
Tracing Spirituality through *The Great Kapok Tree*, *Greta and The Giants*, and *The Lorax* Novels: A Kincentric Ecology Perspective

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Abstract

Through children's literature, kincentric ecology is investigated to convey spirituality. Kincentric ecology, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living beings, provides a framework for understanding how narrative can promote a spiritual connection with nature. Using *The Great Kapok Tree*, *Greta and The Giants*, and *The Lorax* as examples, this study illustrates how ecological themes are used to illustrate the importance of a deep connection with the environment. According to the findings, Children's literature can effectively promote a kincentric viewpoint. Readers are encouraged to develop a more profound appreciation for the natural world and stewardship of the environment through this process.

Keywords: Children's Literature, Ecological Themes, Environmental Connection, Kincentric Ecology, Spirituality

INTRODUCTION

In an era of climate change escalating and environmental degradation, early environmental education has become crucial. Learning about the environment at a young age plays a key role in supporting holistic development, including spirituality (Nasution et al., 2024; Sharma, 2023). Spirituality in this context encompasses a profound understanding of the relationship between humans and nature. It also encompasses how spiritual values can shape positive attitudes towards the environment throughout one's life.

Children's literature holds significant potential for conveying messages about the environment, particularly those related to spirituality. Spirituality is often overlooked in research, yet its role is crucial in developing deeper ecological awareness in individuals. Although research linking children's literature with spirituality and ecocritical criticism is still limited, studies by Thi & Anh (2019) have shown that teaching through literature with an ecocritical approach can enhance children's literary understanding and positive attitudes towards the environment. Additionally, children's literature serves as an effective

medium for delivering ecological messages (Schreiber, 2021).

However, examining spiritual values in literature is not easy. The main challenge lies in interpretation diversity. The concept of spirituality is broad and can be interpreted differently by different individuals (Nasution et al., 2024). Therefore, it is necessary to navigate these diverse interpretations to provide comprehensive and relevant insights through research.

To address this challenge, this study uses the primary theory of kincentric ecology as its foundation. This research explores how characters in the books *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry, *Greta and The Giants* by Zoe Tucker, and *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss reflect the principles of kincentric ecology. These books were selected for their spiritual values that align with the concept of kincentric ecology as depicted in these children's books. For instance, *The Lorax* illustrates the act of cutting down Truffula trees without considering their impact, representing ecosystem damage (Seuss, 1971). Meanwhile, in *Greta and The Giants*, Greta and the community oppose the Giants' destructive activities, reflecting their resistance to environmental harm (Tucker & Persico, 2019). In *The Great Kapok Tree*, the encounter between humans and forest animals

provides deep perspectives on the importance of preserving the Amazon rainforest (Cherry, 2000). By examining how these books depict the relationship between humans and nature, this research reveals new perspectives on kincentric ecology. This research emphasizes the reciprocal and interdependent relationship between humans and nature. The harmonious interaction between humans and their environment indicates that this relationship is not only physical but also spiritual. Each character is also analyzed regarding how they consider the long-term impact of their decisions on the environment and are inspired to act collectively in nature conservation (Erdoğan et al., 2011). The question arises: is kincentric ecology and spirituality the reason behind their actions?

Enrique Salmon (2000) introduced kincentric ecology, drawing from the Native American Raramuri tribe. This states that humans have both spiritual and physical responsibilities to care for and protect nature (Naess, 1973; Walwyn, 2023). This theory emphasizes that humans and nature are closely interconnected as integral parts of a larger ecosystem. All living creatures and natural components depend on each other to maintain environmental balance (Bhattacharyya & Slocombe, 2017; Martinez et al., 2023; Read et al., 2013). In kincentric ecology, humans are

viewed as having a familial relationship with nature, applied in interactions with animals and other natural elements. Environmental sustainability can only be achieved by respecting and maintaining harmonious relationships with nature (Bhattacharyya & Slocombe, 2017; Salmon, 2000, 2015).

