

# Ecology Destruction: *Hoot* of Environmental Psychology

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**Abstract**— Environmentalism become distinguished economic, society, culture and all parts nowadays. This paper have to examine carefully environmentalism in children's literature *Hoot*. This book figure the struggle of children that try to protect burrowing owls in California (coexist nature with human). Social justice is realized which is right or not before some law made a solution. Children in *Hoot* have protected by themselves that almost adult don't know what is more important in their society. They already know the importance of endangered species preservation than children. But they didn't recognize about it seriously. Children find the environmental law and then adult agree their opinion. We have to find why is importance to know environmentalism in children's literature and try to bring into relief the necessity applied with *Hoot*.

**Keywords**— destruction of ecosystem, environmental psychology, relationship with nature and human, *Hoot*.

## I. INTRODUCTION

LOTS of time and endeavors are required for the coexistence of human and nature. It is clear that, if the convenience of the human is sought for, the environment will be destructed. As the foods from the nature cannot fulfill the quantity required for the human's eating habits and are contaminated at high levels, alternative foods produced through scientific processes are now introduced in large quantity. The situation will become more serious in future and, with scientific measures to solve such problem, it is expected that the nature will be further destructed. When it is recognized that such problems may be solved by the harmonization with the nature only rather than destruction of the nature, it becomes our task to solve such very highly complicated problems step by step.

The problem of the harmonization between the human and the nature has been emphasized by the author referring to the importance of the relationship between the characters and the environment in *The Secret Garden* when analyzing the book in terms of "Eco-Feminism." At the viewpoint to deem the female as the nature, it was reviewed that the female's nature and the male's humanistic environment (science and technology, etc.) are harmonized and what the meaning of coexistence is. As described before, not only the recognition of the interest in and importance of the environment (nature) but also the practical thinking and practice is required.

In this respect, the appearance of a new academic area called "environmental psychology" shows how much the

environmental problem is important. In general, environmental psychology is "a new area to study the relationship between human behavior and environment (natural and artificial environment)" (Seung-Bin 32) and the purpose is to solve the problems generated due to human behavior and environmental destruction, such as air and water contamination and resulted health problem, population and house concentration, vehicle confusion and congestion and resulted energy squandering and stress, noise, mental health, and living quality, and energy saving and resource reuse. The lower theory explained as the details of this academic area is eco-psychology to discuss natural environment and meets the subject of this thesis; however, the subject will be explained in this thesis using the term, "environmental psychology" in terms of large meaning.

The adults should not hand the mistakes of their thoughts and behavior to their children but should take the role of guides to teach the children the methods to solve the problems. Environmental problems should not be simply recognized but should be solved through practice. However, the adults have the trend to recognize them only. In this respect, "*Hoot*" written by Carl Hiaasen gives us an important suggestion. In this book, it is shown that the practice by the children influences the adults and solves an environmental problem.

Carl Hiaasen is a columnist and a novelist who was born and grew in Florida like the background of this book. Environmental problems would be sensitive to him who lived with the nature together. *Hoot* was his first juvenile literature and was literarily accepted receiving Newbery Award. His successive works consist of *Flush*, *Scat*, *Downhill Lie*, *Paradise Screwed*, *Tourist Season*, and *nature Girl*. As indicated in the titles of these works, all of his works induce the recognition of environmental problems based on environment.

Children's literature is a genre of literature which shows problem solving or growing processes of children through their activities. In this book, the story is continued focused on what the environmental problems are and what is the start and end to solve such environmental problems letting a common person, who does not know what the environmental problems are, as the hero. A common person called Roy Eberhardt appears; it is highlighted that most of common persons do not recognize the environmental problems but the persons who should solve the problems are the very common persons, as a result.

## II. SUGGESTIONS BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Eco-psychology is the academic area to induce the preservation of environment (ecology) by analyzing the relationship between the human and the nature as described above. Three steps are required to understand the environmental psychology and analyze this book. These three steps consist of "perception (perceive), recognition (recognize), and attitude (judge)": it is the problem ask to each individual to practice to what direction after making judgment and; the recognition should be changed in relation to the attitude to be taken to environment and practice should follow.

