

Modern cannibals of the wild essay



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The author, Basil Johnston, is trying to portray the connection between a mythical story from the Aboriginals and the way we are destroying the environment today, from his article *Modern Cannibals of the Wilds*, written in 1991. Johnston begins his article by telling a story about a habitat filled with many different species such as: fish, birds, insects and other wildlife. Then, Johnston continues to introduce a cannibalistic mythical creature called weendigoes, who feed on human flesh to try to satisfy his never-ending hunger.

After Johnston introduces the mythical weendigoes, he transitions into introducing the modern weendigoes who are reincarnated as humans, depicted as industries, corporations and multinationals who dwell on wealth and profits from forestry. As the story continues, the use of woodsmen with axes to harvest trees converts to clear-cutting tractors, as the corporations' greed increases. Industrial destruction of the ecosystems from greed, selfishness, and ignorance of the human nature will have negative impacts on the environment, wildlife and the climate change.

The main idea of the article is the affect of deforestation on the environment, wildlife and climate change. Deforestation results in soil deterioration.

Forests store nutrients that are required for all plant life. Without trees to fill these roles, many forest's lands can quickly become barren deserts.

Deforestation also impacts the habitat for million species. Majority of Earth's land animals and plants live in forests, and many cannot survive the deforestation that destroys their homes. Deforestation also drives climate change.

Forest soils are moist, but without protection from sun-blocking tree cover they quickly dry out. Trees also help conserve the water cycle by returning water vapor back into the atmosphere. Trees remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. Cutting down forests will cause a decline in photosynthetic activity which results in the atmosphere retaining higher levels of carbon dioxide. The modern weendigoe's nature of greed caused them to destroy what was once filled with abundance of life and beauty to destruction, death and ugliness (Johnston, 1991, p. 56).

Basil Johnston used his story telling to capture his reader's attention. He organizes his article by telling his readers about a cannibalistic creature called weendigoes who feed on human flesh to satisfy his never-ending hunger. "The more he ate, the larger he grew, the larger he grew, the greater his hunger" (Johnston, 1991, p. 55). Johnston uses the weendigoe's never ending appetite to represent real human cupidity (Johnston, 1991, p. 55). After the introduction of the mythical weendigoes he introduces the modern weendigoes who have refined their tastes but their greed is no less than their ancestor's.

Johnston uses comparisons that reveal similarities and draws parallel between the mythical weendigoes and the modern weendigoes. He uses this analogy to compare the never-endless hunger between the two, example, "but no matter how many victims a single weendigoe devoured raw, he could never satisfy his hunger" (Johnston, 1991, p. 55) and "the quantity always fell short of the expectations of the weendigoes, their masters. Is that all? Should there not be more? We demand a bigger return for our risks and investments (Johnston, 1991, p. 56).

He also compares the two weendigos by depicting the mythical weendigo as a savaged weendigo and the modern weendigo as the respectable businessman, “ the new, reincarnated weendigos are little different from their forebears. They are more omnivorous than their ancestors, however, and the modern breed wears elegant clothes and comports itself with an air of cultured and dignified respectability” (Johnston, 1991, p. 56). This essay also appeals to the emotional feelings of the reader. It attempts to show the pain and suffering big corporation are causing.

Johnston’s essay is intended for the public, government and especially forestry corporations. Johnston wants to convey to his audience to make changes in how we take our natural resources for granted. “ Now all the forests are in decline, the weendigos are looking at a future that offers scarcity. Many others are reassessing the weendigo’s accomplishments not in terms of dollars but in terms of damage – the damage they have inflicted on the environment and the climate and on botanical and zoological life” (Johnston, 1991, p. 7).

This article is intended to reduce paper usage and stand up against deforestation. Another purpose of this article is also to persuade large corporations to stop cutting down trees faster than they can produce. This article also challenges how people, government and forestry corporations can make positive changes to restore what was once destroyed. Little steps such a recycling and planting 5 trees after cutting 1 tree down is a start of a bright future for the ecosystem to rejuvenate what was once lost.

In conclusion, the greed, selfishness and ignorance of big forestry corporations have a negative impact on the environment, wildlife and climate change of our ecosystem. This article is not only intended for large forestry corporations but for everyone living on this planet. This article is a calling to make changes whether it's small or big so we can better take care of the planet we all call home. Johnston captures his reader's attention by his storytelling design of an article. He also captures his readers attention by writing about a topic that will impacts the lives of all the living organisms living on Earth.