

The Pedagogical Implications Of Dr. Seuss's Children's Literature

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Introduction

Our project identified the key elements of Dr. Seuss's writing that played into cultural conversations of each work's time of original publication and the ways that these elements may have influenced children to behave in more prosocial ways. Because Dr. Seuss's works connect to children through his storytelling, his stories were able to lead his audience from their current place of understanding to a place of higher social consciousness and maturity, causing them to potentially behave as better citizens.

Research Process

I performed close readings of all of Dr. Seuss's children's books and selected texts with social narratives under the guidance of Dr. Saunders. Performing historical research identified the potential cultural connections, and research within literary, educational psychology, and communication arts disciplines supported our claim of Dr. Seuss's influence on children's social behavior through his rhetorical approach.



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Key Findings

Dr. Seuss produced cultural connections within many of his children's books. His books implemented strategies, such as the use of child and non-human characters in order to provide his audience canvases that they could imagine themselves as. His choices allowed readers to visualize themselves acting in the just or moral ways Dr. Seuss portrayed in his texts, allowing Dr. Seuss's texts to influence his audience to potentially act in prosocial ways. Thus, Dr. Seuss's works can be considered as culturally educational.

Conclusion

Dr. Seuss's children's books reach a wide audience even in the present day. We have argued that these select Dr. Seuss texts (Table 1) go beyond teaching literacy and can influence who children want to be or become within their own communities.

Selected Texts

- The King's Stilts (1939)
- Horton Hatches the Egg (1940)
- Horton Hears Who! (1954)
- How the Grinch Stole Christmas (1957)
- Yertle the Turtle (1958)
- The Sneetches (1961)
- What Was I Scared Of? (1961)
- Ten Apples Up On Top! (1961)
- Come Over To My House (1966)
- !King Looie Katz (1969)
- The Lorax (1971)
- Marvin K. Mooney (1972)
- The Butter Battle Book (1984)

Table 1: Selected Texts by Dr. Seuss/Theo Leseig, pseudonyms of Theodore Seuss Giesel

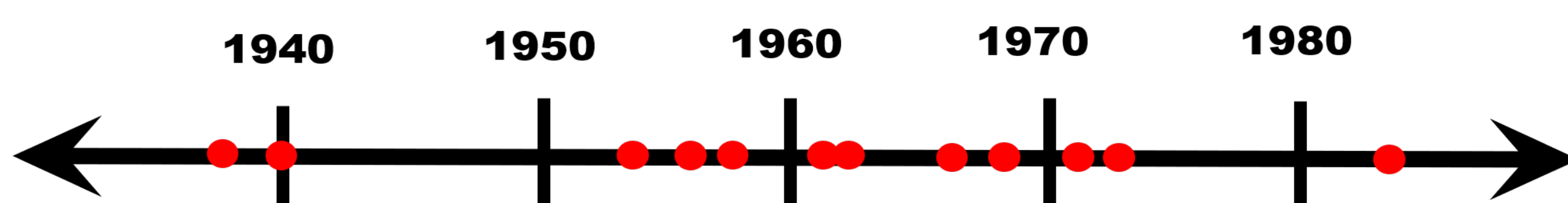


Figure 1. This timeline depicts the publication years of the 13 different selected Seuss children's books that contain the selected texts with culture ties. As evidenced by the dates of publication, Seuss's works of cultural influence picked up following World War II and continued until the mid 1980s.

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