In this respect, the scene that the hero of this book, Roy Eberhardt (hereinafter referred to as Roy), looks at the situation that Mullet Fingers, a person assimilated with the nature, runs with bare feet may be deemed to be the stage of perception. The boy called Mullet has his own name, Napoleon Bridger Leep, but wants to be called "gray mullet's finger" that is a nickname. That is, his life is not nonrecognition of the importance of the environment but is the life deliquesced in the environment. Mullet passes the step of perception and recognition and lives in the nature with changing his name after making a judgment by himself. The person who plays the role to connect him, who independently lives with no intercourse with others, with the human is his elder stepsister, Beatrice. She is explained as the string of Mullet who was tired out of and finally escaped from his parents who did not understand him and bound him with force in relation to the recombined family members.

Beatrice perceived and recognized the environment but has the agony on which judgment she should to make. However, she is characterized as a female person who is a sport player who has a better physique compared with male children and grasps such male children in the school. That is, it is suggested that her weight is less than those of other heroes or her role is equal to the roles of the male. The person who threw a stone called judgment to such a female person was Roy who had no such perception and the opinion agreed by her and Roy could save the nature with Mullet together.

The title of this book, owls, do not mean common owls but mean burrowing owls that live in the tunnels and are faced on the crisis of extermination. It is deemed that the author intended to set the place, where such burrowing owls live, as the superfine spot at the center of a city of Florida in order to clearly show the collision between the human and the environment. Florida, which is the hometown of the author, may be explained to be the space of culture, the symbol of the nature, and the place where various races and the nature coexist. It would be natural that the Mother Paula, which is characterized as the largest pancake house in the USA, intended to run its business at this place. However, as the place where the company intended to construct structures was the place where the burrowing owls live, such problems were generated.

The cleat thought that the nature is valuable places requiring protection is apparently carved in the recognition of the adults. The situation that the construction is continued in the name of development although it is known that the home of the burrowing owls is designated as a nature protection zone by the

law shows that environmental destruction is done. However, the development that is done for the profit and convenience of the human may exterminate natural monuments such as burrowing owls, etc. The responses of the mother of Roy and his surrounding persons welcomed the construction plan of the Mother Paula let Roy, Mullet, and Beatrice know that their actions made according to their judgments are reasonable when it is recognized that such development is beneficial to the convenience of the human and that what the meaning of protection of the space behind such development is. It is emphasized in the environmental psychology that "an interim step is required as the connecting mean" (Christopher 5) and it is found that three children acted as the connecting mean.

Burrowing owls excavate tunnels to line in such tunnels and show the characters of owls in night. The feature of Mullet that he lives in a disused vehicle and performs vandalism wandering about in night only is similar with the character of burrowing owls. In this case, vandalism means the action to destroy public facilities as defined in the dictionaries. Mullet's action to destroy the buildings at the construction sites, set many alligators, which are common in Florida, under the buildings, and scribbles on the police vehicles under patrol is destroying action but, at his standpoint, is the action for real protection. That is, as he knew that removal of the homes of burrowing owls is extermination of the burrowing owls, his action that may be called vandalism shows the warning against environmental destruction by implication.

"The action to justify destruction of nature at the standpoint of the human and to assert the convenience shows the property of own living space in terms of psychology and is the compensation system to rationalize own opinion in such space." (De Young 23) Looking at the Mother Paula that acts for the convenience and profit of the human only, the policemen's action at the side of the Mother Paula, Deliko who is a police officer and goes through fire and water for his promotion, and the workers of the work field who made idle action, we should be aware of important matters. However, although the environmental destruction can be deemed to be same with the adults, if the readers look at the behavior of Kimberly Lou Dixon who is the main model of Mother Paula's pancake house in the book, the readers may be aware of important matters.

Kimberly enjoyed the high popularity of the model but becomes skeptical of his work and decides to protect the home of burrowing owls that is a natural monument in a decisive moment in order to help the three children. In not only the children keep the mind to consider the nature valuable but also the adults understand the coexistence, the fear of natural destruction will disappear. Also, the assistant principle of Roy rapidly made a judgment on the situation and her clever judgment indirectly influenced the character of Roy and gave good influence to the parents of Roy. The parents had had the mind of nature like Roy but, when they became adults, became familiar with comfortable life. However, as they had kept proper judgment in their mind, they could easily understand the endeavors of Roy and could help Roy.

