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***The Role of Environment in The Open Boat and To
Build a Fire***

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Dedication

To my dear family, my parents, brothers and sisters

To the soul of my beloved grandfather and nephew

To my dear best friends

And last, I dedicate this work to all whom I love without exception

R.S

Dedication 2

*I dedicate this work to my dearest family, my lovely sisters and brothers and to all
the people that I love*

Y.W

Acknowledgment

First of all, our thanks go to Allah for giving us the persistence and patience to complete this work.

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Abstract

This study attempts to investigate the manifestations of naturalism and examine the naturalism themes in the two short stories of two outstanding American writers, named Stephen Crane and Jack London. We seek to show the ways in which Stephen Crane's short story "The Open Boat" and Jack London's "To Build a Fire" display the role of environment in shaping humans destiny, and to examine the forces of Nature and their effects on the characters of the both stories. Stephen Crane and Jack London reveal the indifference of Nature toward humans and highlighted the conflict of man against nature. Our special aim is to explain how these two American writers share the same literary style in their stories which make them belong to naturalism. In fact we seek to show not only the content but also the forms are examples of naturalist features.

Key words: Naturalism, Stephen Crane, The Open Boat, survival, battle cold, snow, fire, nature.

Key words: the man, the dog, cold, snow, fire, nature.

المخلص:

نحاول في هذه الدراسة ابراز مظاهر المذهب الطبيعي ودراسته في كلتا القصتين القصيرتين لاحد أبرز الكتاب الامريكيين، هما ستيفن كرين وجاك لندن. نسعى في هاته الدراسة ان نبرز الطرق التي عبر بها الكاتبين ستيفن كرين "القارب المفتوح" و "ان توقد نار" لجاك لندن دور الطبيعة في تحديد مصير الانسان. ودراسة مدى قوة الطبيعة وتأثيراتها على شخصيات كلتا القصتين. وقد كشف كل من ستيفان كرين وجاك لندن عن عدم مبالاة الطبيعة بالإنسان وكيف سلطا الضوء على صراع الإنسان ضد الطبيعة.

الهدف الرئيسي من هاته المذكرة هو ابراز التشابه في اسلوب الادبي لهذان الكاتبان في قصصهما مما يجعلهما ينتميان إلى المذهب الطبيعي نسعى ايضا إلى إظهار ليس فقط المحتوى بل الشكل ايضا.

كلمات مفتاحية: التيار الطبيعي، ستيفن كرين، القارب المفتوح، الأدب الأمريكي، النجاة، كفاح.

كلمات مفتاحية: الرجل، الكلب، البرد، الثلج، النار، الطبيعة.

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General introduction

General Introduction

Our dissertation sheds light on one of the important literary movements in American literature history called Naturalism. This new movement received huge welcoming from many significant writers of the nineteenth century like Frank Norris' *Mc Teague* (1899), Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat" (1898), Jack London's "To Build a fire" (1908), Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905), John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1936). Naturalism is a literary movement of a pessimistic tone that appeared in the late nineteenth century, it's the way of studying human life that is completely different from other movements.

This study aims to give an examination to the two short stories "The Open Boat" (1898) written by Stephen Crane and "To Build a Fire" (1902) by Jack London. The two stories are great examples of naturalism in American literature in the 19 century. Crane and London show in these literary works how little control human has over Nature and how does it affect the destiny of the person by its indifference. They intend to show the effects of the environment on people who were helpless and powerless against nature and their attempt to change their situation. Thus, we intend to analyze the two short stories and present the manifestation of literary Naturalism.

Throughout our study of both short stories we will point out the main themes of Naturalism and we will examine the forces of Nature and their effects on the characters of both stories.

In the first chapter, we aim to give a comprehensive account of what is naturalism? The nineteenth literary movement and its most important writers. The second and the third chapters are devoted to discussing the themes of Naturalism, the neutrality of Nature, man versus nature, struggle, hopelessness and pessimism, and fate and determinism.

