



RITA MAE BROWN'S *RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE*: QUEERING ECOLOGY, AN EXAMINATION OF THE INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN ENVIRONMENT AND IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

This essay examines Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle*'s "queering ecology" through Molly Bolt's life, which extends beyond a lesbian coming-of-age story. Instead, it explores environmental consciousness and queer identity. The examination examines how Molly's relationship with nature impacts her self-perception and challenges femininity and belonging (Brown, 1973). It explores how Brown uses nature for self-discovery, disobedience, and alternative family systems. It also discusses how the story criticizes anthropocentrism and stresses ecological responsibility for underprivileged communities. The article uses queer ecology to examine how Molly's overlapping identities and interaction with the rural Appalachian terrain reflect human and non-human fluidity and diversity. Molly freely expresses her gender identity without societal pressures to conform to a binary view of gender in the woodland (Brown, 1973). The term "Queer Ecology" pretend that queerness is innate and opposes the colonial narrative of people as apart from and superior to nature (Bridgewater State University, 2018)

Keywords: Queer Ecology, Environment, Lesbian, Identity, and Disability

Introduction

The paper investigates how Rita Mae Brown's novel *Rubyfruit Jungle* stands seminal against the backdrop of Queering ecology, which examines the connection between environment and identity. Published in 1973, *Rubyfruit Jungle* stands as a pioneering work in

LGBTQ+ literature narrates the coming-of-age story of Molly Bolt, a young lesbian navigating the complexities of identity in a heteronormative society. By employing a queer ecological framework, this study delves into how Brown's novel intertwines themes of sexuality, gender, and the natural environment to challenge societal norms and redefine the relationship between humans and nature.

Traditional ecological conceptions frequently portray a connection between humans and nature that conflicts with one another, with humans being portrayed as dominant and exploitative of nature. However, it is worth investigating whether our relationship with the environment is more nuanced, fluid, and connected with our sense of self than what this inflexible framework says. Queer theory provides a valuable perspective for examining and questioning conventional environmental narratives, allowing for the exploration of "queering ecology." Here's how: As a researcher

✓ It is important to explore the shift from domination to interdependence in various contexts (Chwala, 2020). This transition signifies a move away from hierarchical power structures towards collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships. By examining this phenomenon, one can gain a deeper Queer theory that challenges the notion that humans are distinct from and superior to nature. The concept of "ecological kinship" is highlighted, which emphasizes the interconnectedness between humans and all living things. (Arigo, 2021).

✓ From a researcher's perspective, traditional ecology tends to perceive nature as a valuable resource that can be utilized. Queer theory challenges anthropocentrism by advocating for a more respectful and reciprocal relationship with the environment. (Arigo, 2021).

✓ It is crucial to embrace fluidity and diversity in our work, meaning to be open to different opinions, concepts, and methods.

✓ Scholastics have the skill to adjust to new data and reshape old stories when they stay receptive. A few stories like to paint nature as a supporting mother figure, while others consider environmentalism to be a rough investigation of wild grounds. In the realm of eccentric hypotheses, they



shake things up by testing laid-out bits of insight and embracing the assorted ways individuals show love for nature (Chwala, 2020). Everything revolves around perceiving various perspectives and previous encounters with natural issues. As a component of their examination project, these researchers plunge into families and capricious connections tracked down in strange hypotheses, taking notes en route. They passed the common family arrangement to make a more comprehensive thought of natural obligation that includes everybody. It's not just about the family unit any longer — it's tied in with building a local area where everybody shares an obligation to deal with our planet together. (Chwala, 2020).

✓ Research has shown that traditional environmentalism tends to neglect the viewpoints and experiences of marginalized communities. Queer theory places a strong emphasis on inclusivity, recognizing and valuing the distinct experiences and contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals about environmental concerns. Queer theory offers a critical analysis of power dynamics and disparities that exist within environmental movements. The research emphasizes the need for a more just and equitable approach to environmental protection. (Arigo, 2021).

✓ The overall impact of the research is through the lens of “queering ecology,” researchers aim to transcend antiquated narratives and cultivate a comprehensive comprehension of our interrelationship with the environment. This particular perspective advocates for the emergence of a more comprehensive and varied environmental movement—one that acknowledges the importance of flexibility, embraces the notion of interdependence, and recognizes the intrinsic links between identity and the environment.

Integrating Queer Perspectives into Ecological Studies in Rita Mae Brown's Novel *Rubyfruit Jungle*

It's a real gem in the world of lesbian literature, delving into deep themes like identity and diversity uniquely. But guess what? These themes aren't just limited to the pages of a book – they can shed some light on ecological studies, too. Isn't that wild? Take Molly Bolt, the fearless protagonist of the novel. She challenges societal norms around gender and sexuality with such courage. This whole idea of breaking away from traditional norms is pretty important when it comes to looking at ecological systems as well.

