

Tribhuvan University

Human-Nature Relationship in Carl Hiaasen's *Hoot*

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Degree of Master of Arts in English**

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Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that Mr. Purna Bahadur Lama has completed his thesis entitled "Human-Nature Relationship in Carl Hiaasen's *Hoot*" under my supervision and guidance. Mr. Lama carried out his research from May 2024 to December 2024. I, therefore, recommend his thesis to be submitted for *viva voce*.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Human-Nature Relationship in Carl Hiaasen's *Hoot*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur by Mr. PurnaBahadur Lama has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

This research explores how Carl Hiaasen's novel Hoot acknowledges children's contributions in saving the burrowing owls from the businessperson's capitalistic business venture. The poor child character, Mullet Fingers appears as a source of inspiration for other children and adults in the conservation of nature from anthropocentric business venture. Examining the relationship between nature and business venture, this study further critiques the anthropocentric activities of the business ventures from Chris Diehm's perspective on ecotage, ecodefense, and deep ecology. The findings connect unity, inspiration and struggle of children for the conservation of nature and inhabitants of the wildlife.

Key words: anthropocentrism, children's protest, business venture, wildlife protection

Hoot is Carl Hiaasen's novel in which one of the major characters, Mullet Fingers, starts his mission to save the innocent owls from the construction of pancake house in their natural habitat. Later, other children and adults join him in his owl-saving mission. Fingers is poor from every perspective. Despite this fact, he is able to get success in his mission. Fingers creates many obstacles to the construction of pancake house. Ultimately, the construction project is cancelled due to the severe attacks from the owl-saving side.

Mullet Fingers recognizes himself as an extended part of nature. For this reason, all the inhabitants of the nature is, for him, kith and kin. He takes initiative to protect nature and its inhabitants from the business persons who are trying to build the pancake company destroying the natural habitat of owls. Mullet Fingers and other children's nature-saving activities is intriguing. I found the poor kid's sympathy towards the burrowing owls and his struggle to save them from the construction company heart-touching and inspirational.

Considering these issues, this study explores children's contributions in saving the burrowing owls from the business persons' capitalistic business venture. To explore this issue, this research deals with these questions: Why is unity significant for the conservation of nature and its inhabitants? How does the child character, Mullet Fingers, become the source of inspiration for other children and adults for the conservation of nature and its inhabitants? How are nature and its inhabitants' conditions determined by the anthropocentric activities like business venture? Regarding this issue, the present study claims that anthropocentric activities like the business ventures cause damage and destruction to the nature and the creatures of the nature, and such damage and destruction can be minimized by the unified efforts of the pro-environmentalists like children of the novel.

A businessperson is supposed to do those activities, which are economically promising and beneficial. Furthermore, except in some cases, it is assumed that businesspersons do not care about other things except profit. This can be observed in *Hoot*. This novel portrays the

implications of anthropocentric activities for the burrowing owls specifically and all the creatures generally. The child characters, Roy Eberhart, Mullet Fingers and Beatrice Leep, undertake numerous risky actions to save the burrowing owls' habitat from being destroyed by the construction of pancake house. Ultimately, they succeed to stop the construction of the pancake house. This study investigates Mullet Fingers' action as a source of inspiration for other characters for the conservation of nature and burrowing owls, finds out how the anthropocentric human activities like business ventures determine the conditions of nature and its inhabitants, identifies the significance of unity in the conservation of nature and its creatures.

Every creature on this earth is connected to each other. All the creatures of this earth need air, water, sun, food and other things to survive. If these things of daily consumption are good, they affect positively to the health. If these things are not good, it will affect health negatively. If so is the reality and fact, why the human being, one of the inhabitants of this earth, are increasingly destroying and damaging earth. Human beings are supposed to be the greatest and wisest creature of this earth. That is why, they have some responsibilities to nature and other creatures. They should be aware of the environmental degradation. For this awareness, environmental education should be given to all people since "[t]he primary goal of environmental education is to develop citizens who are knowledgeable about the world around them and involved in working toward a more livable future" (O' Brien and K Stoner 14). Educated citizens feel responsible toward nature and its inhabitants. Therefore, it is a country's foremost responsibility to make their citizens aware of the environment and its biodiversity.

For the purpose of environmental conservation, all the persons, including children, should be made aware of the environmental education to prevent the environmental degradation. Otherwise, the environment will be polluted in such a way that none will be able

to protect it even if they give their complete effort or focus. People have to share the responsibilities among all the people to save the environment. School's curriculum should include the environmental issues. All the people should be encouraged to save the environment for the better and healthier lives of all the earthly creatures including human beings. Elena McGuire and Patrick Della Croce argue, "one way to encourage adult environmental responsibility is to expose and educate children about the environment"(1879). They believe in the environmental education and encouragement for the conservation of the nature. By exposing children to the environmental education, they can be made aware for the conservation of the nature. *Hoots* is the book that intends to give the children the environmental education and encouragement. Elena MacGuire and Patrick Della Croce mention this book this way:

The book centers on a boy named Roy who becomes involved in a fight against the construction of a pancake house on top of endangered burrowing owls' habitat.