Our study is mainly focusing on what is the role of the environment in the open boat and to build a fire, and how Jack London and Stephen Crane portrayed naturalism themes in their short stories. Both of them covers perfectly how Nature shapes the destiny of the person how and highlight the effects of the uncaring environment on people's lives.

Stephan Crane and aims to give a clear vision of how even life and death are determined by fate (89). Stephan Crane and Jack London reveal the indifference of Nature toward individuals, they perfectly portrayed the conflict of man against nature. The two short stories present the theme of mankind's fragile insignificance within nature.

The choice of these two short stories "The open boat" and "to build a fire" is made because of various reasons. First, the two short stories are considered great models of naturalism in American literature. Second, they establish how American literature is affected by Darwin's theories.

Our main objective in this dissertation is to make a deep investigation of the themes of naturalism in "The Open Boat" to give answers to the questions below.

- 1- What is the role of the environment in the two short stories?
- 2- How do nature's forces effects the characters of both short stories?
- 3-How does Nature shapes the destiny of the person?

To answer the previous questions, we hypothesis that:

1-Stephan Crane and Jack London reveal the indifference of Nature toward humans and perfectly portrayed the conflict of man against nature.

2-"The Open Boat" is a clear representation of late nineteenth-century American Naturalism.

Chapter one

**The main Naturalism writers in the
Nineteenth Century.**

Chapter One: The American society during the Nineteenth Century.

Introduction

An intellectual literary movement that appeared in the nineteenth century is called Naturalism. It is developed out of literary Realism and it shares some of its characteristics. The aim of this chapter is to give a comprehensive idea of Naturalism, the main literary naturalism works, and interpreting the social and historical background of the two writer's and their influence on their writings.

1.1. Historical Background of the Stories and Their Setting.

1.1.2. America during the Writers' Time

During any period of time literature reveals the social and the historical characteristics of its nations, lit considered the mirror of any society. The literary field records different changes that occur in the history of any society.

Many important events as the social revolution from a rural state to an urbanized one, and the gap between the social classes constitute were the major concern of the greater part of the literary works. These radical events were mainly carried out in the works of naturalist and realist American writers. For instance, Stephen Crane's "The Open boat" (1898), and Jack London's "To Build a Fire" (1908), which are the main valuable examples of such a literary movement.

These short stories are great representative writers of the movement of naturalism and treated naturalistic that mainly concerned is the point out to the forces of Nature and their effects on the characters of the both stories. Their aim is to shade light to the determinism and fate of individuals, and the indifference of nature toward human being suffering. The naturalism movement extended from Europe to America during this critical period, the Gilded Age, was a turning point in the

American history as it brought great changes in nearly all fields including literature, economy, society and politics

1.1 American society in the Nineteenth Century

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in America were the great period of urbanization, immigration from southern and eastern Europe and Asia, and industrialization three phenomena that were indelibly linked. During these years American's identity changed from the stability to maturity (Lamb& Thompson 26)

2.1 Biographical Elements.

2.2.1 Stephen Crane's Biography and works.

Stephen Crane was born in New York, New Jersey, on November 1, 1871. he is a poet, novelist, and famous short story writer. Unlike many contemporary writers, who focused on characters' situations, Stephen Crane focused on their thoughts and feelings.

Stephen crane was the ninth child of Protestant Methodist parents. He is the ninth child of Protestant Methodist parents. When he was just four years old, Stephen Crane began writing and made some progress in his later years." *Maggie: A girl of the streets* " is Stephen Crane's first novel and universally regarded by critics to be the first work of American literary naturalism. His father, a graduate of the College of New Jersey, was the presiding elder of Methodist churches in the Newark district, and also an author committed to producing ten pages a day (Lamb& Thompson 561).

The family was a large, happy one. As Stephen grew up, however, he found his parent's religion irrelevant to the difficult life he saw, because most of his writings were realistic, dealing with poor and sex (Bode 104).

