Ideas Of The Wilderness In Order To Create A New World In The Readers' Imagination

In children's literature, fairy tales are important stories that include aspects of the nonhuman nature into the setting of the plot. Fairy tales integrate ideas of the wilderness in order to create a new world in the readers' imagination. Therefore, fairy tales are "short narratives" which are "passed down" by generations that are able to produce a "magical state of reality" as time and place are imaginative (Bolus-Reichert, slide 4). Fairy tales involves reoccurring characters who have repetitive motivations which are realised through their main adventures that the reader can connect to emotionally (Bolus-Reichert, slide 4) . In addition, some fairy tales can be "one-dimensional, depthless or abstract" as the readers will not know of everything that is happening in the story as they try to fill in the gaps (Bolus-Reichert, slide 4). Typically, the protagonist is a given a specific task to do and must go into the wilderness to accomplish it. As a result, they create a desire and must satisfy it leading them to become hopeful (Bolus-Reichert, slide 12). Once the protagonist leaves the safety of their home and enters the wilderness, it portrays the idea that one must go on a quest in a new environment to face the challenges and hardships in nature, potentially causing one to dehumanize to learn something based on the interaction with nature (Bolus-Reichert, slide 10). Thus, this leads the protagonist to return home as a different person than the time they had left (Bolus-Reichert). To fulfill the wish or desire, the protagonist is to be brought into a new relationship with nature that they haven't seen before leading them to examine the environment in a different manner (Bolus-Reichert). Therefore, the element of nature is important to stories, as it allows the protagonist to escape the dull reality they face to develop a new perspective of their environment in which they have not recognized before. In addition, the interaction with nature aids the protagonist to learn something new about themselves which enhances their development as they return home as a matured being.

Accordingly, nature is influential to the story as it allows the protagonist to be forced into a new setting in which they may not be comfortable in and gain a new mindset when exploring. This is because, once they are removed from the setting they feel safe in, they must interact with aspects of nature differently, especially if they are unaware of how to interact within the setting. This allows the protagonist to become more aware to view forces they may not like in a different relationship with the environment (Bolus-Reichert). For example, in The Hobbit, as the dwarves and Bilbo go on the adventure into the woods, strange things continue to happen to Bilbo which tends to push him out of his own comfort zone. In Bilbo's perspective, as he goes on the adventure where he constantly thinks about how uncomfortable this journey is as he often thinks about his hobbit-sized home where he is in control of what happens there as he follows a routine (Tolkien 57). Within this new environment, he has no control over, he must learn to adapt to the environment which leads him to acknowledge his relationship to the dwarves as a collective group. This can be seen when the dwarves were captured by the Wood-elves (Tolkien 157-158). At this moment, Bilbo slipped on his ring to become invisible so that he would not be captured as well (Tolkien 157). As a result, this engages Bilbo in a new perspective as he must find a way to save the dwarves within the new setting. After 1-2 weeks, Bilbo hunted and stole food from the cave in which the dwarves were captured in and was able to discover where the dwarves' cells were (Tolkien 159-161). Finally, Bilbo had gone to save the dwarves as he entered the environment with attentiveness and came with a plan to escape using the stream. Bilbo, told all the dwarves to get into the barrels (Tolkien 161- 173). Through this experience,

Bilbo is able to prove himself capable to the group and learn how to engage within the woods, with the end result being that Bilbo becomes respected in the group instead of feeling isolated. Hence, as Bilbo moves deeper into the wilderness, he faces greater problems however, learns to adapt and deal with various creatures and collaborate with the dwarves as they take on various paths, pushing them to work as a team. In addition, Bilbo learns to understand the natural world exist, even if he does not go there and the world is much larger than just his hobbit-sized home with many new things to discover. Thus, Bilbo is only able to understand this, as the group continues to make mistakes on the journey, while Bilbo learns to fix which allows him to comprehend the outer world.

