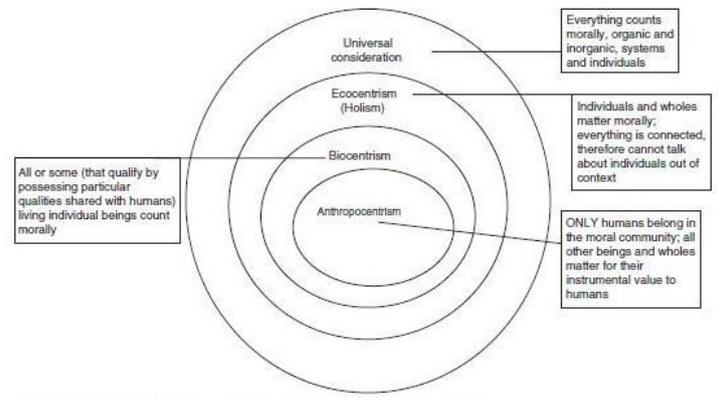


Fig 1. Moral community expansion across prominent theories in environmental ethics.

Anthropocentrism which means human-centered, but in its most relevant philosophical form it is the ethical belief that humans alone possess intrinsic value. In contra perspective, all other beings hold value only in their ability to serve humans, or in their instrumental value. From an anthropocentric position, humans possess direct moral standing because they are ends in and of themselves; other things (individual living beings, systems) are means to human ends. In one sense, all ethics are anthropocentric, for arguably humans alone possess the cognitive ability to formulate and recognize moral value. This characteristics places humans at the center of whatever ethical system we devise, and this moral reality drives some researchers to claim that anthropocentrism is the only logical ethical system available to reader. But many other researchers argue this circumstance is an ethically uninteresting fact, not a limiting factor in the type of ethical system people devise to help readers determine good and bad, right and wrong. Readers can accept the limitation of human lens and still make choices about where people find value in the world. Because they are moral agents, the same cognitive ability that allows them to see the world in comparison to themselves also allows them to treat with respect, or value as ends in themselves, other things. People can refer to this conception of a human-centered world in which human cognition determines people ethical approach as ontological anthropocentrism. Alternately, the definition of anthropocentrism that understands humans as the sole possessors of intrinsic value is ethical anthropocentrism. [8].

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Methodology

The study is a Descriptive Qualitative research that its method was practicing close readings, which sources were taken from two books entitled *Where the Sidewalk Ends* and *A Light in The Attic*. These two titles of books consist of 262 titles of poems. There are 135 poems *A Light in The Attic* and 127 poems in *Where the Sidewalk Ends*.

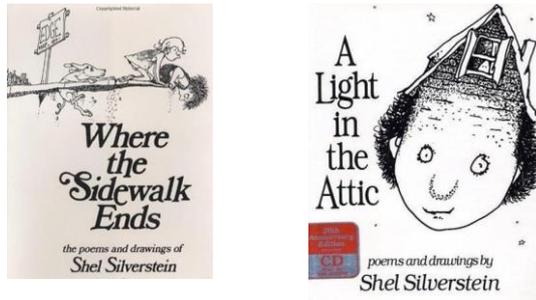


Fig 2. *Where the Sidewalk Ends* and *A Light in The Attic*

There are three steps to understand thoroughly about two collections of poems. This process was a preliminary action that conducted to categorize details to construct themes. The details will be taken from words or vocabularies on 262 poems that represent the meaning and characteristics of the themes that have been decided, they are daring, fantasy, death, and creation. Furthermore, this initial phase is to collect information not only each poems but also dictions and illustrations that supports a characteristic.

Second phase was primarily documenting data through two categories. They are logic and illogical facts, which indicated human superiority in the data. To emphasize on dominance, extrinsic elements or meanings were interpreted.

The last action was relating to expressions, which included dictions and sounds in a poem. Therefore, analysis was done mostly by interpreting to produce meanings in order to answer the research questions. As a closing, a conclusion will be given to sum up all findings.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Themes

Where the Sidewalk Ends, which consisted of 127 poems, and *A Light in the Attic*, which consisted of 135 poems, were intended to enlighten young readers in understanding life. Moreover, Silverstein’s creativity was introducing qualities that were more of contemporary ideas, which is strongest than others.

Daring or vulgar expressions were naturally embedded in his poems that as at the same time characterized Silverstein’s works. Baughan “...some military policemen, who kept a special eye on him, found Silverstein wearing silly argyle socks with his uniform rather than the regulation solid-color socks and threatened to haul him into be disciplined.” [9] Furthermore, Silverstein as a modern poet made his poems “realistic flavour” [10]. He combines realistic and natural elements in creating poems.

Daring expressions were emerged through natural phases in manhood, which include childhood, rebellious and vulgar meanings. Furthermore, they were interpreted also by comparing righteous values, modern and traditional values. In

the process of analyzing, these meanings provide a vast understanding in humanity through verbal and illustrative evidences.

