



The Cultural Ecology of the Postmodern American Novel: E.L. Doctorow, *The Book of Daniel* and T.C. Boyle, *The Tortilla Curtain*

Anniko B. Hüske

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The literary theory Literature as Cultural Ecology implies the notion that literature, in imaginatively bringing together various discourses, may release new potential for the extra-textual, cultural world. Why and in what way do the postmodern American novels E.L. Doctorow, *The Book of Daniel* and T.C. Boyle, *The Tortilla Curtain* act like ecological forces within their culture? They serve as metaphorical cultural ecosystems. The cultural ecology of each of the two novels is revealed in a combination of the three discourses cultural-critical metadiscourse, imaginative counter-discourse, and reintegrative inter-discourse. *The Book of Daniel* and *The Tortilla Curtain* gain a unique status in that they have the power to interact with their readers and may serve as a source of cultural self-exploration, self-preservation, and self-renewal. This master's thesis addresses students of literature and literary scholars as well as everybody else interested in an evolutionary, reflective process of reading.

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