When coded, the owls represent an animal primary character. Since the owls are wild, they fall into the wild character type. The fight against the human's planned destruction of nature is a human induced conflict. Due to the children's passion and activism, the book conveys the eco message.(1884)

Children take so much risk to save the burrowing owls. They are wholeheartedly eager to save the burrowing owls. The entire novel deals the passion of children to save the owls. They are actively involved in the mission. They do not leave their mission until they get success. Therefore, they are activists in nature-saving mission. The construction of the pancake house is bound to bring the destruction to the burrowing owls' habitats. Roy, Mullet Finger and other characters fight against the construction just to save the nature and its inhabitants- burrowing owls. Ultimately, the construction plan is thwarted by the unified efforts of all the characters including parents of those children.

Actually, Roy is motivated by Mullet Fingers. Janet Ruth Heller explains friendship between Mullet Fingers and Roy and their effort to save the burrowing owls this way: "Hiaasen also develops a mystery surrounding a stranger Roy's age who lurks near the Coconut Cove restaurant construction site and creates havoc to save the local burrowing owls. Roy befriends stranger and assist him"(519). While Roy was going to his school by bus, he, for the first time, sees Mullet Fingers running on the road without wearing shoes on his feet. From that time on, Roy follows Mullet Fingers and ultimately befriends him and assists him in the efforts of saving the burrowing owls from the construction of the pancake house.

Despite the fact that they are children, they perform a great task in saving the owls from the construction company. Adult are not as conscious as the child. Children are fighting for the saving of the nature but the adults are not taking the lead. Li Dan says, "Children have purest human nature, their minds have not been polluted by modern industrial civilization. . . . They had the characteristics that adults did not have" (29-30). Children have the pure heart. That's why, they do not like to look at the pains of other creatures. They have the kind heart and high degree of sympathy and empathy. Due to this fact, the children are taking the initiative to save the nature and the burrowing owls. Dan echoes the similar sentiment in these words: "For William Wordsworth nature is like his mother, his teacher, his friend and his lover. Nature was representative of perfect humanity. Nature nourished and soothed the human mind, and provided pleasure and education" (Dan 30). Nature is everything for the child who has no near and dear one. Mullet Fingers has not his own father with him. His mother is living with his step-father. For this reason, he has no one to love and caress him with pure heart. That's why, he might have been the nature-lover.

Mullet Fingers has no home. As a homeless boy, he plans to save the burrowing owls' habitat. It seems impossible at the first glimpse. John Stephen comments on the ethics of care

in the following way: "Known for most of the book as 'Mullet Fingers', the mysterious boy is depicted as a 'wild child' and becomes an object of deep concern for Roy, in whom he ignites empathy and ethics of care." Roy, when he was on the morning ride to his school, Trace Middle, he saw Mullet Fingers running along the sidewalks barefoot for the first time. Mullet Fingers is unlike other boys. Owing to this reason, Roy is intrigued by the sight of him.

From this time on, Roy is following and trying to find about him all the time. Roy learns more and more in his every attempt to know him. Ultimately, he finds most of the things about Fingers. After knowing about Fingers, Roy follows his path of nature-saving. Mullet Fingers is meticulously and heartedly working for the saving of the owls alone in the beginning. Later on, he inspires Roy and Beatrice Leep and ultimately many children and adults for the stopping of the pancake house- construction and conservations of owls and nature. He does not care for his comfort and easiness. He has no shoe to wear on, and no proper and safe place to spend the day and night. Despite these, he, until he gets success, continuously creates havoc to the construction site to save the burrowing owls from the construction of pancake house. He does great job like a mature person.

A mature person is not the only person who can save the nature and its habitants but even an immature and poor children can save them. In the novel, the children are able to save the owls from construction of pancake house. The novel shows courage of the children to save the burrowing owls. Cyndi Giorgis and Nancy J. Johnson give a glimpse of children's activities. They explain, "Carl Hiaasen's novel *Hoot* shows what can happen when a group of children use their heads to fight for what they believe to be right and, in the process, become unlikely allies to some endangered miniature owls"(844). The mission is led by Mullet Fingers, a child. He inspires all the children. After being inspired by him, all the children participate using their own head and heart. Fingers' owl-saving group takes part in the fighting for what they believe to be right. The book is the story of the fighting for the

conservation of the nature and creatures by a group of children who use their heads. Moreover, it shows that the foremost thing for the human beings to succeed is the desire to do something by heart. The present study also asserts that success can be achieved by the unity, inspiration and perseverance.

Although the novel seems to have been written for young readers, the aim of this book is not only to give the environmental knowledge and inspiration to the young readers only. It intends to give the knowledge to all the readers who show the interest in the environment and the nature. Regarding this issue, David Aitchison makes the following observation:

In 2003, the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, named *Hoot* a Newbery Honor book, qualifying Hiaasen's novel for its annual list of Notable Children's Book. Situating it as a work for "older readers" (ages eleven to fourteen), the list summarizes and applauds the novel as a "wildly funny satire . . . both a rollicking adventure and a serious examination of values that threaten our environment. (144)

The book is especially for the children aged eleven to fourteen. Despite this fact, it is for all the readers of all ages since it is an environmental book. An environmental book is good for people of all the ages- it has no limitation of age, gender and interest. It is the responsibility of all the human beings to keep their home (earth) safe and clean. Furthermore, Sondra Lipshutz et al. put forward their view on the book commenting on its style and intended readers. They argue:

We selected *Hoot* because while it is written for young readers, the style is mature and the prevalence of some "dark" linguistic elements makes the book appropriate for diverse reading levels. We also choose *Hoot* for its content; the main environmental themes represented are anti-development and conservation of a protected species. Other topics surface as well, such as citizen activism, the intrinsic

value of nature, and the importance of nature in urban environments. Also, the novel touches on the lack of awareness with which the general public regards nature. At the conclusion of the book, characters become aware of the natural eco-systems in their community. Hence, the novel promotes recognition of human co-existence with nature. (7-8)

The novel presents the anti-developmental theme. The development for the human beings may be destruction for other non-human beings. The development should not be anthropocentric alone. If something is anthropocentric alone, it may prove harmful for other creatures and nature. While doing some human-centric activities, one has to be aware of these things. The co-existence is strictly needed for the betterment of all the earthly creatures.

In this manner, all the articles and reviews discussed above have talked about what this book is about and who this book's intended readers are. They have even touched upon the environmental issues. However, they have not carried out an in-depth research on human-nature relations against the backdrop of the capitalistic human activities regarding *Hoot*. Furthermore, they have not explored why children are more likely to have more care for nature than adults are. Therefore, this study seeks to fulfill these gaps in knowledge in relation to the novel selected for this study.

There are no statistical data for this study. That is why, this research is qualitative and analytical in nature. A poor boy, Mullet Fingers and other children are involving in the owl and nature-saving activities. Their involvement and success intrigued me to explore more about it. Furthermore, I wanted to know how they became able to get success being a small children. So, I chose *Hoot* as primary text.

A research needs a particular perspective or theoretical hue to give the research a particular flavor. For this reason, this research employs Chris Diehm's perspective on ecotage, ecodefense and deep ecology as the theoretical tool of this research. In this article, he

combines his idea with ecology theorists, Dave Foreman, Arne Naess, and Bron Taylor's idea regarding the defense against intruder and empathetic attitude towards other non-human creatures. Diehm introduces his article by mentioning the history of 'ecotage' this way:

Over the past several decades, thousands of environmentally-motivated acts of sabotage-commonly referred to as "ecosabotage" or "ecotage"- have caused millions of dollars in damage to individuals, organizations, businesses and governments involved in project with controversial environmental effects. (61)

In the beginning of his article, he brings the history of the monetary damage brought about by the ecotage activities or conservational activities. In addition, he introduces the term 'sabotage', 'ecotage' or 'ecosabotage'. The sabotage is the term that denotes the deliberate damage to equipment, things and machines to prevent something. Furthermore, he mentions:

The thinking here, in other words, is that if nature is an extended part of oneself, then to protect it is to protect one's Self, and thus property destruction on nature's behalf is as permissible as property destruction on behalf of oneself. In short, if one has identified with nature, then ecotage is every bit as justifiable as self-defense, because it is Self-defense. (67-68)

The given lines from Diehm's article, "Ecotage, Ecodefense, and Deep Ecology" suggests that if someone thinks nature as an integral part of his/her life, he/she must protect the nature by using whatever means are available. Protection of loved things is like the protection of his own belongings from the robber. He believes that identifications and connection with nature makes one to take it as oneself. Furthermore, he mentions:

A similarly non-instrumentalist value-orientation also issue from identification-as-kinship, yet here, rather than stemming from the expansion of an intrinsically valuable self, such as orientation stems from an expanded awareness of other-than-human-others, an awareness that allows one to see that they, too, have a value

irreducible to their utility. That is, through this type of identification one becomes aware of other-than-human beings as entities of the same sort as oneself, and thus one is led to ascribe to them value of the same sort as oneself as that which is ascribed to oneself. (66)

The above quotation implicitly mentions that the awareness to and identification of other non-human beings arouses the feeling of kinship. And it helps to value their existence as same as theirs. When the value is given to something, then the respect to that thing appears. As a result, the issue of protection and preservation comes in the front. In addition, he reveals his opinion about the eco-defense this way:

In its particulars, the eco-defense argument is a variant of the position that asserts that while it is usually wrong to damage or destroy another person's private property, it is also usually permissible to defend oneself against undue harm or violation, and if self-defense ever were to require breaking the prohibition against the property destruction, self-defense would take priority and the property destruction would be morally justified. (67)

Here, Diehm tries to define the eco-defense term metaphorically. Eco-defense is the defending of the nature by using various tactics. When a person understands nature as his own belonging or a kin, he/she tries his/her best to protect it. This is a form of self-defense and for self-defense one can destroy the property or go beyond the rules and regulations. And this act of property destruction and going beyond rules and regulations is a sheer work of self-defense according to the author. He puts his idea simply saying that "if sabotage on behalf of other morally valuable humans is justifiable, then so is ecotage"(72). According to Diehm, if the protection for the safety is morally right, then the protection of nature or ecology is also right and morally justifiable.

Mullet Fingers has the deep intimacy with owls and nature. As above theorist mentioned that the 'identifications-as-kinship' makes one to protect that very thing. Mullet Fingers has identified the owls and other creatures of the forest as his kin. That's why, he is involving in the conservational activities. All the activities he has done to save the nature and its creatures are justifiable from the perspective of Diehm. He is involving to save his kin-owls and other creatures of the nature. It is an act of 'ecodefense' or an act of 'ecotage'.

