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Green Humour for a Greying Planet: Exploring the Potential of Humour in Environmental Communication

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Abstract

This research paper explores the concept of green humour as a powerful tool for addressing environmental issues in the context of anthropocene. As humanity's impact on the planet intensifies, the need for creative approaches to ecological communication becomes increasingly evident. Green humour, characterized by its blend of wit, satire, and environmental consciousness, offers an engaging and effective means of raising awareness about ecological challenges. In this paper, we delve into the significance of anthropocene and examine how cartoonist Rohan Chakravarty utilises green humour to highlight environmental concerns, encourage sustainable behaviour, and foster a deeper connection between humans and nature. It explores the historical context of ecological comedy, the power of humour in environmental communication, the functions of green humour and the strategies and techniques employed by comedies to convey environmental messages effectively. By presenting complex issues in a relatable and engaging manner, he encourages readers to become active participants in environmental conservation and activism. Through his creative and insightful approach, Chakravarty demonstrates that green humour can educate, inspire, and empower individuals to make a positive impact on our greying planet. As we navigate the challenges of an increasingly fragile environment, Chakravarty's green humour serves as a beacon of hope, reminding us that change is possible and that each of us can contribute to creating a more sustainable future. Through the fusion of creativity, humour, and environmental consciousness, we can forge a path towards a greener and healthier planet for generations to come.

Keywords: Green Humour, Environmental Communication, Satire, Eco-comedy, Environmental Awareness and Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Green Humour for a Greying Planet by Rohan Chakravarty is a delightful reading that uniquely combines humour and environmentalism. The book is a collection of cartoons, illustrations and witty one-liners that poke fun at human behaviour and the impact we have on the environment. The author uses humour to raise awareness of the serious environmental issues we face, such as climate change, deforestation and plastic pollution. Through his illustrations, he makes us think about our daily habits and encourages us to make small changes that can have a big impact. The author argues that humour can help to engage people emotionally and encourage them to take action, even in the face of daunting environmental challenges. The book is divided into several chapters, each of which covers a different aspect of environmentalism. These include topics such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and sustainable living. Each chapter contains a variety of cartoons, jokes and stories that are designed to entertain and inform readers.

Understanding Green Humour

Humour has long been a powerful tool for social commentary and communication, and in the face of environmental challenges, the concept of “green humour” has emerged. Green humour refers to a specific comedy genre that addresses environmental issues, sustainability, and the urgent need for change. In a world grappling with the consequences of climate change and ecological degradation, green humour offers a unique approach to engage and inspire individuals towards positive environmental action. The research paper aims to explore the significance, potential impact, and various dimensions of green humour on a greying planet. It specifically focuses on the insights and examples presented by Rohan Chakravarty, a renowned cartoonist and the author of the book *Green Humour for a Greying Planet*. Through an in-depth analysis of Chakravarty’s work, this paper explores the significance, impact and various dimensions of green humour in fostering environmental awareness and inspiring positive action.

Theoretical Foundations

Rohan Chakravarty is an acclaimed cartoonist known for his unique blend of humour and environmental commentary. In this book, Chakravarty presents a collection of cartoons that highlight pressing environmental issues in a witty and engaging manner. His cartoons not only entertain but also provoke thought, making them an effective medium for communicating complex environmental messages. The cartoons provide vivid illustrations of the environmental challenges faced by our planet, Earth. Through his artistic interpretations, he captures the consequences of climate change, habitat destruction and wildlife conservation issues. For example, his cartoon depicting a polar bear stranded on a melting iceberg poignantly portrays the impact of global warming on the Arctic ecosystem. Such visuals not only convey the gravity of the situation but also evoke emotions and promote empathy among the readers. The author employs satire and social commentary as key elements of his green humour. Through clever wordplay, irony and visual metaphors, he presents thought-provoking scenarios that shed light on the contradictions and absurdities of human behaviour towards the environment. For instance, his cartoon depicting a fish politician making empty promises to clean up the polluted river satirically highlights the lack of real action and accountability in environmental governance. The book promotes conservation and sustainable practices. Chakravarty, cartoons often feature charismatic animal characters that engage readers while conveying important messages about wildlife conservation. For example, his depiction of a jungle gym for animals in a deforested landscape cleverly highlights the need to protect and restore natural habitats. Chakravarty’s cartoons also provide practical tips and suggestions for individuals to adopt eco-friendly behaviour, such as reducing plastic waste and conserving water.

