

Name of Student

Professor's Name

Course

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Book Report

Over the years, environmental conservation tasks have required mounting pressure from both the public and lobby groups. The public takes participatory roles through means such as writing books and articles, documenting short films, and making peaceful protests. Lobby groups, on the other hand, are well guided and supported by their majority supporters and campaigners. As a result, they have a much bigger voice than individuals do because of the resources at their disposal from funds to increase government support. Nonetheless, certain people taking solo roles to campaign for environmental conservation have remarkably helped shift the world's thinking and influenced governments, policy-makers, and lobby groups to see their point and join their campaign. Notably, men have had a more influential voice over the years than their women counterparts. Nevertheless, notable females such as Kenyan-born Nobel Laureate Wangari Mathai and fiction writer Rachel Carson have managed to achieve this, as well. The latter, through her book *Silent Spring*, managed to change the world's perspective during the time when the issues of conserving nature were not a typical household discussion.

Themes

Carson's remarks and retributions came during the period when environmental conservation was not an issue for a discussion among many people, especially Americans. During her times, technological advancements were quickly taking place, slowly assisting the economies in growing. The wars that had occurred before – the First and Second World Wars – and their consequent effects of the emerging Cold War had ultimately led to an increased

demand for new fighting techniques. These methods included technological innovations that involved the use of stronger weapons, including nuclear bombs and chemical armory. Thus, the need for such innovations characterized the nuclear age. Carson describes scientific research and the application of chemical warfare and technology as being god or male. She also states that sciences revolving around these fields were prestigious – unlike her biology major.

Therefore, Carson begins describing the situation at hand to the world through the example of a pseudo-city located within America's heartlands. Numerous well-to-do farms and green hillsides surround the city. Thus, it enjoys the ability to host wildlife, including birds and fish. Carson describes this town as the one abundant of life, beauty, and ecological resources. However, soon everything in the town begins to change, from good to bad and to ultimately worsening. Flora and fauna began to fall sick and died within a short time, leaving the entire town devoid of life. Even though Carson does not write about an existing city, her description highlights an ongoing past and current theme of ecological devastation. She attributes the form of desolation to the continued and increased use of chemical pesticides to kill insects, which has an adverse effect on the environment.

Furthermore, Carson highlights the theme of “deep ecology” rooted and balanced by nature itself, with human and other natural factors existing in balance. She describes that humans, wildlife, and plants belong to the natural system and that tampering with one would consequently lead to the fall or eminent destruction of the others. In her second chapter, she quotes, “The history of life on earth has been a history of interaction between living things and their surroundings, to a large extent life has been modeled by the environment” (Carson 5). She argues that the world and its nature have too much to lose if trends of heavy chemical use of insect treatment continue, urging governments to implement new laws that ban such practices. She further outlines the need for the research that would innovate new techniques

to pest treatment and control. These techniques should not only be environmentally friendly but also contribute to its sustenance and growth.

Environmental Message

Carson's message to her readers is simple, clear, and direct to the point – stop and avoid the use of harmful chemicals to control insects. From her first chapter where she describes a beautiful city that consequently succumbs to environmental devastation, she goes further to highlight the interconnection of nature, including humans, wildlife, and plants. She states, “The most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal material” (Carson 6). She argues that pollution results in irrecoverable damages, initiating a chain of adverse consequences that affect living organisms and destroy their tissues.

Carson reminds people of how delicate nature is and the considerable period it needs to form a balanced eco-system. The millions of years needed for plants and animals to evolve into their modern day stages required complex transformations that were initially guided by the sun and earth radiations and not human activities. She provides an insight into some of the human activities that result in radiation emissions, including the use and tests of nuclear substances and harmful chemicals, among others. For the earth to adjust to these chemicals, it would take much time, perhaps generations. In addition, not only would future generations suffer the consequences of the current chemical use, their bodies would also need to adapt to chemicals that would be produced then, constantly changing and transforming bodily tissues, making them adjust to these new stimuli.