Therefore, Mullet Fingers' destruction of the property of pancake company falls under the sheer act of 'ecosabotage' or 'ecotage'. Human beings should not ignore other creatures' existence while doing various activities including business ventures. In *Hoot*, human beings' ignorance to the other creatures of the nature can be seen. Human beings' carelessness can cause great damage to the nature and natural habitats of all other creatures. Hein Stein, in this regard, argues, "Unfortunately, we are increasingly destroying the habitats of animals. On the one hand, we are clearing the forests and polluting seas and coastal areas. On the other hand, we are trying to protect the environment by recycling waste, building national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, and launching breeding programmes in zoos" (56). Stein's lines hint that people are continuously destroying the nature and its inhabitants. They are not only destroying the land; they are also destroying the water bodies.

On the other hand, they are showing that they care for nature by involving in various types of nature-saving hypocritical activities. It means human beings are not involving genuinely in the conservational activities. Furthermore, Stein claims, "Almost all plants and animals need air, water, light, and nutrition to grow"(58). All the creatures need these things regularly. So, these things should be pure to make their body pure. But, people are polluting all these things. These things are integral parts of the human beings. Being such an integral part, humans are not caring it. The earth is not human beings' personal property; it is common

home shared by all the earthly creatures. Therefore, if they control and shape the nature, it is injustice to all other earthly creatures.

Human beings' entry to the natural habitats of the earthly creatures creates problem to the creatures especially living in the ground. There are many creatures that live in the ground. If the human beings walk over there, they are likely to be killed by being trodden. The small creatures living in the land and their habitats are affected by such a way. This type of incidence can be seen in the novel, too. Officer Delinko treads on the owl's habitat unknowingly. Later Delinko knows it from Curly: "That's what you tripped over" (Hiaasen 6). This line clearly shows that Curly, the construction foreman knows that owls live there but he is ignoring their existence for his and his company's profit. Officer Delinko learns the owls' existence from Curly. After knowing about it Officer Delinko, unlike Curly, shows the concern for the owl's existence: "What'sgonna happen to them?" Officer Delinko asked. "Once starting bulldozing, I mean"(7). It seems that Officer Delinko is pro-environmentalist since he is showing the deep concern for the burrowing owls. He is questioning about owls' existence after the completion of pancake building.

In the similar manner, believes that human beings have no right to control and destroy nature and other creatures' habitat for their benefits. In the novel, pancake-company is trying to control the nature for its own benefits. Curly, the pancake house-building foreman knows about the owl's existence there in the construction site but he does not care about it. Nature and human are interrelated to each other. Nature greatly influences human culture. In return, "culture plays a role when establishing a connection with nature"(Donnell and Rinkoff 82). The culture is an integral part of the nature.

That is why, it is necessary to develop the positive culture to make the healthy and pure environment. Certainly, the culture of nature-saving will affect the future environment positively. In a way, the novel presents the nature-saving culture of the children. Human

beings' activities have something to do with the nature. Once all the world was in its pristine condition.

Likewise, in the beginning of the novel, habitat of the burrowing owl is in the pristine condition. No human activity has affected it. Later, the pristine condition of nature is interfered with human beings. After interference, it has started to lose its pristine and wild beauty. The characters of the novel struggle to preserve the wilderness for the sake of both human being and other earthly creatures. Mullet Fingers is the first child who is trying to preserve the pristine and wild beauty of the nature. Roy is one of the children who is also trying to preserve the pristineness and wilderness. He, for the first time, sees Mullet Fingers running on the road without wearing anything on his feet. From this very time of seeing Mullet Fingers, Roy starts to follow him. Roy is very curious to know about that running boy, Mullet Fingers. When Beatrice Leep asks Roy about her step-brother Mullet Fingers, and why he is following him, Roy responds in this way: "There was something about the look on the boy's face when he went running past the school bus those days; something urgent and determined and unforgettable" (Hiaasen 69). Roy is impressed by Mullet Fingers in his first encounter.

Later on, Roy follows and shows sympathy to Mullet Fingers. Roy's sympathy to Mullet Fingers can be realized in this line by Roy to Beatrice: "Look, the kid needs shoes. He could step on broken glass or rusty nails...or even a cottonmouth" (69). Roy is worried about the poor condition of Mullet Fingers. Hence, he wants to give Mullet Fingers a pair of shoes. Roy is attracted to the strange personality of Mullet Fingers.

Ultimately, Roy comes to know who Mullet Finger is and what he is doing. The following lines from the study by John Stephen clearly show how much Roy is influenced by Mullet Fingers:

The boy is without a home or family, does not wear shoes or attend school, but when Roy does get to know him and learns his passion for protecting local ecology, Roy is in turn inspired to play a pivotal role in saving a colony of burrowing owls threatened by illegal development. The interdependence of the three the campaign fosters does not elide their irreducible differences, however, and while companionship of a loose kind does develop among Roy, 'Mullet Fingers' and Beatrice, none of them seeks a bond closer than that inspired by their ethical imperative. (Stephen)

When Roy knows about Mullet Fingers' target to save the burrowing owls from businessperson's construction of pancake house-building on burrowing owls' habitat, he becomes motivated and assists him to save the owls. These lines from the book show how much Roy is influenced by Mullet Fingers and what Mullet Fingers really doing:

That night, lying in bed, Roy felt stronger connection to Mullet Fingers, and a better understanding of the boy's private crusade against the pancake house. It was not just about the owls, it was about everything-all the birds and animals, all the wild places that were in danger of being wiped out. No wonder the kid was mad, Roy thought, and no wonder he was so determined. (Hiaasen 193)

The given quotation shows the motivation and inspiration Roy gets from Mullet Fingers. He feels that he has understood Mullet Fingers. He feels intimacy with Mullet Fingers. Here, he has used the term 'crusade' to refer Mullet Fingers' nature-saving activities. The term 'crusade' is religious term that means a religious war. Using this term suggests that Mullet Fingers and Roy believe in "environmentalism as religion".

Beatrice Leep is also bound by the common threat, i.e. the love for the nature. They three become united to save the burrowing owls. This binding of theirs is caused by the learning of Mullet Fingers' pure love to nature and burrowing owls. They all have cherished and

nourished the same ecological ethics. So, they, wholeheartedly move ahead to their destination. Mullet Fingers is the main source of this relationship. Roy, after being inspired by Mullet Fingers, starts to the line of Mullet Fingers. He does many things to save the nature and burrowing owls.

Roy's father has the job in law enforcement. Roy does not tell about Mullet Fingers' vandalism to save the burrowing owls. Roy decides "not to tell his parents about his encounter with Mullet Fingers, the running boy. Being in law enforcement, Roy's father was required to report all crimes, even truancy. Roy did not want to get the kid in trouble"(Hiaasen 54). Roy fears that if he tells his father about the strange boy, his father will catch the boy for the vandalism and truancy. Therefore, Roy decides not to tell that secret to his father for owl and Mullet Fingers' sake. Roy does it because he likes Mullet Fingers' owl-saving mission. Liking somebody's activity means being motivated by his/her acts. If Roy had not liked Mullet Fingers' owl-saving mission, he would have ignored Mullet Fingers or he would have told his father about it. But he does not do these things rather supports Mullet Fingers. Not only does Roy lie to his father but he also lies to his mother to save and support Mullet Fingers. Beatrice Leep is already supporting Mullet Fingers and his owl-saving mission. She wants to protect her step-brother Mullet Fingers from any kind of possible danger from businessperson. Hence, Beatrice Leep firstly does not tell about Mullet Fingers' mission. Later on, when she believes in Roy, she reveals the secret mission of owl-saving. Beatrice Leep reveals her relationship with Roy.

Now, the three children- Mullet Fingers, Roy and Beatrice Leep- are united in the owl and its habitat-saving mission from construction project on the owls' habitat. Later on, Officer Delinko, who is trying to find about the vandals, starts to change his intention to arrest the vandals. He realizes that vandals are creating obstacle to stop the construction of the pancake house. Officer Delinko is indirectly united with Mullet Fingers'team. He also expresses his

worries to Curly, the construction foreman, about the destruction of owls' habitat while building the pancake house. After knowing the reality of construction projects' destructive effect on burrowing owls, Officer Delinko says to Curly, "What's gonna happen to them? Once you start bulldozing, I mean"(7). Officer Delinko is sympathetic to owls and owls' habitat. So, he questions Curly, the construction foreman, about the probable destruction of owl's habitat.

Mullet Fingers has no permanent settlement. He is a homeless and parentless child. He does not have enough food for eating and he has no proper clothing and shelter. Despite these things, he has given his whole life to save owls' habitat from destructive construction of pancake house. Businesspersons are ready to build the house. But the repeated disturbance created by Mullet Fingers has caused a great delay in the construction of the pancake house. The narrator reflects, "Supervising a construction job was a large responsibility, and every morning brought new obstacles and headaches. Thanks to the mystery intruders, the pancake house project already was two weeks behind schedule"(Hiaason 82). The intruders cause delay in pancake house construction. It causes tension and loss of money to the construction project. For this reason, all the members of construction become tensed and angry.

The delay helps pro-environmentalists to be organized. Owl-saving team gathers some information about the owls and the things related to the construction. Furthermore, they have also gathered support from other persons, including their classmates and class teacher. The mission of owls' habitat-saving is initiated by Mullet Fingers and later many children or pro-environmentalists join him in his owl-saving mission. In the beginning, Officer Delinko, was in the arresting mission to owl-saving team, who had vandalized the construction site. Later on, he understands why the vandals are doing these things. He says to Curly, "I am worried about the owls" (235). He also questions Curly about the destruction of owl's habitat. This shows that he is sympathetic and pro-environmentalist. This questioning of Officer

Delinko shows that he is directly or indirectly connected to owl-saving mission. Further, he expresses his worries in this way: "Darkness had fallen on the construction site and swallows were swooping back and forth, chasing mosquitoes. Tomorrow was the big day. 'Come on, I saw 'em with my own eyes,' the patrolman said. 'Is not there way to, like, move 'em someplace safe?'" (235). He seems very worried about those owls. He is pre-occupied with the future of burrowing owls. He is patrolman of the construction site.