Kincentric ecology strongly highlights the importance of having a harmonious relationship between humans and the environment, recognizing that all forms of life are interconnected. The well-being of one group greatly depends on the well-being of the whole (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Kearney, 2018; Naess, 1973). Kincentric ecology views nature as a living entity with a spiritual relationship with humans. This understanding acknowledges the physical and spiritual unity between humans and nature (Salmon, 2000), seeing nature as a "living companion" that also has spiritual value, not just as an economic resource or a natural environment for us (Puchalski, 2012; Spencer, 2012; Tanyi, 2002). Through kincentric ecology, it can be concluded that humans have a relationship with nature that is both physical and spiritual (Antonio et al., 2019; Walwyn, 2023).

Spirituality plays a crucial role in motivating responsible attitudes and positive actions toward the environment. Spirituality itself is the recognition of something greater

than oneself. It involves practices such as meditation, prayer, and experiences that cannot be scientifically explained. Spirituality is a personal journey to find meaning, purpose, and identity in daily life (Baker & Morrison, 2008; Cook, 2015; Gonçalves et al., 2015; Jain & Jain, 2019; Kreml, 2014; Spencer, 2012).

The relationship between spiritual values and kincentric ecology values is close because both emphasize that human life and nature mutually influence each other. In the concept of kincentric ecology, there are four spiritual values: (1) Interconnectedness: All things are interdependent. Caring for nature positively impacts humans, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect for the common good (Bohensky & Maru, 2011; Edara, 2017; Walwyn, 2023), (2) Mutual Respect and Reciprocity: Respect and give back between humans and nature, creating harmonious relationships and a sense of togetherness (Coates et al., 2006; Jain & Jain, 2019; Walwyn, 2023), (3) Indigenous Cosmology: A belief system that sees humans as an inseparable part of nature, encouraging deep spiritual relationships and living in harmony with the environment (Baker & Morrison, 2008; Edara, 2017; Walwyn, 2023), and (4) Eco-Spirituality: Emphasizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of humans and nature, integrating spiritual and

ecological dimensions, and highlighting the importance of balance, harmony, and reducing consumerism for sustainability (Baker & Morrison, 2008; Coates et al., 2006; Edara, 2017; Jain & Jain, 2019; Walwyn, 2023).

Spirituality is divided into two types: Religious and Secular spirituality. Religious spirituality relates to beliefs, practices, and spiritual experiences within organized religions. On the other hand, secular spirituality focuses more on spiritual experiences without attachment to a specific religion. This research uses secular spirituality as a foundation to view the relationship between humans and their environment as part of a sense of fulfillment (Baker & Morrison, 2008; Cook, 2015; Gonçalves et al., 2015; Jain & Jain, 2019; Krempl, 2014; Moss & Thompson, 2007; Puchalski, 2012; Spencer, 2012).

Besides understanding the two types of spirituality, it is also important to recognize the four main aspects that characterize spirituality in an individual or character (Baker & Morrison, 2008; Cook, 2015; Jain & Jain, 2019; Moss & Thompson, 2007; Puchalski, 2012; Spencer, 2012). These aspects include: first, the search for meaning and purpose in life, which assists individuals in discovering their role in larger life and their relationship with the universe. Second, a deep

sense of interconnectedness, which fosters awareness of close relationships with oneself, others, and nature. Third, the drive for self-development and awareness, which promotes personal growth and spiritual balance to understand and maintain ecosystems. Lastly, social influence and decision-making, which helps communities face environmental challenges and make sustainable decisions. Spirituality is closely related to kincentric ecology as it helps individuals understand their relationship with nature through life meaning, connection, personal growth, and social influence in decision-making.