This story is closed with happy ending. This book reminds the human of the recognition of environment protection by the method to let the human recognize that, if the environment is destroyed, it is impossible that the foundation of the human is extended and the human may enjoy convenience but, as a result, the next generation's space for the human to stand disappears. That is, if perception is done, it is required to recognize and remember the 3rd step of environmental psychology for understanding and proper judgment.

### III. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF BURROWING OWL

At one time, the Burrowing Owl was common in the four western Canadian provinces. Now, it is one of the most endangered birds in these areas. The decline in population began in the 1980s and accelerated during the 1990s to an average rate of 22 percent a year. In 1977, more than 2 000 breeding pairs of Burrowing Owls lived in Canada; by 2000, the number of pairs had dropped to fewer than 1 000.

Human activity has a great impact on the Burrowing Owl. Chemical pesticides, applied to control ground squirrels and grasshoppers, sometimes poison the Burrowing Owl. For example, carbofuran, a pesticide that is now banned, was linked to a reduction in the number of young Burrowing Owls. Strychnine-covered grain has also killed owls that eat the grain that is left in burrows to kill ground squirrels. Pesticides also kill animals and insects that the Burrowing Owl eats. This may force the bird to hunt far from the safety of its nesting site, making it more susceptible to predators and other dangers.

The extermination of burrowing mammals, particularly badgers and ground squirrels, often killed as "pests," reduces the number of suitable homes for the Burrowing Owl. Fewer of these digging animals means fewer nests and nearby roost, or resting, burrows for the birds.

Burrowing Owls sometimes die along roads. Young owls in particular hunt on and beside roads at night. Because they are slow flyers and have difficulty escaping oncoming traffic, they are often killed.

Habitat loss and changes in the quality of habitat reduce hunting and nesting territories and are associated with low birth and high death rates among Burrowing Owls. In Canada, less than 24 percent of the original prairie habitat remains. Native grasslands lost to housing, farming, roads, and energy exploration have eliminated some of the bird's living space or changed it into something that the Burrowing Owl can no longer use.

The Burrowing Owl has many natural predators. Badgers, foxes, skunks, weasels, raccoons, and snakes dig up or enter burrows, eating eggs, nestlings, or adult females; other owls, hawks, falcons, domestic cats and dogs, and coyotes prey upon adults and young outside the burrow. Features that humans have added to the Burrowing Owl's territory, such as fences, utility poles, hedgerows and artificial nests for hawks, may give some of the Burrowing Owl's predators more vantage points than they once had.

In 1995, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) declared the Burrowing Owl "endangered," meaning that it may soon no longer exist in the wild in Canada. The Burrowing Owl has been designated "at risk" in all four western Canadian provinces and is protected

under provincial wildlife acts from capture, harassment, trade, killing, or nest disturbance. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species also protects the Burrowing Owl. A national Burrowing Owl recovery team, working through Recovery of Nationally Endangered Wildlife (RENEW), a program that includes governmental and non-governmental groups, approved a recovery plan in 1995 and updated the plan in 2002. This plan aims to increase Burrowing Owl populations in Canada to levels where they can sustain themselves.

In addition, the recovery team members are involved in the experimental release of captive-bred owls in Saskatchewan and the reintroduction of owls in British Columbia. Few of the birds released in Saskatchewan have returned there. Some of the more than 250 birds introduced into the Kamloops region of British Columbia since the program began in 1989 have mated and produced young, and a few have returned to British Columbia the following spring.

Despite its efforts, the recovery team has not been able to identify the key factors behind the population decline, although research has shown that some combination of factors is to blame. To help it reach some conclusions, the team is working to gather information about migration, winter range, changes on the breeding grounds, mortality, and the effects of various land uses on the owl. One of the reasons assembling this knowledge is taking time is because Burrowing Owls are difficult to track. They are very cryptic, or hard to see because of coloration that camouflages them. They migrate at night and fly alone, not in flocks. In addition, because of their small size, they cannot carry satellite transmitters like those used on larger birds, making it necessary for biologists to attach smaller radio transmitters with shorter ranges.