On one hand, he is a patrolman of construction site. Therefore, his responsibility is to protect that construction project. On the other hand, he knows about the threat to owls. For this reason, he is worried about both construction site and burrowing owls. So, he is searching for the third way to both. Officer Delinko's third way is to let the vandals or the Fingers' owl saving team continue their vandalism for saving owls. No other option seems to satisfy his soul. In this difficult situation, Fingers becomes the important tool for him as he is naturally interested in nature and owl-saving.

Not surprisingly, Fingers seems to be uninterested in school education. Rather he seems to be nature-learner. Nature learners are those, who show the keen interest in learning from nature. Learning from nature is good for sound and pure heart. It develops sympathetic feeling and makes people learn about the nature's beauty. According to Ruth A. Wilson, "For the young child, the world of nature is an especially appropriate avenue for fostering an appreciation of beauty"(Wilson 4). Children learn many things from nature. Nature and beauty are connected to each other. Children should be made to learn from nature. Great educational theorist Jean Jacques Rousseau also supports this type of learning. Learning from nature is fruitful for all age groups. Children should be made to interact with the nature since "interacting with nature opens up a whole new world for many children"(N. Kupetz and M. Twiest 60). It is imperative to be interactive to be aware of nature and develop the new and novel attitude towards nature. The close proximity with nature gives many experiences to

understand the nature. Mullet Fingers is this type of learner and person because he has given priority to nature and has left formal school.

Furthermore, he loves all the birds that's why he is compelled to love the nature for the protection of those birds. Fingers reveals his love for birds in this way: "But no, I love birds! All birds!" (Hiaasen 252). From this line, it can be deduced that Fingers loves all the birds. That's why, he is fighting for the protection of their habitat. This fighting, naturally compels him to fight against the pancake house construction which is going to be built on the natural habitat of owls. Roy, who is following Fingers is supporting Fingers in his nature-saving mission.

Roy tells the class about the owls in Trace Middle School of Coconut Cove to motivate and inform others about it. By listening to Roy, students feel motivated and worried about owls' existence. There is a great ceremony to be held by Mother Paula's All American Pancake House. All are invited to celebrate it. All come to the ceremony but not for the celebration but for the protest. All the owl-savers who have been motivated by Mullet Fingers' team come to ceremony surprisingly. It is surprising in the sense that they were not expected by owl-saving team. They also bring their parents to the ceremony. The following lines give one a glimpse of who come to the ceremony:

At ten minutes to noon, Roy and Beatrice arrived; this time she rode the handlebars and he pedalled, the camera stowed safely in his backpack. They were startled to see that they were not the only ones to show up—the freckle-faced boy, the red-haired girl, and at least half of Mr. Ryan's history class were already there, along with a bunch of parents. 'What in the world' d you say to those kids yesterday?' Beatrice asked. 'You promise 'em free flapjacks or somethin'?' He got another pleasant surprise when a van from the Trace Middle School Athletic Department rolled up

and Beatrice's soccer teammates piled out, some of them carrying posters. (Hiaason 244)

Roy and Beatrice Leep's friends come there to support owl-saving mission and to oppose pancake house. Some of Roy's friends bring their parents along with them. Now, all are united to save burrowing owls from being destroyed by business persons. After being motivated by Mullet Fingers, Roy and Beatrice Leep also take part in the mission. After sometime, Roy observes, "Beatrice had been joined by the entire soccer team, linking arms in a silent chain. They were tall, strong, girls who weren't the least bit intimidated by Chuck Muckle's blustery threats"(Hiaason 256). Later on, all the friends of Beatrice join Beatrice to protest against the pancake house construction. All are united in the owl-saving mission. All the attendees in Mother Paula's celebration start protesting against Mother Paula. The narrator observes, "By now, the parents in the crowd were talking loudly and pointing at the den holes. A few of the schoolkids started chanting in support of Roy, and Beatrice's soccer teammates began waving their hand-lettered signs"(248). Now, all the attendees are supporting Roy's owl-saving team. Some has taken the hand-lettered signs that read: "BIRDKILLERS GO HOME", "SAVETHEOWLS, BURYTHEBUTTERMILKS!"(248). Protesters give up the tasty buttermilks or pancakes to save the burrowing owls and nature. They are ready to stop eating those delicacies for the owls and other birds.

Later on, after being united, Fingers and other people openly protest against the construction of pancake house. They do not even fear to stand against them. Previously, when they were alone it was not possible to stand alone and protest openly. This open and unified protest brought great energy and courage to stand against the construction of the pancake house openly. In the beginning of the novel, Mullet Fingers was secretly conducting a protesting-mission which was very dangerous and risky. For this mission, he took great risks. Now, after being united, his fear has escaped and his strength has increased by others'

company. The secret behind this successful protest is unity of the pro-environmentalists.

Every action, when it is done in unity, it is likely to be successful.

Not only does Mullet Fingers love but he loves all the birds. He wants to protect all the birds. While protesting against Mother Paula's All American Pancake House, he says, "You bury those birds,' 'you gotta bury me, too.' 'But no, I love birds! All birds!'"(Hiaason 251-52). The above lines clearly suggest that Mullet Fingers does not only love owls but he loves all birds. Loving all the birds means he is nature-lover and pro-environmentalist.