METHODOLOGY

As part of this study, a qualitative research approach was used with detailed steps for data collection and analysis to be followed. As a first step towards collecting the data, it was decided to select three relevant novels to study: *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry, *Greta and the Giants* by Zoe Tucker, and *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss for data collection. In this study excerpts and sections from novels related to the themes of spirituality and kincentric ecology were selected and tested for their relevance to the study. To analyze the data, kincentric ecology was used as the framework for analyzing the excerpts and sections. According to this analysis, the

narratives of these novels show a continuity and a relationship between humans and nature that is reflected in patterns and themes relating to the spiritual connection between humans and nature (Gerring, 2017; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The values of kincentric ecology are closely aligned with spirituality, which emphasizes interconnectedness, mutual respect and reciprocity, indigenous cosmology, and eco-spirituality (Baker & Morrison, 2008; Bohensky & Maru, 2011; Coates et al., 2006; Edara, 2017; Jain & Jain, 2019; Walwyn, 2023). Considering that these values are also central to spirituality, we can gain a deeper understanding of spirituality through kincentric ecology, since both share the same core values.

Based on an examination of spirituality's key aspects, it has been concluded that four aspects of spirituality can be identified in these three novels, including 1) the search for meaning, 2) a sense of connectedness, 3) self-development, 4) social influence, and decision-making within the context of kincentric ecology (Baker & Morrison, 2008; Cook, 2015; Gonçalves et al., 2015; Jain & Jain, 2019; Krempl, 2014; Moss

& Thompson, 2007; Puchalski, 2012; Spencer, 2012).

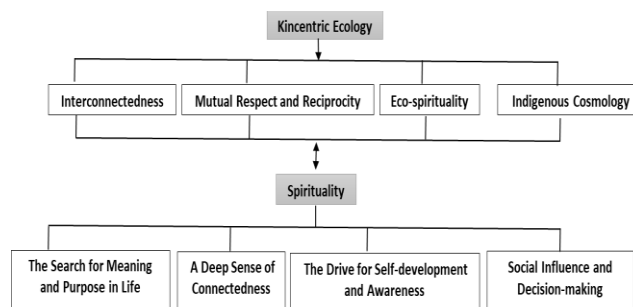


Figure 1. Structure of the Relationship Between Kincentric Ecology and Spirituality Based on Previous Explanations

To gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between spirituality and kincentric ecology, an analysis of the three novels under study was conducted. Here are the research findings:

A. Interconnectedness

The theory of interconnectedness emphasizes that all things are interdependent. Caring for nature has a positive impact on humans, highlighting the importance of mutual respect for the common good. The main point of this interconnectedness is the emergence of a sense of care and acting "for the common good." This feeling arises from the awareness of the interconnectedness of all living things, likened to a web where everything is linked (Bohensky & Maru, 2011; Edara, 2017;

Walwyn, 2023). This interconnectedness is clearly manifested in the three books studied:

In *The Lorax* (1971), Dr. Seuss uses the characters Once-ler and Lorax to highlight how greed and indifference towards nature can destroy ecosystems and humanity itself. Quotes from the character Once-ler, such as "*I meant no harm. I most truly did not,*" reflect his initial intention not to cause damage, but he was unaware of the negative impact of his actions on the environment (Seuss, 1971:45). Furthermore, the phrase "*But I had to grow bigger. So bigger I got*" illustrates Once-ler's drive to keep expanding, symbolizing human greed. Repeated use of the word "bigger" in the sentence "*I biggered my factory. I biggered my roads. I biggered my wagons*" (Seuss, 1971:45) shows Once-ler's obsessive nature in expanding his enterprise, symbolizing uncontrolled and destructive industrial expansion. The character of Once-ler reflects a lack of awareness of the interconnectedness between humans and nature due to his selfishness and greed.