Crane was a son of a Methodist minister and the niece of a Methodist bishop, wrote an essay for Methodist journals and New York and Philadelphia papers, gave lectures, and was

a member of the women's Christian Temperance Union (Lamb & Thompson 561). "*Maggie: A girl of the streets*" is Stephen Crane's first novel and universally regarded by critics to be the first work of American literary naturalism. His civil war novel "*The Red Badge of Courage*" gave him the reputation of international acclaim in 1895, which was marvelous thus because he did not have any battle experience. Then, owing to being a witness in the trial of suspected prostitution, Stephen Crane was involved with a highly publicized scandal. Late that year he decided to visit Cuba as a war correspondent. At the same time, he kept a lasting relationship with Cora Taylor. During the route to Cuba, the vessel SS Commodore Stephen Crane took met accident and sank off the coast of Florida, leaving him and other passengers adrift for 30 hours in a small open boat. According to this alarmingly dangerous experience, he created the work "*The Open Boat*", a famous naturalistic representative work.

Crane's style was a mixture of Realism, Naturalism, and impressionism (Bode 106). Crane's characters are controlled by their environment; this is what makes him a naturalist (High 88).

Crane is regarded as the first American naturalist; he was not much influenced by the scientific approaches. According to Crane, the environment is a tremendous thing in our world and frequently shapes lives regardless, he shows how man is affected by the anger and the indifference of society and also by heredity (ibid).

Stephen Crane published another short story which is "*The Open Boat*" (1898),

Crane shows how even life and death are determined by fate (High, 89). It is a story about four men who were going to aid Cuban revolutionaries, Crane was one of them, He was shipwrecked and spent 27 hours at sea in a small boat with three other men, this story discusses fear, courage, and survival (Bode 105).

In 1899, Crane published a collection of poems named *The War Is Kind*; it discusses the theme that he discusses at the heart of his novels:

A man said to the universe,

“sir, I exist!”

“However,” replied the universe,

“The fact has not created in me

A sense of obligation (High, 89)

Troubled by ill-health and poverty, Crane died of tuberculosis at the age of 28 in Germany. Though living a very short life, he was a prolific writer. His writing style was diverse, covering the color of Realistic traditions, Impressionism as well as naturalism. At the time of his death, Stephen Crane was considered a proficient figure in American literature. . He was forgotten by the public and critics for nearly two decades, after that, his life and works began to arouse their interest and attention and then was regarded as one of the most innovative writers of his generation.

2.2.2 Jack London’s biography and works

John Griffith Chaney, better known as Jack London, was born on January 12, 1876, in San Francisco, California. Jack was the son of Flora Wellman, an unwed mother, and William Chaney, an attorney, journalist, and pioneering leader in the new field of American astrology. His father was never part of his life, and his mother ended up marrying John London, a Civil War veteran, who moved his new family around the Bay Area before settling in Oakland.

London grew up working-class. He carved out his own hardscrabble life as a teen. He rode trains, pirated oysters, and shoveled coal, worked on a sealing ship on the Pacific, and found employment in a cannery. In his free time, he hunkered down at libraries, soaking up novels and travel books. One day his mother saw an announcement in one of the local papers for a writing contest, she pushed her son to write down and submit the story of him when he had weathered a harrowing sealing voyage, one in which a typhoon had nearly taken out London and his crew.

At the age of 19, he entered the University of California, but after a year he left school and decided to earn a living as a writer. In 1899 he began publishing stories in the *Overland Monthly*. The experience of writing and getting published greatly disciplined London as a writer. From that time forward, London made it a practice to write at least a thousand words a day.

“The Son of the Wolf” was his first book; *“Tales of the Far North”* (1900), a collection of short stories that he had previously published in magazines, gained a wide audience.

