Realism In Literature Essay, Research Paper

REALISM IN LITERATURE

In the late nineteenth century, Realism was the main style expressed in all of the stories written in that period. A change took place, from romance to reality. Authors were motivated by the change going on around them. Such items as science, language, art, and religion were understood to be the building stones for the realistic style of the late nineteenth century. Realism was portrayed through regionalism, naturalism, and most importantly through the reality of the story.

Regionalism is best defined as the part in a story or novel when an author describes the area of which the story takes place in. Not only the area, but any characteristics of the area that describe it in any way. Such authors as Ambrose Pierce, Mark Twain, and Bret Harte heavily rely on regionalism in their works.

?The Outcasts of Poker Flat? by Bret Harte is a great story which contains many good examples of regionalism. The geography of the story held a great role in the outcome and more or less the situations throughout the story. ?It lay over a steep mountain range. In walking distance they passed out of momome and more or less the situations throughout the story. ?It lay over a steep mountain range. 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was a great one by Mark Twain. Cleanly stated in the title the Mississippi River plays an important role in this book. For example,? …. it is the longest river in the world…four thousand three hundred miles…? (Twain, Life on the Mississippi 113).

?Maggie: A Girl of the Streets? by Stephan Crane, was a true story of a homeless girl on her own in the streets of New York City. ?Eventually they entered into a dark region where, form a careening building, a dozen gruesome doorways gave up loads of babies to the street and the gutter. A wind of early autumn raised yellow dust form cobbles and swirled it against a hundred windows. Long streamers of garments fluttered from fire escapes. In all unhandy places there were buckets, brooms, rugs, and bottles. In the street infants played of fought with other infants or sat stupidly in the way of vehicles.? (Crane, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets 6) The way Crane uses powerful words to describe every characteristic of NEW YORK city is wonderful. He paints a picture in your head of what a city is like. He doesn?t stop there, he goes on to say,? a dozen cabs…. Electric lights.? He constantly describes the city and every sight he remembers to be intriguing. Lastly, the book has some strong dialect. For example, ?Are yehs hurted much, Jimmie… Will I wash deh blood… Naw?(Crane, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets 29). Poorly educated English can easily signify slum-like people from the city, but then I would be a hypocrite.

Naturalism is expressed through this saying, ?we are just pawns on a chessboard controlled by fate. Such authors as Theodore Dreiser and Stephan Crane are writers that focused on naturalism.

?The Open Boat? by Stephan Crane shows how four men totally different are shipwrecked and forced to grasp for their lives on a small boat (dingy). All four men are put at mercy of nature. Ripped about in the ocean for days and they aren?t able to control what is made of them. Fate controls the movement and the outcome of the story. Naturalism is also shown when the smartest and bravest of them all dies at the end (Crane, The Open Boat 467).

Now, ?To Build A Fire? by Jack London is story of a man and battle to survive in a harsh environment. Fate controls either or not he makes the right decision because if he makes the wrong one, he has a chance of dying. That is what happened. He fell through thin ice then he built a fire underneath a snow-covered tree which was the beginning of his death. His mistakes are controlled by fate. In his case There were many mistakes (London, To Build A Fire 486).

?The Cop and The Anthem? by O. Henry illustrates to us the normal everyday life of a homeless man. Through the story, the man tries his best to be put in jail. But he is consistently denied. Fate controls either or not he is put in jail ( Unger 423).

?The Call of the Wild? by Jack London was a great example of naturalism. ?Buck? the main character is put through some life-chancing obstacles throughout the novel. His survival is based on fate, either or not he overcomes these obstacles or not. For example, ?Buck countered back and bit him(Spitz)….. with a bloody body…Buck used his instincts and fought back? (London, The Call of the Wild 50).

Now, in ?The Red Badge of Courage? by Crane, there was a different kind of naturalism. An emotional type, meaning if you don?t mature then you won?t survive or at least conquer your fears. So, in this novel, Henry fights inside of his head wether or not he will flee when battle came. Sure enough, he fled. For example,?…. The youth turned his head, shaken from his trance by this movement as if the regiment was leaving him behind…. He yelled then with fright and swung about…. He lost the direction of safety. Destruction threatened him at all points(Otfinoski 109). This was the point at where he fled. Fate controlled at this time that he should?ve fled because he was scared and immature and he would?ve probably been killed. Luckily, he matured and came back, this time with a wound witch was considered a red badge of courage, and fought like a bat out of hell. Fate controlled his emotional stability (Crane, The Red Badge of Courage 139).