On the other hand, Lorax, who deeply cares for the environment, warns Once-ler that his actions are wrong. Quotes from Lorax highlight the urgency of environmental protection and the destructive consequences of irresponsible actions. The quote "*NOW...thanks to your hacking my trees to the*

ground" (Seuss, 1971:41) makes it clear that destroying nature has widespread negative impacts. Using the word "NOW" emphasizes the urgency and immediate impact of Once-ler's actions, while "hacking my trees to the ground" describes his rough, destructive behavior. These actions negatively affect the Truffula tree inhabitants: "*not enough Truffula Fruit*" (Seuss, 1971:41) shows that significant natural resources have been depleted due to over-exploitation. The phrase "*poor Bar-baloos*" emphasizes the miserable condition of creatures depending on the forest, while "*no food in their tummies*" depicts their hunger and suffering. This statement underscores the message that human greed harms the environment and the creatures relying on it (Seuss, 1971:41).

Interconnectedness emphasizes the need to maintain ecological balance, which is the primary goal. Lorax also shows how deeply interconnected and dependent living beings are on a balanced ecosystem in his statement, "*They loved living here. But I can't let them stay*" (Seuss, 1971:42). Lorax's actions reflect a profound sense of interconnectedness with other creatures in the forest, reminding the Once-ler of the consequences of his actions.

In *Greta and The Giants*, interconnectedness is shown through

destructive human actions that endanger ecosystems and communities. The giants' actions to destroy forests reflect human indifference towards the environment and its inhabitants. Greta confronts the giants who damage the forest for development without considering its impacts. The quote *"They didn't see all the little birds and bugs and butterflies and bears that trembled in the shadows. And no one told them to stop because everyone was scared of them"* (Tucker & Persico, 2019:10) illustrates the importance of having a deep connection with nature. The phrase "didn't see" indicates indifference and blindness to the negative impacts of their actions, while "little birds and bugs and butterflies and bears" mentions various small creatures to emphasize the diversity and number of affected beings. The image "trembled in the shadows" shows the fear and suffering experienced by these creatures. The sentence "no one told them to stop because everyone was scared of them" shows the community's lack of courage to oppose injustice and depicts widespread fear and helplessness. This highlights the importance of courage and awareness to protect the environment and its living beings.

The previous quote illustrates how critical it is to have a healthy connection with nature; animals feel scared because there is no

sense of trust and safety. To realize how destructive the environment is, it is essential to have someone who can teach the value of interconnectedness. Greta, as a brave and caring figure, voices the importance of protecting nature from greed and indifference. The call *"Please STOP!"* is a firm and direct plea to halt destructive actions. The phrase *"greedy behavior"* shows that greed is the main cause of destruction, and *"spoiling our home"* describes the negative impact on the environment where all creatures rely on (Tucker & Persico, 2019:22). This statement emphasizes that human greed and indifference towards the environment have negative impacts on all creatures, and highlights the moral responsibility to protect nature. Humans, as part of nature's family according to kincentric ecology (Salmon, 2000), have a moral responsibility to protect nature. Destructive actions towards the environment damage ecosystems and cause suffering to living beings. Greta, with her courage, teaches the value of interconnectedness and maintaining nature's balance. This is for all living beings.

The message of interconnectedness in *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry is conveyed through the dialogue between the animals and the tree cutter. Quotes from this dialogue show how all living beings depend on

each other and emphasize the importance of maintaining a balanced ecosystem. An example quote from this book is *"Do you know what trees produce? Oxygen!"* (Cherry, 2000:23). This rhetorical question aims to draw attention and raise awareness of the importance of trees in producing the oxygen needed by all biological beings, both animals and humans.

The phrase *"we animals and humans"* asserts that this need is shared, illustrating that all living beings depend on trees. Cherry depicts the serious impact of deforestation with the sentence *"If you cut down the forests you will destroy that which gives us all life"* (Cherry, 2000:23). This dialogue asserts that damage to one element of the ecosystem, such as trees, can have serious consequences for the entire ecosystem. This sentence clarifies that actions that destroy forests are equivalent to destroying the source of life for all beings dependent on them.

