Comparision Of Jack London Essay, Research Paper

In Arthur Gordon’s short story “The Sea Devil” and in Jack London’s short story “To Build a Fire,” it is clear that in spite of the many differences the two stories have many more similarities.

First, although there are more similarities between the two stories, there are still many qualities that portray the antithetic nature between the two short stories. For example, when the fisherman (in Jack London’s story) used his intelligence to defeat his enemy; “Only by using his brain could he possible survive, and he called on his brain for a solution.”(12) On the other hand, when the young man (in “To Build a Fire”) panicked when struck by the thought of dying, “he was aware of the panicky feeling that it caused”(364) Also, In “To Build a fire” the young man did receive advice; “he knew that he should have listened to the man.”(357) Conversely, In “The Sea Devil” the old man did not receive any advice. Furthermore, In Jack London’s story the young man did learn a lesson, but he died; “Then the man drowsed off into what seemed to him the most comfortable sleep ever.”(365) Contrarily, the man in Arthur Gordon’s story learned a lesson; “He knew one thing. He knew he would do no more casting alone at night”… “No, not he.”(13) Moreover, In Jack London’s story, the plot mostly took place on land and in the day time. On the contrary, in Arthur Gordon’s story, the plot mostly took place in water and at night. Also, in “To Build a Fire,” the main character had a knife for a weapon; “With his helpless hands he could neither draw nor hold his sheath knife.”(363) In contrast to this, in “The Sea Devil,” the main character did not have a weapon of any sort. All these differences show that although there may be more similarities, there are still many differences.

Secondly, there are many similarities between the two short stories. For example, in both of the stories, the old man and the young man were solitary. This is shown by a couple of quotes: “He knew he would do no more casting alone at night.”(13) And in London’s tale, “he was”(357) . . . “As he turned”(358) . . . “He was bound.”(359) These three quotes show that the author did not mention another person, therefore the man was solitary. Also, In “The Sea Devil” and in “To Build a Fire,” both of the main characters damaged their hands. To illustrate this, the quote in “The Sea Devil,” “He lifted his other hand and felt the hot blood start instantly.”(13) And in Gordon’s story, ” . . . he became aware of sensation in his had. His flesh was burning.”(362) Furthermore, in London’s tale, the theme was man vs. nature. This is illustrated by the quote, ” . . . he came around a turn in the trail and found himself lying in the snow.”(364) Likewise, in Gordon’s tale, it is shown by the quote, “. . . and the water would pour into his lungs in one sharp painful shock, and he would be finished.” Moreover, in “The Sea Devil,” the main character was nameless. His name was not mentioned once in the entire story. Similarly, in “To Build a Fire,” neither was the young man’s name. Also, in Gordon’s story the old man had bad luck. This is illustrated by the quote, “He shot over the side of the skiff as if he had roped a runaway locomotive.” Comparatively, In London’s story, this is shown by the quote, “He was angry, and cursed his luck aloud.” Furthermore, both stories had a prominent animal figure. In “The Sea Devil,” it was the Devil Ray and in “To Build a Fire,” it was the dog. Moreover, in “To Build a Fire,” the young man made many foolish mistakes. One of which is illustrated by this quote, “It was his own fault or, rather, his mistake. He should not have built the fire under the spruce tree.” Likewise, in “The Sea Devil,” it is illustrated by the quote, “. . . he knew, in the split second in which thought was still possible, that those twin swirls had been made not by two mullets, but by the wing tips of the giant ray of the Gulf Coast.” All these similarities show that the stories are very similar in many ways.

In conclusion, in “The Sea Devil,” and in “To Build a Fire,” the stories had many differences, but many more distinctive similarities. Both stories were man vs. nature, the character was nameless, the main character was solitary, and many more supports. These all advance my thesis and so, it is clear that in spite of the many differences the two stories have many more similarities.