The Role of Humour in Engaging Audiences

Rohan Chakravarty’s green humour has the power to inspire environmental activism and positive change. By presenting environmental issues with wit and creativity, he fosters a sense of urgency and agency among readers. His cartoons depict ordinary individuals taking small steps towards conservation, demonstrating that individual actions can contribute to a larger movement. His work encourages readers to become environmental advocates and motivates them to actively participate in environmental initiatives. One of the strengths of Chakravarty’s green humour lies in its ability to connect with diverse audiences. His cartoons transcend language and cultural barriers, making them accessible to people from different backgrounds. By using visual storytelling and universal symbols, Chakravarty effectively communicates environmental messages and sparks conversations about sustainability. His work not only appeals to environmental enthusiasts but also engages individuals who may not have previously been interested in ecological issues. By examining Chakravarty’s creative and thought-provoking cartoons, this research highlights the power of humour as a means of raising awareness, promoting sustainability, and inspiring positive action. It recognizes Chakravarty’s contribution to using his artistic talent to engage and educate people about the pressing environmental issues we face today. To understand the emergence of green humour, it is crucial to examine its historical context. Environmental comedy can be traced back to traditional forms of satire, political cartoons, and stand-up routines that challenged societal norms. As environmental awareness grew, comedians began incorporating ecological themes into their acts, blending humour with insightful commentary. Notable pioneers of green humour include George Carlin, whose routine on the Earth’s “immune system” resonated with audiences, and more recently, comedians like Jon Stewart and John Oliver, who have utilized their platforms to address environmental issues. Humour has a unique ability to break down barriers and engage audiences in a non-confrontational manner. Green humour employs satire, irony, parody, and other comedic techniques to deliver messages about environmentalism and sustainability. By making people laugh, green humour effectively captures attention and fosters

emotional connections, making complex issues more relatable and accessible. This approach can potentially bridge the gap between scientific jargon and the general public, facilitating greater understanding and empathy towards environmental challenges.

Humour in Environmental Campaigns and Media

Green humour serves multiple functions in the context of a greying planet. Comedy allows environmental messages to reach wider audiences who may otherwise not engage in serious discussions. Through laughter, green humour brings attention to critical issues such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change, thereby increasing awareness and knowledge. Satirical elements of green humour provide a platform for critiquing unsustainable practices and challenging societal norms that contribute to environmental degradation. By exposing contradictions and absurdities, comedians prompt individuals to reflect on their behaviours and consider alternative approaches. Humour can inspire individuals to take positive environmental action. By presenting environmental challenges in a lighter tone, green humour instils a sense of empowerment and encourages people to become part of the solution rather than feeling overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problems. Green humour employs various strategies and techniques to effectively communicate environmental messages. Comedians often employ exaggeration and absurdity to highlight the incongruities and contradictions in human behaviour towards the environment. By magnifying certain aspects, green humour draws attention to the need for change memorably and entertainingly. The use of irony and satire allows comedians to expose hypocrisy and challenge the status quo. By poking fun at unsustainable practices and institutions, green humour invites critical reflection and promotes discussion. Parodies and spoofs of popular culture, advertisements, or political campaigns can effectively convey environmental messages while simultaneously entertaining audiences. By tapping into familiar cultural references, green humour creates an immediate connection with viewers or listeners. Humorous self-reflection and self-deprecating jokes can disarm audiences and create a sense of camaraderie. Comedians who admit their flaws and shortcomings about the environment encourage individuals to recognize their responsibilities and take action.

Examples of Using Humour for Environmental Advocacy

Rohan Chakravarty's book *Green Humour for a Greying Planet* is replete with examples of green humour that effectively convey environmental messages. Here are a few examples of his work:

1. Cartoon "The Climate Refugee": This cartoon depicts a polar bear floating on a small piece of ice in a vast ocean. The bear holds up a sign that reads, "Will work for an iceberg." The cartoon humorously highlights the plight of polar bears and the impact of melting ice caps due to climate change. It serves as a satirical commentary on the urgent need to address global warming and its consequences for vulnerable species.

2. Cartoon "Urban Jungle": In this cartoon, a tree stands amidst a concrete jungle, with tall buildings surrounding it. The tree holds up a sign saying, "I miss the forest." The illustration cleverly portrays the encroachment of urbanization and the loss of natural habitats. It humorously highlights the importance of preserving green spaces and the need for a harmonious balance between urban development and nature.

3. Cartoon "Recycle, Reduce, Reuse": This cartoon features a group of animals holding a banner that says, "Recycle, Reduce, Reuse," with each animal representing one of the actions. For example, a monkey is recycling, a tortoise is reducing its speed, and a bird is reusing a nest. This cartoon humorously emphasizes the significance of waste management and resource conservation, encouraging readers to adopt sustainable practices in their daily lives.