Fantasy, which is essential in story books, has evolved to encompass a wide variety of ideas that may employ magic, spiritual, paranormal, supernatural, or fairy tale components to create vivid and stylized stories. Moreover, imaginary events allow young reader a chance to reflect upon difficult or complex real world issues from the safe stance of exploring these speculative and make-believe universes from their own home. Leona W. Fisher said that fantasies as “represent the child’s that need to come to a personal understanding of deep and questioning about time, God, and moral behavior—but in a context that is neither institutionalized nor individualistic.” [1].

After categorizing Silverstein poems into two major themes, additional themes that also relates to them were included to support and emphasize the findings. Gradually, themes were categorized into four sub themes, which were daring/vulgar, fantasy, death and creation.

TABLE I. TABLE OF THEMES

No	Work/Title	Daring	Fantasy	Death	Creation
1	<i>Where the Side walk ends</i>	33	9	3	1
2	<i>The Light in the attic</i>	39	27	1	5

The table above identified through the amount of themes that were functioned. The highest category was Daring. In detail *Where the Sidewalk Ends* Daring 33, 9 titles were Fantasy, 3 titles were Death, and Creation with only 1 title. Continuously, *The Light in the Attic* presented 39 titles of Daring, 27 titles of Fantasy, 1 of Death, and 5 titles of Creation.

By specifying sub themes, further analysis was conducted to support findings on human beings qualities that produce daring meaning. Data below were done initially by selecting expressions that relates directly of human being or logical meanings. To emphasize on the first quality other supportive meanings, which were under illogical facts, were altered.

TABLE 2. Facts

No	Work /Title	Logical Facts		Illogical facts	
		Daring	Creation	Death	Fantasy
1	<i>Where the Side walk ends</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's Dark in Here - The Loser - Listen to the Must - Early Bird - One Inch Tall - Stone Telling - The Farmer Chicken - Us - Hector the Collector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - True Story - Double-Tale Dog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lester - Peanut-Butter Sandwich - Fred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Me and My Giant - Invention - Sleeping Sardines - Snowman - Santa and the Reindeer - he Yipiyuk

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For Sale - Enter this - Deserted House - Dumping Rope - Who - The Crocodile's - Toothache - Oh Have You - Heard - Point of View - Me Stew - Paul Bunyan - With this Mouth - full of Food - The Worst - The Land of - Happy - If the World - was Crazy 			
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The - Light - in the - attic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How not to - have to dry - the dishes - Baby Sitter - Rock n'Roll - Band - Fancy Dive - Mr. Smeds - and Mr. - Spats - Rockabye - Ticklish Tom - Strange Wind - One Two - Tusk Tusk - Outside or - Underneath - Hula Eel - Who Ordered - the Broiled - Face - The Man in - the Iron Pail - Mask - Quick Trip - Playball - Examination - Fear - Catching - Skin Stealer - Ladies First - Clarence - Pie Problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moon- - Catchi - n' Net - The - Drago - n of - Grindl - y - Backw - ard - Bill - Home - work - Machi - ne - Goolo - o 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little - Abigai - l and - the - Beauti - ful - Pony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hammoc - k - Picture - Puzzle - Piece - Always - Springkl - e Pepper

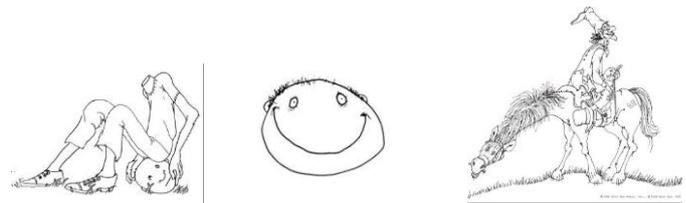


Fig 3. *The Looser, The Land and Happy, Backward and Bill*

By combining the three types of data, it was able to collect findings on Silverstein’s poems. Themes based on the sum were describing Daring expressions or realistic flavour to convey contemporary ideas. To put in details dictions such as selling people, I am a dope, I erased her, etc. Moreover, these obvious meanings were considered a natural elements in today’s society.

Obscene dictions and meanings continued to developed not only on Daring as a theme but also become concrete by describing through logical facts. By involving concrete meanings, traditional values, which was the foundation of poems were shifting into different values or modern qualities.

Qualities of dominance that refer to human characteristics become basic meanings in most of Silverstein’s works. Moreover, stories as a reference for young readers tend to adjust with their contexts.

V. CONCLUSION

As the central of the universe, human beings have been classified with its superiority having moral values including power among other human beings. This phenomenon existed in *A Light in the Attic* (1981) and *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1974) by Shel Silverstein. Furthermore, works were given categories (daring, fantasy, death, and creation) and facts (logical and illogical) to recognize dominance. Daring dominates the ideas presented in 1st and 2nd; following it were Fantasy, Creation and Death. The meaning being interpreted will give a complete understanding through concrete meanings, which are elaborated through are logical and illogical facts. Afterward, Daring expressions were evidences or findings that characterized She Silverstein’s poems.

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Meanwhile, illustrations in Silverstein’s texts do not influence significantly in creating meanings. He applied simple pictures and colors. Thomas, etal explained that “Author and illustrator, Silverstein obviously felt no need to sugarcoat his words with flashy collage or ostentatious color.” [11], which implies that Silverstein’s dictions were stronger in building meanings.

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