In the novel, Mother Paula is the business company which makes the different types of cakes. It is expanding its business throughout America. It wants to build another building in Coconut Cove to expand its business. They are planning to construct business in the natural habitat of burrowing owl. It suggests that they are going against nature. They are ignoring the existence of nature and burrowing owls for the money. Curly, construction foreman knows that there is owl's habitat where they are planning to make the building for the selling of their cakes. The given lines say a lot about it:

Walking back toward the patrol car, the policeman stumbled and fell down. Curly grabbed him under one arm and hoisted him to his feet. Both men were mildly embarrassed. 'Stupid owls,' said Curly. The policeman brushed the dirt and grass burs off his uniform. 'You say owls?' Curly gestured at a hole in the ground. It was as big around as one of Mother Paula's famous buttermilk flapjacks. A mound of loose white sand was visible at the entrance. 'That's what you tripped over,' Curly informed Officer Delinko. (Hiaason 5-6)

Curly, the construction foreman, knows that there is owl's habitat in the construction site.

Despite this, he is ignoring owls' existence. He is not thinking about saving the owls from the danger and destruction rather they are just planning to construct the building to sell the cakes.

There are holes as well to prove the existence of the owls. Officer Delinko asks,

"What'sgonna happen to them?"(7). Officer Delinko, who is trying to find out the vandals, seems to be aware of the owls' existence. He questions foreman Curly about the future of the owls. This suggests that Officer Delinko is pro-environmentalist. His questioning shows his worries towards the other creatures' existence.

In the novel, humans look like the determiners of the fate of other creatures. They have already done many things to destroy the owl's habitat. It means they have already interfered with the owl's natural habitat because they have brought many things and machines to make the building. These things might have surely caused some disturbances in the owls' habitat. They are treading the burrows under the earth. This treading of holes is treading in their existence. The pancake business company is controlling and using the owl's habitat for their benefits. Their activities have caused great problems to the existence of owls and other creatures that live with the owls in and around the owl's habitat. Like this all creatures' existence is determined by human capitalist business venture.

Any capitalist business venture has some sort of effect on nature and its inhabitants. Capitalists always aim to earn the profit by applying whatever available to them. They do not care about other people and creatures' existence. They try their best to earn profit by taking strategic actions. Regarding this, Noel Castree claims, "What is more, some capitalists remain determined to physically remake nature, rather than adapt to it, as they harness the latest science to their profit –seeking ventures"(Castree 11). They do not want to adapt to nature rather they want to control it for their own profit. Human beings are the only creatures, who harness the nature for their benefits. Curly, the construction foreman of Mother Paula is persistent in his mission of controlling the nature. He is trying his best to build the pancake house on the natural habitat of burrowing owls. Curly told Officer Delinko to forget about the burrowing owls' existence in a cruel way. He is the representative of the capitalist businessman. He replies to Officer Delinko's curiosity about the burrowing owl this way:

"Want my advice? Don't think about it (owls). Put it out of your mind, is what I do"(235).

Officer Delinko is worried about the future of burrowing owls. He wants to save them by moving to the better place if it is possible but Curly, who is from the business company's side, wants to ignore the existence of the burrowing owls. Rather he advises Officer Delinko not to think about the burrowing owls and their habitat. Curly is doing what a true business person thinks up- profit gaining in whatever situation.

In this capitalist era, all the people have the influence of capitalism. Because of this reason, they do everything for their own benefits. People in this modern world are very selfish and money-minded. They apply their money-occupied mind everywhere. They try to get profit everywhere. They even do not care the nature and other creatures. Exactly, this reality can be seen in the novel. Despite Curly, the construction foreman's knowledge that owls live there in the construction site, he is planning to construct the building above it rather than stopping it. This fact shows that humans do not think about nature and its creatures for some profits. They only think about their existence.

According to the ecological perspective, destruction of owl's habitat is not only destruction of owl's habitat but it is the destruction of the all creatures of this earth. When some problem occurs in one creature of food chain, all the creatures are affected less or more. Naturally, saving of this food chain is the saving of all the creatures and nature. The human beings are acting in such a way that they are at the center of this earth. They are doing everything for them. This type of human-centric attitude and action which is termed 'anthropocentrism' can be seen in every action. Our traditional human-centered perspective is very harmful for the other creatures' existence. All the earthly creatures are dependent on this earth's resources. These resources are being polluted by the human-centric actions. Those human-centric actions are the sole reason that determines other creatures' existence.

Development for the human beings may prove destruction to other non-human creatures. Human being should be very careful while doing the developmental activities for the protection of the diversity. Such type of development that brings the destruction to other creatures is not actually development rather it is destruction. It means development should not be anthropocentric. This anthropocentric development is not as such beneficial for human beings as it seems in the first glimpse. Whatever is done by human beings, it is harmful for the existence for other creatures.

Therefore, all the earthly creatures should be left untouched by the human activities because those activities might not be beneficial for other creatures as they believed in surface level. If the innocent creatures suffer a lot because of human activities, injustice is inflicted on them. *Hoot* shows the injustice done to owls by some money-minded business person. There should be given attention to other inhabitants to maintain ecological balance and justice to all the creatures of the nature. Inhabitants of the nature should be protected for not only for the sake of them. The protection of the inhabitants of the nature is protection of entire human beings.

