
The Pro-life Message Conveyed in Children's Book Horton Hears a Who

"Horton Hears a Who" is a children's book written and illustrated by political cartoonist Theodor Seuss Geisel under the pen name Dr. Seuss. The book tells the story of Horton who holds the responsibility of protecting all of the Who's from multiple dangers. The book often voiced the moral statement "A person's a person, no matter how small" and represented that one person can indeed make a big difference when that person joins in with all his neighbors and friends.

While the "whos" could represent children or any minority population, Dr. Seuss most probably represented the "whos" as the Japanese people. This book often regarded as the kind of a "sorry" from Dr. Seuss for supporting Japanese internment during World War II. During the war, Japanese-American citizens were sent to internment camps because they were considered a "threat" to the safety of the United States (Shmoop Editorial Team). According to Shmoop Editorial Team, the Japanese Americans were represented as the "Whos" and the jungle animals were represented as the United States. Throughout the book, the statement "A person's a person, no matter how small" most probably referring to this tiny population and send a moral statement to the society to consider them as a part of US population. Thus, the book has the purpose of restoring peace even though the tiny population did nothing wrong. According to Richard Minear, Dr. Seuss's view about the World War II changed radically and very much supportive to Japanese- American (Minear). In fact, he wrote this book upon return from Japan and influenced by his visit to Japanese schools (Salsbury). Dr. Seuss even dedicated the book to a Mitsugi Nakamura, a Japanese. During World War II, most of the cartoons consider this tiny, minor population in USA as latent traitor, while Dr. Seuss approach was very different.

Critics also view the most interesting message of this book as pro-life. The character kangaroo is fanatical with killing the Whos simply because they are not visible and the kangaroo cannot hear their voice. According to an article by Melanie Mazzei, the kangaroo can be paralleled with the kangaroo court, a term used to describe the crucial decision of the Supreme Court for harsh punishment (Melanie Mazzei). Interestingly, another influence of the statement "A person's a person, no matter how small" is that the pro-life supporters used this statement to represent their view against abortions.

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