Cherry also emphasizes the importance of considering the long-term impact of human actions on nature. In the quote *"what happens tomorrow depends upon what you do today,"* the cause-and-effect relationship between current actions and their future impacts is depicted. The phrase *"no thought for the future"* indicates indifference towards long-term consequences, while *"chopping down*

this tree" describes a specific destructive action. This book also conveys that caring for nature is a shared responsibility that positively impacts all living beings. The dialogues in this book show that maintaining a balanced ecosystem is the duty of all creatures, both animals and humans. These quotes illustrate that every action that harms nature has serious impacts on all living beings (Cherry, 2000:25).

B. Mutual Respect and Reciprocity

The concept of Mutual Respect and Reciprocity emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and reciprocity in the relationship between humans and nature. According to Coates et al. (2006), Jain & Jain (2019), and Walwyn (2023), through respect and reciprocity, a harmonious and sustainable relationship can be built, creating a sense of togetherness between humans and the environment.

The Lorax highlights the lack of respect and reciprocity humans have towards nature and depicts the consequences of environmental destruction due to irresponsible human actions. In this story, Dr. Seuss emphasizes the importance of reciprocal relationships and respect for nature to maintain ecological balance. One way Dr. Seuss conveys this message is through the character Lorax, who says, *"I am the Lorax. I speak for*

the trees, for the trees have no tongues" (Seuss, 1971:29). "I am the Lorax" introduces Lorax as a guardian of nature who strives to voice the interests of trees that cannot defend themselves. "I speak for the trees" emphasizes that trees and nature do not have a voice to fight for their rights, so someone must act as their representative. "For the trees have no tongues" illustrates nature's helplessness in the face of human exploitation and reminds us that nature is often neglected because it cannot vocalize its suffering.

Additionally, the story depicts habitat destruction and criticizes the One-ler for cutting down trees carelessly without considering the long-term impact. The quote "*Chopping as fast as you please*" demonstrates the rapid and irresponsible actions of the Once-ler, indicating a lack of respect for nature and the destructive impact on the ecosystem (Seuss, 1971:41). The destruction of Truffula Trees leads to the loss of habitat for various species such as Brown Bar-ba-loots, Humming-Fish, and Swomee-Swans, showing how damage to one element of the ecosystem can affect many living creatures (Seuss, 1971).

The story also offers hope and insight into restoration. The quote "*Plant a new Truffula. Treat it with care. Give it clean water. And feed it fresh air*" (Seuss, 1971:61)

calls for repairing the damage that has occurred through tangible actions, namely planting seeds for trees. "Treat it with care" emphasizes the importance of caring for nature with attention and responsibility. "Give it clean water" underscores nature's basic needs and the importance of keeping natural resources healthy. "And feed it fresh air" indicates that fresh air is crucial for nature's survival, reflecting the reciprocal relationship between humans and the environment. Through *The Lorax*, Dr. Seuss delivers a powerful message about the importance of respect and reciprocity in maintaining and restoring the relationship between humans and nature.

In *Greta and the Giants*, Greta becomes a powerful symbol calling for respect for nature and reciprocal actions from the Giants. This shows that respect and collective responsibility can repair environmental damage and restore ecological balance. One way Tucker highlights Greta's call is through the quote, "*They were huge, lumbering oafs and they were always busy*" (Tucker & Persico, 2019:7). This quote illustrates that the Giants have been around for as long as Greta can remember. This shows that this problem is not new but worsening, reflecting change urgency. The description of "huge, lumbering oafs" highlights that the Giants are large and

careless creatures. The phrase "they were always busy" indicates that they are always occupied with their own activities without considering the environmental impact, reflecting a lack of respect and reciprocity towards nature. The concept of Mutual Respect and Reciprocity emphasizes the importance of a respectful and reciprocal relationship between humans and nature. In the context of this story, the change in the Giants' attitude from disrespect to respect for nature is key to restoring ecological balance. This is key to creating harmonious environmental sustainability.