The last characteristic of realism is itself, realism. The straight out, tell it like it was type stories. Giving you a detailed description of life like it was. Also, from a reporter?s point of view and the story doesn?t include any comments from the author. Such authors like Mark Twain, Henry James, and Upton Sinclair were all very famous realist authors.

?The Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge? by Ambrose Bierce was a different story. The story is about the last moments of a man?s life. Most of the story is focused on this man?s dream he has, as he is about to be hanged, of escaping and meeting up with his wife again. As he is about to hug his wife, he is suddenly hanged. Besides the fact of situation irony, because we were lead to believe that the dream was what was really happening, there was definitely a taste of really. A man hanging there limp and dead. Also, the story was told through the main character?s eyes and mind. As soon as he is hanged, the story is over, no comments or nothing ( Bierce 426).

?The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg? by Twain was a great and interesting story. It was about how no town nor person can be perfect. A stranger brings in a sack of so-called gold and expects someone to claim it. As days go by everyone starts to become creative and greedy. Their possessiveness filled hearts become money crazed. Finally, at the end when the sack is opened and ?nothing? is revealed, everyone realizes the amount of greed in the town. This story ended as soon as the sack was opened. Disgracefully, that is the realistic point then and also now (Pizer 147).

?The Open Boat? by Crane was a phenomenal piece of work. Because of a shipwreck, four men are forced to survive in a ?dingy? in the middle of some ocean. ?Crane took a real life experience and turned it into a story ?The Open Boat? (Otfinoski 112). Also, the correspondent tells the story but doesn?t comment based on the fact that he doesn?t know the three men quite good enough (Crane, The Open Boat 459).

?The Red Badge of Courage? by Crane was the best example of realism. First, the reconstruction of a war is quite impossible inless you have first hand evidence or experience. The whole novel is based on the realism shown throughout the story. The setting, characters? reactions, and the events. Everything was perfectly detailed and written. The book shows the real life emotional and physical suffrage inflicted on soldiers. Crane wrote in his usual greatness and brought the ?vivid to life? (Otfinoski 112).

?The Call of the Wild? by London was another great realist piece. Every scene was detailed enough to paint a picture, to enable the reader to feel and watch as well as read. Realism is shown through the all out survival of a everyday house pet and the maturing of one into a wild beast. The conflicts ?Buck? got into. Like the battle between the wild huskies and the sled team. ?Suddenly, Buck was beset by three wild huskies… His head and shoulders were quickly slashed? (London, The Call of the Wild 48). Every event was just like this one, maybe worst. The harsh weather everyday playing a role in the weakening of certain dogs. ?Dolly, one of the huskies went mad and had to be put to rest …. (London, The Call of the Wild 44).

?The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County? by Twain was a short, but meaningful story. Realism is represented through the story by gambling. One day a man made a bet to a man to race two frogs, but he had to go find one first so he decided to trust a stranger.He, then went to find a frog for his gambling opposition, meanwhile. ?…. he got the frog out and prized his mouth open and took out a teaspoon and filled him full of quailshot….? (Otfinoski 94). This meaning that the frog lost the race because of a man?s cheating attitude. Realism at it?s finest, when attitudes and actions of today?s world is shown through this short story (Twain, The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County 389).

Stephan Crane?s ?Maggie: A Girl of the Streets? shows incredible realism. Besides the fact that she is homeless and she lives on the streets. She encounters a drinking problem also. A ?pretty girl? turned?hor? caused by her surroundings and the only way she can escape is to commit suicide (Unger 410).

Bret Harte?s ?The Outcasts of Poker Flat? shows how four people are punished by being, more or less, banished from the town for real-life acts of crime. John Oakhurst, the main character, is a compulsive gambler and is in debt. The rest of criminals are postiturtes and one is a drunk (Pizer 238).

Finally, ?The Adventures of Huck Finn? shows realism through the manor and morals at which Huck Finn presents himself. ?Twain used langauge, behavior, and morality as a basis and force for the regionalism in each of his books,? (Pizer 92) especially this one. The way he lies, cheats, steals, and uses profane language. Also, the white folk called Jim, a ?nigger? and when back then the form of severe punishment was to hang someone and that is what they did. This story shows the detailed life of that time period (Twain, The Adventures of Huck Finn 119). This nover ?explored the questions of freedom, independance, and slavery? (Unger 420).

Realism was a widely used aspect of life and writing. Instead of idealizing life and using perfect emotions and stories, authors started to write straight from their experiences, reality. ?Realists job was to portray life as accurately and honestly as possible as it is observed through the senses? (World BooK 163). Many authors used regionalism, naturalism, and realism to bring together their realistic literature.