His Alaskan novels *“The Call of the Wild”* (1903), *“White Fang”* (1906), and *Burning Daylight* (1910), in which he dramatized in turn atavism, adaptability, and the appeal of the wilderness, are outstanding. His short story *“To Build a Fire”* (1908), set in the Klondike, is a masterly depiction of humankind’s inability to overcome nature; it was reprinted in 1910 in the short-story collection *“Lost Face”*, one of many such volumes that London published. In addition to *“Martin Eden”*, he wrote two other autobiographical novels of considerable interest: *“The Road”* (1907) and *“John Barleycorn”* (1913). Other important novels are *“The Sea-Wolf”* (1904), which features a Nietzschean superman hero, Humphrey Van Weyden, who battles the vicious Wolf Larsen; and *The Iron Heel* (1908), a fantasy of the future that is terrifying anticipation of fascism.

Jack London died November 22, 1916, in Glen Ellen, California, America. He was a novelist and short-story writer whose best-known works among them *“The Call of the Wild”* (1903) and *“White Fang”* (1906). During the 20th century, he was one of the most extensively translated American authors.

3.1 Summary of the two short stories.

3.3.1 Introduction to “The Open Boat”

The Open Boat is a short story written by Stephen Crane, which is based on his real experience. The story begins with four characters who were abandoned on the boundless sea, although they were hopeless about rescue, the four people never gave up the desire to survive.

The Open Boat is a story about four shipwrecked men who were the injured Captain, the oiler Billie the only one named in the story, the Cook and the correspondent who is

Crane himself, they float the crest of waves in the sea in their small boat (Crumbley 92).

The four men took turns rowing and bailing water when the waves crashed their small boat, they soon saw land and even possible rescuers on shore, but the waves were so huge and big in their attempt to reach the shore and they went back out. After two nights of suffering on the lifeboat they tried to attempt to arrive at the shore; their boat was swamped and they swam to the beach. Finally, an unexpected thing that happened when Billie the most strong of the four men drown in the attempt.

The Open Boat is widely considered as an example of literary naturalism and is viewed as an exploration of human behavior under extreme circumstances because it discusses naturalistic themes and symbols; also, it emphasized the role of environment upon human characters, where nature is portrayed as uncaring.

3.3.2 Introduction to “To Build a Fire”

A man stupidly goes out into the terrible cold of an Alaskan storm. Since he has matched, he thinks he can build a fire any time (High 102). Jack London’s great short story 1910 “To Build a Fire” is a naturalist short story which is about a nameless man and a dog as they hike through the bitterly cold forests along the Yukon River in Canada. The story takes place over the course of one

day. It begins at nine o'clock in the morning, when the man stands overlooking the trail, estimating that he will arrive at camp at six o'clock that evening. He continues to walk towards his destination and is unbothered by the cold, which unbeknownst to him has reached seventy-five below zero. The cold worries the dog, who senses danger.

Although the weather circumstances announce a very gloomy and cold day, the man underestimates that and ventures himself in this harsh environment walking some four miles every hour. At first, he seemed to be so confident and satisfied in traveling such a distance by making good times. However, as the story unfolds, the man starts to panic as his face becomes more and more frozen, adding to his dog's behaviors which announces a fearful situation.

Under such circumstances, the man's major will was to build a fire to rescue his frozen fingers, toes, and feet from certain death. So, he hopefully collects some wood branches and tries to make a fire. The man's desperate situation in making a fire pushes him to think about an alternative way of getting warmth. Thus, he realizes that his last chance to survive was to kill his dog and put his hands in its carcass so that he could relieve them from their frozenness.

However, after catching it, he concludes that he cannot kill it as his fingers were unable to move. It was at this time that the man knows that death is inevitable and starts to accept his fate. After the man had died, the dog left the carcass of his master alone. In the end, Alaskan nature defeats him and he freezes to death. (High 102)

4.1 Naturalism

In the beginning of 1890, a new form of realism was introduced into American literature called Naturalism. It is term used to describe an advanced realism. Naturalism is a word derived

from nature; it is the suggestion that art and literature should present the world and people just as science shows they really are (High 85).