This book also depicts the Giants' awareness and change in attitude. The quote "*The Giants looked around*" signifies a moment of reflection and awareness for the Giants. "*Began to see*" indicates the beginning of a change in perspective and understanding of the impact of their actions. "*How their actions were hurting the forest and all the creatures in it*" shows the direct relationship between human actions and the damage experienced by the entire ecosystem, including the forest and its inhabitants (Tucker & Persico, 2019:25). Greta as a force for change is also emphasized in this story. Greta initiates change by voicing the problem and asking the Giants to stop. As an example, Greta encourages the Giants to rethink their

actions and start repairing the damage they have caused (Tucker & Persico, 2019:25).

In *The Great Kapok Tree*, the importance of reciprocal relationships among all living beings and the urgency of maintaining ecosystems for life sustainability are also highlighted. The dialogue between rainforest animals, a Yanomamo child, and the sleeping logger conveys this message. The animals speaking to the logger communicate the negative impact of tree felling on the environment. For example, the sentence "*Senhor, you must not cut down this tree ... We have flown over the rain forest...*" (Cherry, 2000:17) conveys the urgency of the message. The phrase "must not" indicates a strong prohibition and deep concern about deforestation's potential serious consequences. The phrase "flown over the rainforest" provides the perspective that these animals have a broader understanding of the situation and awareness of the cumulative impact of uncontrolled tree felling. Their message emphasizes the importance of considering the environmental impact of human action.

The story also highlights reciprocal relationships in nature. The animals emphasize that all natural beings rely on one another through the statement, "*All living things depend on one another*" (Cherry, 2000:13). This sentence reflects the core of the

ecological message in the story. It says that every natural being plays a vital role in maintaining the ecosystem's balance. The word "depend" shows strong interdependence, where everyone affects and is affected by others. By including the phrase "all living things," this story asserts that this interdependence is not limited to one species but encompasses the entire spectrum of life, from animals to plants. This message warns that human actions that harm nature not only harm specific species but also threaten the balance of the entire ecosystem.

Finally, the logger's transformation and awareness become key elements in this story. The logger's decision not to cut down the kapok tree reflects a change in attitude and awareness that grows from dialogue with forest creatures. The sentence "*The man stopped and looked at the animals and the child ... He dropped his ax and walked away*" (Cherry, 2000:35-37) depicts a moment of enlightenment. The word "stopped" signifies the cessation of destructive actions, indicating that the logger reconsiders his actions. The word "looked at" reflects a reflection process, where he understands the message conveyed by the animals and the Yanomamo child. The action "dropped his ax" symbolizes the release of the destruction tool, showing an awareness of the danger it can cause. Finally, the decision

to "walk away" shows an increased commitment to conservation, indicating that the logger has decided to take a more responsible path towards the environment.

C. Indigenous Cosmology

The integration of indigenous cosmology in the stories of *The Lorax*, *Greta and the Giants*, and *The Great Kapok Tree* highlights the importance of the spiritual relationship between humans and nature, as well as the need for harmonious coexistence with the environment. These three stories illustrate how human greed and neglect of nature lead to environmental destruction and suffering for other living beings. This proves that human actions toward nature have consequences, and indigenous cosmology emphasizes that ecosystem balance is key to life's sustainability (Baker & Morrison, 2008; Edara, 2017; Walwyn, 2023).

In *The Lorax*, Dr. Seuss underscores the importance of the spiritual relationship between humans and nature and the need for harmonious coexistence with the environment. The quote, "*So I quickly invented my Super-Axe-Hacker*" (Seuss, 1971:38-39), depicts the accelerated exploitation of nature by humans through technology. The creation of the "Super-Axe-Hacker," which cuts down trees four times faster than conventional methods,

reflects human greed that disregards ecosystem sustainability. In indigenous cosmology, such actions contradict the principle of harmony with nature, where resource extraction must be done cautiously and with long-term impact in mind. Uncontrolled greed leads to ecosystem imbalances, threatening life on Earth.