In the same way, protection of one creature of nature is protection of entire creatures because there is inseparable relationship among them. In a way, the relationship among the earthly creatures is like the web in which every thread is connected to each other. In this regard, Arne Naess in his article "The Deep Ecology Movement" says, "So called simple lower or primitive species of plants and animals contribute essentially to richness and diversity of life"(5). All the earthly flora and fauna are contributing for each other's lives. To put it another way, they all have the symbiotic relationship. That's why, one who is aware of this fact, should contribute in the protection of the nature and its inhabitants by forming a pro-environmentalist group or by being united to protect them. There needs inspirational source for the unity. Therefore, one should try to inspire others to be united.

Unity as well as inspiration is very important for the conservation of the nature and its inhabitants. Unity and inspiration should go together for the conservation of nature. If these are focused on something, it causes great change as in the novel. In the beginning of the novel, Mullet Fingers is alone trying to save the owls secretly but he is unable to do it because he is alone to save the burrowing owls. After being united with other persons, he succeeds in his owl-saving mission. Inspired by his benevolent mission, other people join him in his mission.

Those people who do not think about the nature and its inhabitants can be made to think by motivating them like in *Hoot*. Mullet Fingers is the source of motivation to protect the nature and burrowing owls. All the characters were not taking any action against the building of pancake house before Mullet Fingers' inspiration by his actions and activities. Later, Roy knows about Mullet Fingers' contribution in saving the nature and burrowing owls. Before knowing this, he is not taking any action. After knowing it, he starts to assist Mullet Fingers. Furthermore, he starts to be another source of motivation for other characters. Children who are studying in Trace Middle with him are also inspired by Roy. Ultimately, Roy's classmates come to the ceremony to protest against the construction of pancake house. In the beginning, there was none except Mullet Fingers. Later, other character joins him in the owl and natural habitat-saving. Ultimately, almost all the characters are united to protest against construction of the pancake house.

Mullet Fingers is singlehandedly trying to save the burrowing owls by creating the obstacles to the construction of the pancake house. Later, Roy and Beatrice assist him. They fear that the construction company will know their protesting activities. It means they create problems to the construction of pancake house secretly. They are compelled to hide because they are only three at that time. Later, when they and other characters become united they succeed their mission. It means they get victory over the construction company. They get

victory because of their unity. At last, all the children and parents join the protest. This unity proves the powerful tool of success. Unity is very important to get the success.

The children have united to save the burrowing owls and nature towards which they have the feeling of kinship. They have felt the nature and its inhabitants as an extended part of themselves as mentioned by Diehm. In this regard, Diehm mentions, "if nature is extended part of oneself, then to protect it is to protect one's Self, and thus property destruction on nature's behalf is as permissible as property destruction on behalf of oneself"(67). According to Diehm, when somebody takes nature as an extended part of himself/herself, then the protection of it is as same as protection of himself/herself. Mullet Fingers and other children do the very thing as mentioned by Diehm. Mullet Fingers thinks nature as an extended part of himself. Therefore, he takes initiative to protect them.

Furthermore, Mullet Fingers and other children's destruction of the property is permissible from the perspective of Diehm. Diehm gives the term "ecotage" or "ecosabotage" to such act of property destruction. All the activities that are done by the children to save nature and its inhabitants are sheer act of an "ecosabotage".

Whatever human beings do, it has something to do with the nature and its inhabitants as in the novel. What would have happened if Mullet Fingers had not taken the initiative? Certainly, the pancake company would build the pancake house and the burrowing owls would have been died under the earth or all the burrowing owls would die by being buried. From all the afore-mentioned analysis, it can be said that nature and its inhabitants can be saved by the unified efforts of pro-environmentalist, a child or person. Anyone can be the source of inspiration for the conservation of nature and its inhabitants and anthropocentric activities cause damage and destruction to the nature and its inhabitants

In conclusion, the activities of human beings affect the lives of the earthly creatures. Human beings' activities like the business venture are causing great damage to other

creatures' existence. Mullet Fingers in one of his revealing statements clearly mentions that he loves not only owls but loves all the birds. To love these birds means to think about their life, future and existence. He is struggling to save the natural habitat to save the burrowing owls and other birds. He makes full effort to save the nature. He is consistently moving toward his mission. When Roy knows Fingers' benign intention to save the innocent creature, he is inspired and thus follows him. Similarly, all other children join hands to support his benign mission to save the nature. When other children and adults join him, Fingers achieves success in his mission of saving owls and their habitat. They create a lot of obstacles to the construction company to stop them. They get success after they become united. Unity has been an important tool for their success. Everything that is done by human being has some effect on nature and hence its inhabitants. This effect is damage and destruction of nature and its inhabitants. This type of damage can be prevented by the unified efforts of the people. Unity is strength. Everything can be achieved by being united.

All the nature-damaging activities can be controlled and stopped by making people aware of the ecological balance, food chain, eco-system and diversity. This is the one of the best ways to save the nature and its inhabitants. Pro-environmentalists should pay attention to these things for the better future of all the earthly creatures. Hence, all the anthropocentric activities like business venture shown in the novel are causing many damages to the nature and its inhabitants. Whatever action is done by the human beings, they should not be anthropocentric. They should be done in such a way that those actions should be beneficial for all the earthly creatures or those actions should not harm other creatures. These activities should be re-considered and which are nature-damaging should be stopped by being united since unity can get success in almost everything.

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