According to *On the Influence of Naturalism on American Literature* “Naturalism was first proposed and formulated by Emile Zola, the French writer and theorist, who is universally labeled as the founder of literary naturalism. Naturalism was a literary movement taking place from 1865 to 1900 that used detailed realism to suggest that social conditions, heredity, and environment had inescapable force in shaping human character. Naturalistic writers were influenced by the evolution theory of Charles Darwin. They believed that one's heredity and social environment determine one's character and influence the actions of its subjects.” (195)

At its most basic level, naturalism was a state of mind put into words, a set of principles from which its practitioners drew in creating fiction that they believed truly represented reality. Set frequently in urban slums or a savage wilderness, naturalistic stories forced readers to confront the indifference of nature, and, closer to home, the indifference of human beings toward their fellow creatures. (Campbell 03)

Naturalism is a literary movement appeared in the late of nineteenth century; similar to literary realism in its rejection of Romanticism, but distinct in its embrace of determinism, detachment, scientific objectivism, and social commentary. The movement largely traces to the theories of French author Emile Zola. Naturalism is the view that the sciences of nature are the best guides to what there is, what it is like, and why. Naturalism is sometimes cast as the claim that there is nothing supernatural, nothing 'spooky' in the world. Naturalism in literature sometime pictures the relationship between individuals and nature. One such naturalistic explore in the short story “*The Open Boat*” “is nature’s indifference to human’s fate. Naturalism is a writing style that aims at recreating nature in its entirety.

5.1 The influence of Darwin

In literature, naturalism developed out of realism. The main influences that went to shape a different point of view were Darwin's biological theories, Comte's application of scientific ideas to the study of society, and Taine's application of deterministic theories to literature. (Cuddon 537).

Charles Darwin (1809-1882) had a big influence on American literary culture in the late nineteenth century. He presented a theory about evolution and critical publications which are "*On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection*" (1859) in which his ideas were based on that all behavior productions are a matter of biological determine forces, that there is nothing transcendent in human life and "*The Descent of Man*" (1871). Charles Darwin's "The Origin of the Species" largely influenced the naturalists. The ideas Darwin put forth contributed to the idea that biological and environmental forces controlled human beings.

Darwinian ideas predominant American authors' understandings and representations of civilization, human nature, courtship, marriage, gender, the "New Woman," race, the role of the environment, heredity, sexual selection, and ecology. (Lamb & Thompson 10). Spencer the leading figure of what is known as social determinism coined the expression of "the survival of the fittest" which represents a social concept that parallels, to some extent, Darwin's biological concept of selection. . In the 1880s and 1890s Social Darwinism advocated a new kind of determinism, a determinism of natural ability in which any intervention on behalf of the poor or weak would weaken the race (ibid 61).

The greatest revolution started in 1859 with the publication of Charles Darwin "*On The Origin of Species*. Sigmund Freud stated: "Darwin had dealt a great biological blow to human narcissism"; compelling humankind to contemplate its place within the community of common descent" (Lamb & Thompson 377).

Darwin believed that all behavior productions are a matter of biological forces, that there is nothing transcendent in human life. The writing of Darwin and other evolutionists have widely been read by the new generation like Stephen Crane, Hamlin Garland, and Frank Norris. So, Darwinian ideas had a great impact on those writers. This era was characterized by the emergence of American Naturalists who were inspired by an advance of French Naturalism led by Emile Zola.

Chapter two

The role of environment in

“The Open Boat”

Chapter Two: The role of environment in “The Open Boat”.

Introduction

After we have introduced the literary movement that American literary witnessed in the nineteenth century, this chapter is devoted to examine the themes of Naturalism and to analyze the role of environment in Stephan Crane’s short story “The Open Boat”.

2.1 Naturalism in The Open Boat’s Themes.

2.1.1 The neutrality of Nature.

Within the story, Crane described Nature as neither a friend nor an active enemy. Rather, Nature is merely indifferent to his existence. As Crane mentioned “the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual nature in the wind, and nature in the vision of men. She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent” (30)

Crane makes it clear that Nature is uncaring about the individual. The correspondent realized that the indifference of nature is more terrifying than even her treachery. It means that he and his companions don't matter to her at all. There is no longer any hope that they can appeal to nature or to the universe as a whole for any help. It depends on an intelligent higher power that directs nature’s affairs.