The quote, *"I laughed at the Lorax, 'You poor stupid guy!'"* (Seuss, 1971:32), highlights the arrogance and indifference towards the warnings given by Lorax, a guardian of nature. When the main character laughs at and ignores Lorax's advice, it shows the neglect of voices that warn about ecological balance. In indigenous cosmology, guardians of nature like Lorax possess deep wisdom about the human-nature relationship. Ignoring them means disregarding ecosystem sustainability's spiritual and ethical values. Thus, *The Lorax* portrays the negative consequences of human greed and neglect of nature, ultimately damaging the ecological balance crucial for life's sustainability.

Similarly, in *Greta and The Giants*, the main message emphasizes the importance of maintaining ecological balance and appreciating nature's spiritual and environmental values. The quote, *"They chopped down trees to build homes"* (Tucker & Persico, 2019:7), depicts the Giants' initial

actions, cutting down trees to create houses. The use of the word "chopped" indicates brutal actions that disregard environmental impact. The above statement also suggests the greed of giants, as they continue cutting down more trees and building larger houses without considering sustainability. This shows neglect of ecological balance, which in indigenous cosmology is vital for maintaining harmony between humans and nature. This greed threatens ecological balance and, ultimately, life's sustainability.

Greed is also depicted in the quote, *"But the greedy Giants had forgotten how wonderful the forest was"* (Tucker & Persico, 2019:10). The word "greedy" describes the Giants' lustful nature, the main cause of destruction. The phrase "had forgotten how wonderful the forest was" indicates that they had neglected its beauty and spiritual value. In indigenous cosmology, forests are considered spiritually valuable and necessary for ecological balance. Neglecting this value reflects a loss of appreciation for the spiritual relationship between humans and nature, resulting in environmental destruction. Greta's plea, *"Please STOP!"* (Tucker & Persico, 2019:22), is a desperate call to halt the destruction threatening ecological balance. The quote, *"Your greedy behavior is spoiling our home"* (Tucker & Persico, 2019:22),

emphasizes that the Giants' greed is destroying the environment they inhabit. This depicts destructive actions that harm nature, threatening ecological balance and life's sustainability.

In *The Great Kapok Tree*, the quote, *"The larger man stopped and pointed to a great Kapok tree. Then he left"* (Cherry, 2000:8), carrying a symbolic meaning related to the human-nature relationship. First, the action of "stopped" in this quote can be interpreted as a call for humans to pause from their busy lives and consider the surrounding environment's condition. In this context, "stopped" is not just a physical action but also a metaphor for introspection and awareness. It is a moment where humans are reminded not to continuously exploit nature but to appreciate and understand its crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. This is the key to life's sustainability. Second, the phrase "pointed to a great Kapok tree" signifies more than just the act of pointing. In many indigenous cosmologies, the Kapok tree is often seen as a symbol of life, the center of both the spiritual and physical worlds. This tree provides oxygen, serves as a home for various species, and is considered a guardian of ecological balance. By pointing to the Kapok tree, the man in the story symbolically acknowledges its importance and, indirectly,

respects the spiritual values embedded in indigenous cosmology. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining ecological balance for life's sustainability.

Another quote from this story, *"The man stood and picked up his ax. He swung back his arm as though to strike the tree. Suddenly he stopped. He turned and looked at the animals and the child"* (Cherry, 2000:35), illustrating a moment of epiphany or profound realization. Initially, the actions of "picking up his ax" and "swinging back his arm" depict human intent to cut down the tree, which can be seen as a symbol of destructive actions toward nature. However, when the man "suddenly stopped," a deep transformation occurs within him, a moment of reflection and awareness. This sudden stop, followed by "looked at the animals and the child," indicates that humans see beyond their selfish desires to exploit nature. The animals and the child represent the future, both the ecosystem and future generations affected by human actions today. In many indigenous cosmologies, humans believe that all living beings are interconnected and that humans have a responsibility to maintain harmony and balance. By considering the presence of other living beings, the man in this story demonstrates respect for indigenous cosmology principles, which emphasize the

importance of maintaining the balance between humans and nature to ensure life's sustainability.