Another example of learning a new perspective can be seen in East of the Sun and West of the Moon. The main character, the girl was seen to be like a princess in her family until time has changed leading her family to face a hardship (Mayer). The girl must learn to hunt and take care of her family which forces her out of her safety net leading her to gain a new view (Mayer). The moment she throws the frog, as she didn't want to marry the frog, he turns into a prince and she ends up going on a journey interacting with elements of nature (Mayer). The interaction with the elements, allows her to understand the larger world as nature is interconnected as she meets different elements such as the moon, the Father Forest, the Great Fish and more (Mayer). Throughout the journey with the different elements, she begins to understand the perspective of nature as it is important to achieve reciprocity (Bolus-Reichert). She is able to understand that when she talks with the elements of nature, they give her gifts to use to aid in her journey which helps her to satisfy her desire of finding and marrying the prince. As a result, because she learned the perspective of nature and the importance of reciprocity, she ultimately diminished the stone castle the dwarves had and developed a new castle which was welcome to nature (Mayer). The protagonist goes through character growth as initially she only saw her youthfulness and beauty as she had to decide who she would like to marry, but overtime with the obstacles she had to go through, she learns that there is more than beauty and learns about the importance of nature and reciprocity. Thus, through the adventure in both stories, the protagonist must leave civilization to go into the wilderness and return with newly acquired understanding.

Therefore, as seen in both stories, once the protagonist enters the wilderness, they uncover something new about themselves, and embarked on a form of self-improvement. The protagonist are able to learn their capabilities which is typically deepened in the wilderness environment. This can be seen in The Hobbit when Bilbo has the opportunity to kill a large spider by attacking the spider with the sword (Tolkien 143-144). But this kill had an impact on Bilbo, as the spider was larger than him and that he could kill the spider on his own without the aid of anyone in the dark (Tolkien 144). All his doubts were beginning to disappear as he felt strong and heroic (Bolus-Reichert). Bilbo was able understand his capabilities and use his intelligence under the pressure to find a way to attack the spiders and save the dwarves. Bilbo learned that being essentially quiet allows him to make sure that the spiders don't know where he is coming from (Tolkien 144). He also has good eyesight which he learns is very important as he is in the outdoor world (Bolus-Reichert). In addition, he finds his previous capabilities can be helpful as he can throw stones accurately in order to kill the spiders (Tolkien 146). At this moment, it enhances Bilbo's character growth as he finds himself to feel dominant and not small or vulnerable. Due to this encounter in nature, it opened Bilbo's eyes to see what impact he has on the world as he was only able to learn this through adapting into the wilderness to see a different view of his many capabilities that he did not know he had.

In comparison to East of the Sun and West of the Moon¸ the girl must show she is worthy to the prince as she goes on the journey to save him (Mayer). The girl learns the importance of her words and how she must keep up to her promises. When the maiden was first introduced to the frog, the frog had asked for three wishes from her and she mentioned if it possible to grant the wish then she will follow to do so (Mayer). However by the frog second wish of asking her to marry him, she indicated that it is impossible to marry a frog and throws the frog away (Mayer). Afterwards, the frog turns into the prince and says he must marry the troll princes due to the maiden not keeping her promise (Mayer). From that point onward, nature sets her up for a new labour she must follow in order to keep her promise to the frog. As a result, she goes through a long journey to conduct many tasks within the natural environment interacting with the elements of nature to make a sacrifice to show she is worthy. Thus, the maiden learns to become trustworthy and how essential it is to value words. Therefore, from both protagonist from the stories, it shows readers when put into the nature, it opens the eyes of an individual, which forces them to see a new perspective of things, they would typically not see. Nature, provides the protagonist the opportunity to build on their responsibilities which leads to character growth as Bilbo and the maiden from the encounter with nature. Thus, nature is an important aspect of a story, as the protagonists leave their home, their sense of civilization to wilderness, where they dehumanize allowing them the opportunity to change so by the time they return to civilization at the end of the story, they will not return back the same person they were from the beginning due to the various experiences they had to go through.

In conclusion, natures presence in stories is crucial as it provides the opportunity for the protagonist to escape the dull reality which forces them into a new perception of their world that they have not seen before. Nature as a narrative tool can help the protagonist uncover something new about themselves which provides an opportunity for character growth and development. Nature therefore is an important aspect of the children’s literature as it promotes the readers imagination of a new fantastical world outside their own. In addition, as the character grows, it can have an impact on the child reader as well which can build up their own perceptions of themselves. As a result, when children read about the protagonist on an adventure, it can allow them to mirror those lessons in their own life. Hence, by the age they reach adulthood, these stories can lead them to think differently in order to learn and fix the mistakes that were previously made within society as the child are the future.