He and his boat-mates are dwarfed by the sheer power and size of Nature. As the story progresses, the correspondent begins to the realization that Nature does not care if he lives or dies. More one this is seen when the correspondent sees the wind-lower as a symbol of Nature’s presence, but indifference. As we can see in the first lines of the story.

The characters come to realization that the higher power may be indifferent to their fate. This is the reason for the repetition of the one phrase “why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea” (Crane 17). Would allow them to come so close to land only to drown.

The sea and the waves were extremely violence toward the four men in their attempt to reach the shore as Crane shows in these lines “These waves were all of the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were of the foaming white, and all of the men knew the colors of the sea. The horizon narrowed and widened and dipped and rose, and at all times its edge was jagged with waves that seemed thrust up in point like rocks” (07).

Another example by Crane expressing the helpless situation of the four men when they could not even see the sky above them because of the high level of the waves that covered the sky “NONE of them knew the color of the sky. Their eyes were glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them” (07).

The four men lost their faith in the injustice seven Gods of the sea when they worked so hard to survive in the unforgiving waves.

“If I am to be drowned—if I am to be drowned—if I am to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate the sand and the trees?” (Crane 07).

Crane declared that the men were losing hope and began to believe that no one of them going to survive to tell their families. “They then briefly exchanged some addresses and ambitions.”(17).this quotation shows clearly the indifference of nature. The correspondent lost his identity when he find out that his existence considered nothing in front of the higher power of the sea , God and universe , Crane said:

“When it occurs to man that nature does not regard him as important ... he at first wishes to throw bricks at the temple, and he hates deeply the fact that there are no bricks and no temples ... Thereafter he knows the pathos of his situation”(27).

“The Open Boat" by Stephen Crane shows us that universe totally unconcerned with the affairs of humankind; it is an indifferent universe in which man has to struggle to survive. The characters in the story come face to face with this indifference and are nearly overcome by Nature's lack of concern.

2.1.2 Man versus Nature and struggle

As the men struggled to survive out of the sea, although the three men do survive, the struggle makes them realize how little control they have over the hands of Nature. The correspondent tries to find meaning in the struggle to survive and in life itself, he became discouraged as he realized that his fate is controlled by an uncaring and uninvolved universe.

In “the open boat”, the four men struggled in the harsh sea. It appeared mainly in the difficult situations when they faced death on the open boat they appear as having no control over their destinies and the sea natural elements control everything they forget even the color of the sky and all what they thought about was how they can survive those violent waves, which were of foaming white. The men want nothing but to free themselves from these harsh waves.it is clearly obvious when Crane said:

“None of them knew the color of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them”(07).

we can easily capture the struggle of the four men in the indifferent Nature when they were trying to reach the shore but, as soon as they get closer the boat sank and they were obliged to

swim all the way to the shore in order to survive as the captain ordered: “if no help is coming, we might better try a run through the surf right away” (Crane 30).

Another example of the struggle against nature when The Cook bent to bail out the boat, the oiler steering with one of the two oars in the boat, the Correspondent pulling with the other oar, and the Captain directs them (Crane 07).

The captain orders them to not wait any longer to get the boat close to the shore and to swim to reach the land, all the men manage to jump out into the cold water in time before the boat overturns. The captain stays behind, holding with his one good hand the keel of the overturned boat, while the others are swimming. The captain keeps on encouraging the men. Finally, the stranded men are rescued and the oiler met his tragic end.

From this adversarial position, the correspondent characterizes the sea as a malevolent agent of a cruel nature. However, as the narrative progresses, the correspondent's perspective on the conflict changes: he struggles with his beliefs, wanting to trust that the universe has a plan for him. Ultimately, the correspondent overcomes his uncertainty by accepting man's insignificance. Nature is not with him or against him; as he comes to see it, nature is "flatly indifferent" to his fate.