D. Eco-spirituality

Eco-spirituality emphasizes the interconnectedness between humans and nature through efforts to maintain balance, harmony, and reduce consumerism to achieve sustainability (Baker & Morrison, 2008; Coates et al., 2006; Edara, 2017; Jain & Jain, 2019; Walwyn, 2023). This concept highlights the importance of integrating spiritual awareness with ecological concern, encouraging individuals to recognize the impact of their consumption on the environment.

In the novel *The Lorax*, the quote "UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not" (Seuss, 1971:64) underscores the importance of individual concern in environmental stewardship. The word "UNLESS" implies a critical condition that must be met, namely that everyone must take action to make a change. The phrase "someone like you" indicates that responsibility lies with individuals, not just leaders or large organizations. Meanwhile, the expression "cares a whole awful lot" suggests that only with deep and significant concern

can real change be achieved. The statement "nothing is going to get better" warns that without action, the environment will continue to deteriorate. This highlights the urgency to reduce excessive consumption and support eco-spirituality to maintain nature's balance.

Conversely, a quote from *Greta and The Giants* demonstrates a shift in attitude that reflects the potential for better spiritual and ecological growth. The phrase "*The Giants felt terrible. 'We're sorry,' they said. And they promised to try harder*" (Tucker & Persico, 2019:25) illustrates the giants' awareness and repentance after realizing the harmful impact of their actions on the environment. This acknowledgment shows the importance of introspection and improving behavior, which is central to eco-spirituality principles. The commitment to "try harder" reflects a willingness to reduce consumerism and adopt more sustainable practices, emphasizing that nature's balance can only be achieved through conscious efforts by all parties.

In *The Great Kapok Tree*, several quotes highlight the negative impact of consumerism and the importance of preserving nature's beauty and balance. For instance, "*Senhor, this tree is a tree of miracles. It is my home, where generations of my ancestors have lived. Do not chop it down*" (Cherry, 2000:11) shows that the Kapok tree is more than just a

material resource; it has deep spiritual and cultural value for the local community. The use of words like "miracles" and "home" reinforces the importance of natural elements that should not be exploited recklessly for economic gain. The concept of eco-spirituality teaches that nature is an integral part of a community's identity and must be protected.

Furthermore, the quote "*Senhor, my hive is in this Kapok tree...*" (Cherry, 2000:13) emphasizes the importance of interdependence in ecosystems, where every living creature plays a crucial role in maintaining nature's balance. Consumerism often ignores this aspect, leading to environmental degradation. Eco-spirituality invites us to appreciate and protect every living being, adopting a holistic approach to our interactions with nature. Another quote from *The Great Kapok Tree*, "*Senhor, how much is beauty worth?*" (Cherry, 2000:27), explores the intrinsic value of natural beauty that cannot be measured materially. This question considers the importance of preserving natural beauty as a source of inspiration and inner peace. Eco-spirituality emphasizes that environmental protection is not only for ecosystem balance but also for humanity's long-term well-being.

CONCLUSION

Using kincentric ecology as a framework, the present study demonstrates that spirituality is not merely an adjunct to environmental discourse but a fundamental component of it as well. Ecological sustainability requires it as an integral component. As illustrated by the examples of *The Great Kapok Tree*, *Greta and the Giants*, and *The Lorax*, this study emphasizes the importance of moral responsibility and a profound connection to nature for people's wellbeing. Findings suggest that recognizing and embracing the spiritual relationship between humans and nature is crucial to fostering a paradigm shift in how humans view and interact with the natural world. As a result, it is necessary to integrate spiritual values into ecological approaches not only in order to achieve long-term well-being, but also in order to ensure that ecosystems are balanced and protected. Using literature to promote ecological awareness, this study contributes to scientific discourse by demonstrating the importance of literary narratives in influencing attitudes towards the environment as well as advocating a more holistic and sustainable approach to environmental stewardship.

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