

Don't forget the Doctor : the life and writing of Dr. Seuss. Konzem, Matthew C.

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Abstract:

This study examines the life and writing of Dr. Seuss. Dr. Seuss is the world famous pseudonym for the shy Theodore Seuss Geisel. Although he was not an exemplary student, Geisel began writing for his Springfield, Ohio, high school newspaper. He continued to write humorous columns and draw political cartoons for the Dartmouth paper, Jack-O-Lantern. At his fiance's urging, he later dropped out of school at Oxford University in order to pursue a job as a newspaper columnist/cartoonist. Finally, he landed a job for Flit Bug Spray which became a deciding factor regarding his future occupation. Through his contract, Geisel was not allowed to write or draw for any media publications; he could only write children's books. Through his children's books, Geisel teaches children to read. The manner in which he teaches is what makes Dr. Seuss books so special. Geisel's Dr. Seuss books introduce a revolutionary style of fun, suspense, and excitement. Children love Geisel's books because of their bouncy, anapestic tetrameter and strict adherence to rhyme. Moreover, the wild, wacky illustrations in his books dazzle readers while amplifying his writings' themes at the same time. Consequently, children have so much fun reading and rereading his books, they forget Geisel is teaching them anything. While Geisel intends to teach children, his books exhibit other themes, as well. Each of his books has a cutting, satirical edge. Geisel satirizes politics, the family, and society. Some of his books mock the silliness of unwarranted discrimination, and others ridicule inept governments and corrupt political leaders. One book questions the nuclear arms race, while another fights for environmental rights. Even though his books have such cynical undertones, Geisel masterfully conceals his satire from children with hypnotic rhythms, clever rhymes, crazy illustrations, silly word-play, and suspenseful plots. However, his political voice is evident to adults. Geisel's literary works are the most popular children's books of all-time. Geisel won numerous awards and honors for his film and literary works. Three of his books, The Cat in the Hat, How the Grinch Stole Christmas, and Green Ei&S and Ham, are among the best-selling books of any type of literature of all-time. Tens of millions of children worldwide have grown up knowing, loving, and learning with Dr. Seuss.

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