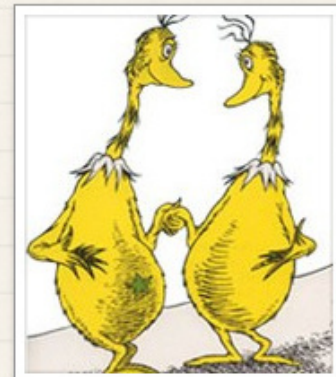
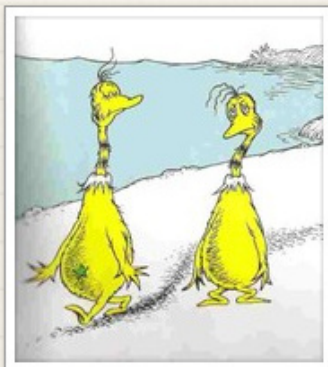
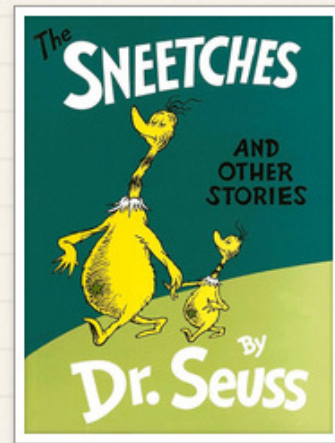


The Sneetches and Other Stories

Critical Analysis

Summary

"The Sneetches" by Dr. Seuss is a story that tells the tale of a group of creatures called the Sneetches. Within this species there are 2 groups, Sneetches with stars on their bellies and Sneetches without stars. The ones with stars are not very kind to the ones without; they believe that they are vastly superior and exclude the Sneetches without stars from every day social events and do not even acknowledge them when they pass by. One day a salesman comes by named Sylvester McMonkey McBean who builds a machine that puts stars on the bellies of the Sneetches without stars. They all pay him to step into his machine and then proudly show the star bellied Sneetches that they are now the same and can no longer be discriminated against. The original star bellied Sneetches become very upset and so McBean creates another machine that can remove their stars so they can feel superior again. As the story goes on, all the Sneetches run from one machine to the next until they all run out of money and no one remembers who is originally star bellied and who is not. McBean walks off a happy man, laughing at the foolishness of the Sneetches. However, the Sneetches learn a valuable lesson of inclusion and treat each other with respect from then on, understanding that regardless of physical characteristics, they are all Sneetches.



CRITICAL EVALUATION

Critical Lenses (AREE)

This book can be viewed through multiple lenses and can be used to model ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, faith-based, and countless other social groups. The most prevalent lens that this can be viewed through, however, is race. In the article "Race in Canadian Education", Henry and Tator comment on racial ideologies young children often have entering school (p.200). Unconsciously, students are acting on preconceived assumptions and biases they have fostered outside of the school and bring them into the classroom, causing racial segregation and racism. The Dr. Seuss text is a good book that allows students to evaluate their own behaviour through discussion and prompt them to think critically about their own actions towards others around them based on social constructs. "The Sneetches" does not adhere to every guideline presented by the AREE manual; for instance it does not "reflect a balance of people in Canadian society [...] realistically" or "offer an objective and accurate description of the contributions of people in multiethnic and multi-racial society" (AREE manual). With that being said, this is not a downfall of the book; this book does not aim to represent any ethnic group. This book is intended to start a conversation that is essential in creating a foundation for understanding and evaluation of racism in the school. Using fictional characters like the Sneetches, Dr. Seuss is singling out a particular ethnic group, but creating two of his own to present a more simplistic view of racism and exclusion for a young audience in a manner that is age appropriate.

Teachable Resource

I find this book an excellent resource that can be adapted and applied to multiple lenses for teaching in an inclusive classroom. Just as race is socially constructed in real society, Dr. Seuss has created his own different "races" of Sneetches to highlight the absurdity of basing opinions of people solely on physical characteristics. The text is addressing a serious issue of race relations and discrimination yet doing so in an age appropriate manner that promotes discussion and evaluation of students' own lives and encounters with others. I find this book would be a very good resource in the Social Studies curriculum for the primary grades because it would serve as an introduction to different racial groups as well as learning respect for others regardless of social status. This text would serve as a means to "promote educational practices focused on identifying and challenging stereotyping, bias, and discrimination in the curriculum" (AREE, 9) because it on one hand separates students by not pinpointing a particular real life group, yet, through discussion, helps them evaluate themselves and their own social interactions. I also think it would be very beneficial to the teacher and the manner in which she teaches the curriculum because as the teacher discusses with their own students, they learn from them and help create a safe and accepting environment.

References

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