Her overall message to her readers invokes taking care of the environment through disregarding ways that harm the ecological system. She offers a solution called “The Other Road” – the one less traveled by ordinary individuals. Her argument is that the final choice is the one calling for unison to make and achieve. The first step is making it a right for all

people to know the truth that continuous and increasing chemical use, dumping, and tests on the environment have and will continue having devastating consequences (Lockwood 135). The people of the world deserve to know the unprecedented effects of technological advancements, innovations, and evolution, some of these effects being the cause that the ecological system has suffered and is suffering death and decay.

Nonetheless, not all hope is lost. Carson's text argues that new insect control methods such as sterilizing could be a means to avert harmful ways of chemical use. Citizens should stand up and demand accountability from organizations and individuals that contribute to environmental degradation, demanding remunerations and punishment from relevant authorities. Furthermore, they should participate directly and indirectly in nature's preservation by avoiding using harmful chemicals, properly disposing of garbage, cleaning the environments, and reporting any cases of unlawful conduct.

Agreeing with the Message

Carson's message is should not be doubted and every citizen should agree with it. Having considered the facts of the matter and the grave consequences beforehand in case the situation remained unchanged, one can state that were it not for her campaigns and remarks, the world would be suffering more than it is currently. Her campaigns and texts are revelations of the devastating situation facing people – the destruction of the environment through chemicals used to fight insects, which ultimately leads to its slow death and decay. Her major was a biology and she has learned several aspects regarding the environment from her environmentalist mother. Thus, Carson was more than well suited to explain the situation to ordinary citizens who, at that time, had limited knowledge of the consequences of continuous and increased chemical use. Her analogies and descriptions cover a considerable portion of the areas that people ought to be concerned about.

Furthermore, her recommendations to governments, people, and policy-makers to find alternative ways of fighting insects and abandoning using harmful chemicals are further resourceful to environmental conservation. She revisits the ideas and ideologies proposed by Dr. Knipling by offering “a unique method of insect control – sterilizing male insects and letting them compete with natural one resulting in infertile eggs and the complete eradication of the species” (Davis 130). Notably, other ways of fighting environmental damage would entail creating new and amending current laws that aim at protecting the environment, imposing taxes and hefty fines to carbon emitters, and a combined global effort to fight the menace that is the ecological damage.

Present-Day Relevance of the Environmental Issue

Environmental devastation remains a matter of concern to the present day. Even though the causes of these concerns may have shifted from those Carson campaigned against, people continue to cause irrecoverable destruction. The issues of deforestation, poor soils and land use policies, excessive carbon emissions, poaching and overfishing, chemical tests, and dumping of hazardous material into water bodies continue to cause the same amount of damage against which Carson campaigned. Currently, the world is facing problems such as melting of polar ice caps, increased global temperatures, unpredictable and devastating weather patterns, including El-Ninos and floods, increased poaching, and droughts; all of these issues have negative effects on the ecosystem (Heckel 1613).

Noteworthy, her campaigns are echoed to present day. Numerous lobby groups and individuals are still spearheading the fights for ecological preservation. In addition, governments have begun working jointly to curtail global carbon emissions by setting standards, taxes, fines, and punishments for those who breach international laws of environmental conservations. Present day organizations set up funds for research into means

of preserving nature, with these means being clearly stated in their corporate social responsibilities.

Conclusion

Conclusively, Carson's texts are vital for discussing the issues of ecological destruction and preservation. She argues that crude means of fighting insects such as using chemicals were a primary reason for the death of wildlife and plants, consequently affecting the beauty and balance of nature. She also recommends that even though technology has benefited people, it has also been a leading factor contributing to the ecological damage. Nonetheless, she states that people can still shift from these unconventional ways of fighting insects and improvise means that are less harmful. Ultimately, there need to be numerous campaigns and policies that work toward overall environmental preservation.