A number of governmental and nongovernmental programs in Canada's four western provinces are conserving habitat for the bird, studying its habits, banning the use of some pesticides, and raising awareness about the needs of the Burrowing Owl. Through two nongovernmental programs alone—Operation Burrowing Owl in Saskatchewan, which began in 1987, and Operation Grassland Community in Alberta, which started in 1989—more than 700 landowners have conserved roughly 70 000 hectares of Burrowing Owl nesting habitat. By increasing our knowledge about the Burrowing Owl's habits and changing some of the practices that harm the owls in their nesting areas, we hope we can help the Burrowing Owl regain its healthy numbers in Canada.

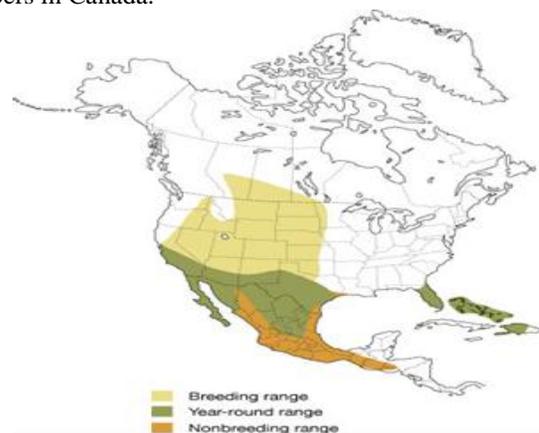


Fig. 1 distribution of the burrowing owl.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The situation that the change in the children's recognition influences the adults is easily seen in the surroundings contrary to people's expectation. Of course, their opinions are not easily accepted at the first step but, if their opinions are accepted, the adults may reach the top called the solution of problems. The endeavors of Roy, Beatrice, and Mullets may look great but such endeavors should be made in terms of the logic of properness related with the environment.

Before moving to Florida, Roy had lived in a calm country village in Montana where cowboys lived. Roy is characterized to be involved in the strange action in Florida because he had the mind to love the country life very much and to make his action as such strange action was deemed to be a natural action. The environment of the nature influences the childhood of the human and influences the adults to have corresponding mind. Therefore, coexistence with the nature means to live with family members consisted of parents and their sons and daughters together at a home. This can be expressed as happy properness.

The point to which attentions should be paid in this book is not terminated as the opposition and reconciliation between the three children representing the nature and the adults representing the destruction. The laws for practical protection of the nature are referred to and actual victory is shown with application of each law. It is reemphasized in this book that, if the judgment is properly made, the judgment should be implemented in practice. Of course, it is clear that the help of the adults who rapidly got the recognition played a decisive role. However, if there was no endeavor of children, their proper judgment would disappear soon. Due to this reason, the endeavors of Roy, Beatrice, and Mullets are deemed to be more valuable.

Of course, this book has the high possibility of argument. Seeking for the convenience of the human will give bad influence to the future? In what respect, will it be profitable to construct a wide park to protect animals at the Florida's downtown where even one step also makes money like Myeong-dong? It is impossible to know the matter of the next generation but righteous conclusion should be made based on the judgment of present time. It is clear that the human will produce environment-friendly foods and living environment based on science. The human may also revive the nature based on the power of science. However, what intended in this book to be asserted is not the words biased to a side called justification and actual profit but the fact that the intention of protection and the method of protection should be firmly set and should be implemented in practice. As science cannot be excluded from the human life, we should keep the thought that science is essentially required but overuse of science should be avoided.

Carl Hiaasen applied his will to the initial feature of Roy who kept the attitude to simply look at the situation and showed his self-confidence that there is no problem that is not solved through Mullet who had what Carl Hiaasen sought for. The fact that his other books continuously handle environmental problem is the expression of his will. As the environment exists nearby always and we can thoughtlessly overlook the environment. The author clearly shows that, like Roy who

could do the work that had been deemed to be great but could be done as a matter of course, we, common persons, may also solve the problems of the nature.

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