In ecology, one often boxes things into neat little categories – like natural

versus unnatural or human versus nature. But maybe this way of thinking isn't doing us any favours when trying to understand the complex web of relationships. Just like Molly refuses to be boxed in by society's expectations, maybe it's time for us to break free from these rigid distinctions, too. When one explores nature next time, let's think about how Molly Bolt would see things. Maybe there are connections and interrelationships we're missing out on because we're so caught up in these artificial binaries. Let's embrace a more fluid and inclusive perspective – just like Rita Mae Brown did in *Rubyfruit Jungle*.

“I don't care if you're a boy or a girl, or what you want to do. You can love anybody you want, and you can do anything you want. It's your life.” (Brown, 1973). This statement impeccably catches the central thought of testing dualistic orders and can be stretched out to the domain of natural examination. By embracing a more nuanced point of view, biologists can acquire a more profound comprehension of the dynamic and reliant qualities of biological systems. Molly's story is about completely embracing her singularity and facing cultural tensions to adjust. Very much like the way that biological frameworks prosper with a large number of animal groups. Each species, no matter what its size or evident importance, has a

significant part to play in keeping up with the well-being and security of biological systems. Strange viewpoints feature the significance of embracing variety, both inside human social orders and in the normal world.

“I'm me, and that's all I can be. Whatever I am, I am. And whoever I love, I love.” (Brown, 1973). Molly's statement emphasizes the importance of embracing and honouring one's authentic self, which aligns with the significance of acknowledging and protecting the various forms of life in ecological studies. In *Rubyfruit Jungle*, Molly's experiences highlight the way personal and social identities are intertwined. The interconnectedness found in ecological systems is reflected in the intricate web of life, where each component relies on one another. Understanding these connections is crucial for taking a comprehensive approach to environmental issues.

“Everybody's tangled up with everybody else, but nobody wants to admit it.” (Brown, 1973). This quote highlights the frequently disregarded yet crucial links between individuals and communities. Recognizing these connections in ecology can result in more comprehensive and efficient environmental management strategies. Molly's ability to effortlessly navigate her identity and relationships



mirrors the dynamic and ever-changing nature of ecosystems. Similar to how Molly adjusts to the obstacles she encounters, ecosystems are constantly changing and adapting in response to shifts in the environment. Embracing diverse perspectives in ecological studies fosters a greater emphasis on adaptability and resilience.

“Life is full of change and adaptation. Those who can adapt, thrive. Those who can’t are left behind.” (Brown, 1973). This viewpoint promotes the study of how species and ecosystems adapt to changes, fostering a greater understanding of resilience in the face of environmental challenges.

Conclusion

Exploring the intersection of queer perspectives and ecological studies, drawing inspiration from Rita Mae Brown’s *Rubyfruit Jungle*, expands our comprehension of the natural world. One can acquire significant information on our current circumstances by investigating customary conundrums, embracing different characters, perceiving the reliance of every single living being, and valuing the potential for development and improvement.

Rubyfruit Jungle takes a gander at the possibility of interconnectivity and the separating of limits, which concentrates on

the subject of biology. Molly’s resistance to social shows and her will to address ordinary orientation jobs reflect the need to deliver severe classifications in environmental review. Molly, the specialist, thinks of her as her character and offers her view that names are more fitting for containers than for individuals. The remark causes us to notice the instability of the arrangement (Brown, 1973).

In environmental examinations, as well, the scientist takes note that the attention on severe classification disregards the dynamic and complex person of biological systems. Besides, the book focuses on the need to understand the relationship of every living element, which is a perspective significant in the field of environmental review. Whether their orientation or sexual direction, Molly’s experiences with various individuals show the many-sided organization of human connections. The analyst finds that as she explores the connections between individuals, we as a whole essentially have comparative necessities. These objectives incorporate the hunt for joy, the flavour of affection, the accomplishment of monetary security, and the ownership of stylishly gorgeous shoes (Brown, 1973). This demeanour mirrors the natural thoughts focusing on the common steadfastness and availability of numerous species.

Additionally, including strange perspectives in natural examination propels inventive strategies for ecological consideration. Like Molly's test of social shows, eccentric perspectives in nature question customary information and open the way for imaginative thoughts and replies. Brown (1973) claims that one of the book's characters tells Molly not to devalue herself to accommodate others' assumptions. Rather, the persona propels her to go out and accomplish something amazing. This remark thoroughly concurs with the need to utilize a creative mind and act strongly to address ecological issues. Citations from *Rubyfruit Jungle* improve the conversation as they assist one with getting derailed in the story's storyline and character. Besides, pushing biological examinations accentuates the more extensive need to value variety and versatility in the associations among individuals and environmental factors. Joining these parts assists a scientist with bettering the need to incorporate strange perspectives into natural examinations, as shown by the huge work completed by Rita Mae Brown.

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