4. Cartoon "The Sinking Ship": In this cartoon, a ship is shown sinking due to overloading with plastic waste. The illustration satirically criticizes the excessive use of single-use plastics and the detrimental impact on marine life and ecosystems. It serves as a humorous reminder of the need to reduce plastic consumption and promote responsible waste management.

5. Cartoon "The Green Hero": This cartoon features an ordinary individual wearing a superhero cape and picking up litter. The image humorously portrays the power of individual actions in making a positive difference in the environment. It encourages readers to recognize their capacity to contribute to environmental conservation and highlights the importance of collective efforts in addressing environmental challenges. These examples illustrate Chakravarty's ability to use humour and satire to convey important environmental messages. Through his cartoons, he effectively engages readers, encourages critical thinking,

and prompts individuals to reflect on their behaviours and choices. Chakravarty's green humour not only entertains but also serves as a powerful tool for raising awareness and inspiring action towards a greener planet.

Humour as a Catalyst for Environmental Action

The features of *Green Humour for a Greying Planet* by Rohan Chakravarty showcase the unique characteristics and qualities of green humour in addressing the environmental challenges faced by our planet. Green humour relies on satire and wit to effectively convey environmental messages. Chakravarty's cartoons employ clever wordplay, irony, and sarcasm to highlight the contradictions and absurdities in human interactions with the environment. This feature adds an element of amusement while also serving as a critique of unsustainable practices and behaviours. His cartoons utilize visual storytelling to communicate complex environmental concepts. Through his illustrations, he captures the essence of environmental issues, such as deforestation, climate change, and wildlife conservation. The visual element of green humour enhances the impact and accessibility of the message, allowing readers to grasp the environmental challenges at hand more easily. The author also often employs anthropomorphism, attributing human characteristics to animals and natural elements, in his cartoons. By humanizing these subjects, he enables readers to form an emotional connection and empathize with the challenges faced by the natural world. This feature evokes a sense of responsibility and encourages readers to consider the impact of their actions on the environment. Green humour has a universal appeal that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers. Chakravarty's cartoons use symbols and imagery that resonate with a global audience, making his work accessible and relatable to people from diverse backgrounds. This universal appeal allows green humour to effectively communicate environmental messages to a wide range of individuals and communities. A prominent feature of green humour is its ability to inspire positive action. Chakravarty's cartoons not only highlight the environmental challenges but also provide practical tips and suggestions for adopting sustainable practices. By presenting actionable steps, he empowers readers to make a difference in their own lives and communities, promoting individual and collective efforts towards a greener planet. Green humour aims to evoke emotions and create an emotional connection between the reader and the environmental issues being addressed. Chakravarty's cartoons often elicit empathy, concern, and amusement, fostering a deeper understanding and engagement with the subject matter. This emotional engagement adds depth to the environmental messages and motivates readers to take action. Green humour recognizes the power of humour as a tool for change. By using humour, Chakravarty effectively captures the attention of readers, engages them in environmental conversations, and encourages critical thinking. Humour catalyses behaviour change, inspiring individuals to re-evaluate their actions and make more sustainable choices. These features collectively contribute to the effectiveness of green humour in addressing environmental issues.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Chakravarty's cartoons serve as a powerful medium for raising awareness, promoting conservation, and inspiring positive action. Through his witty and creative illustrations, he successfully captures the urgency and complexity of environmental issues, engaging readers and encouraging them to reflect on their behaviours and choices. Furthermore, Chakravarty's green humour offers practical solutions and suggestions for individuals to adopt eco-friendly practices. His cartoons provide clear messages and tips for waste reduction, energy conservation, and wildlife protection, empowering readers to make positive changes in their daily lives. Ultimately, Chakravarty's book and his green humour cartoons exemplify the potential of humour as a powerful tool for addressing environmental challenges. By presenting complex issues in a relatable and engaging manner, he encourages readers to become active participants in environmental conservation and activism. Through his creative and insightful approach, Chakravarty demonstrates that green humour can educate, inspire, and empower individuals to make a positive impact on our greying planet. As we navigate the challenges of an increasingly fragile environment, Chakravarty's green humour serves as a beacon of hope, reminding us that change is possible and that each of us can contribute to creating a more sustainable future. Through the fusion of creativity, humour, and environmental consciousness, we can forge a path towards a greener and healthier planet for generations to come.

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