

Shop to Kill

by

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In “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,” *William Wordsworth ruminates:*

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream, / The
earth, and every common sight, / To me did seem /
Apparelled in celestial light, / The glory and the freshness
of a dream. / It is not now as it hath been of yore; / [...] The
things which I have seen I now can see no more

Following the tradition of a poet requiring a muse, for us, William Wordsworth’s “Ode” was a stimulus for documenting the anthropocentric reality of the twenty-first century. It is a fact that the planet’s resources are depleted daily, temperatures rise, the ice caps are melting, and only recently have we realized the wrongdoings of our past and present, but hopefully not perpetuated in the future. We are regularly bombarded with information about the deterioration of our planet on a global scale, and the moral of the fairy-tale “Shop to Kill” is to sensitize the recipients of this tale, to awaken readers from the passive consumption of environmental facts, and to act for the amelioration of ecocide.

*In “Shop to Kill,” the names of the town and the forest are adapted material from Native American mythology. During our studies in the elective course *Ecocritical Readings of American Literature and Culture (Lit7-487)*, we were mesmerised by the close relationship Indigenous people in the Americas have with mother nature, an element we aspired to incorporate into this fictional piece. Our creative writing is founded on two theories: *ecofeminism* and *symbiosis*. *Ecofeminism* has documented the catastrophe of the cosmos regulated and “dominated by men” (*Imperial* 235). The CEOs seen in this story are all men, characters blinded by gluttony for more power, people who endeavor to destroy the natural resources. At the same time, the element of *symbiosis* promotes the polyphony and the diversity of organisms which co-habit the physical cosmos (*Mackenzie* 597). For this reason, there is a constant and*

dynamic interaction between animals and humans, nature and industrialism, decay and life. This antithesis is embedded in the story through the names of the city and the forest.

“Apikunni” was known as “War God” (Saunders and Allen) and, through this name, we attempt to construe the modern city as the cosmos of the Anthropocene, industrialization and its ramifications on the five ecospheres. Furthermore, Apikunni was also known as the “God of Lung Cancer” (Saunders and Allen), an identity, which we desired to maintain since it signifies the toxification of Mother Earth. If we consider all the above, the toxic discourse of a current societal issue becomes a central theme of “Shop to Kill.” Toxicity radiates similarly to lung cancer, which is silently and rapidly attacking the body, while victims are unaware of the dire consequences of pollutants. The citizens of the “Apikunni Empire” are bewitched by the illustrious lifestyle neoliberalism offers them and fall into the trap of KILL Industries.

The term “Apikunni” contrasts with the name “Atira,” since in Native American cosmology “Atira” is “Mother Earth” (Brooklyn Museum: Atira). Wordsworth was one of the many thinkers who discussed nature’s beauty and vitality for the human soul. Thus, it is without wonder how “Atira Forest” in this story is the beating heart that awakens and pumps spirituality for the residents of the town. She cares for the well-being of all creatures, whether biotic or abiotic. She is the one who rescues us, shelters us, and motivates us to become the better version of ourselves, and not be fooled by the shiny God-like machines. In effect, the two toponyms throughout the story act as polar apart concepts, death and life, which, however, cannot exist without each other.

The concept of the combining forces of nature and the residents of the “Apikunni Empire” by the end of the story is drawn upon the theory of interdependence. Only by uniting our forces, can we promote the continuum of natureculture and life-enhancing activities (Ávila et al.). If we wish environmental issues, such as global warming and air pollution, to be curbed, it is crucial to combine our forces and “Shop to Kill” is a prime example of what happens when we educate ourselves on environmental awareness and when we embrace ecocare.

Works Cited

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