2.1.3 Hopelessness and Pessimism.

Crane's short story seems to have pessimistic tone, and themes of hopelessness that runs through the entire story which contributed the naturalist tone. The four characters of the story felt completely hopeless when they had no control over their free will. They were powerless and helpless, they were under the mercy of the sea. It was mentioned in the story when the captain pointed out to the cook, “There don't seem to be any signs of life about your house of refuge.”(Crane 16).

Another example of losing hope and pessimism when the oiler said: “If we don’t all get to shore,” said the captain, “if we don’t all get to shore, I suppose you fellows know where to send news of my finish?”(Crane 17) he was like confirming his certain death in a pessimism tone.

Another one mentioned by Crane saying:

“If I am to be drowned—if I am to be drowned—if I am to be drowned,
why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I
allowed to come thus far and contemplate the sand and the trees” (17).

The lines below shows that Crane makes it clear that the sea with its waves is the location where the hope for survival is reduced and sometimes it is impossible “A singular disadvantage of the sea lies in the fact that after successfully surmounting one wave you discover that there is another behind it Just as important and just as nervously to do something effective in the way of swamping boats” (08).

The captain expressing his pessimism after the boat was tossed by the waves and all the four of them get wet. It is more of resignation on the part of the captain when he gives some whisky and water to the correspondent while saying, “If I ever get ashore and anybody shows me even a photograph of an oar” (Crane 30).

Another example of pessimism in the story is found in the story when the characters saw people waving at them from a distant shore and to the inaction of the latter they say, “Maybe they think we’re out here for sport Maybe they think were fishin. Maybe they think were damn fools.” (Crane 18). These words clearly show not only pessimism about their situation but a somewhat loss of hope in the human ability to comprehend the need for help.

2.1.4 Brotherhood

Stephen Crane portrayed brotherhood and sympathy between the men by depicting characters' psychological action under harsh reality. In "The Open Boat", the four characters experienced a series of changes in their minds: from fear to boldness, from desperation to hope, from strangeness to intimacy.

"It would be difficult to describe the subtle brotherhood that was here established in the seas. No one said that it was so" (13).

The correspondent Stephen Crane himself never imagined that he would struggle with these people, but as time passed on and they struggle together. He and the other men felt a sense of brotherhood. The captain has complicated feelings, he was filled with deep sorrow for the dead, but he has to control himself and keeps his leadership manners. As a matter of fact, he was pessimistic about the surviving route, but in order to sooth the others, he pretends to be hopeful and confident. The oiler is very strong, Stephen Crane depicts little about him, he talks less but does more, in the end, he is dead because of weariness. The cook has fancy dreams about adventure route all the time.

The relationship between the captain, the oiler, the correspondent, and the cook were aiming for a same goal, is to survive the savage and harsh sea. The men work as a team and rely on themselves to survive. Despite that nature tries to decide their fate in some way. This is displayed in the quote, "In the shallows, face downward, lay the oiler. His forehead touched sand that was periodically, between each wave, clear of the sea." Displaying incredible determination while struggling to survive, nature proves too powerful for one's own fate. (35) The four characters were all equal in nature and equal in their friendships, and that they were never supposed to leave each other in the name of friendship and equality.

2.1.5 The Survival of the Fittest

Stephan Crane adopted the theory of Darwinism oppositely. As the men struggle to survive, they were struggling with forces they know little about. So, even the theory of Darwinism will not give the logical sense of nature because in this case, even the "survival of the fittest" does not apply. As Stephen Crane has personally experienced the sea journey with the four men in "The Open Boat", the men appear to be The Fittest when allowed in their comfort zone. As that zone is breached further and further, nature gains more and more of an advantage

Usually in common stories, the strongest is the one who survives at the end, but in Crane's short story "The Open Boat" he used irony to establish his naturalistic view of nature's disconnected relationship with humanity. Crane shows that the struggle against Nature is vainness, and Billie the strongest of the group who lead them to the shore safe is the one who died at the end as Crane described "In the shallows, face downward, lay the oiler. His forehead touched sand that was periodical, between each wave, clear of the sea." (35)

When the four men jump in the icy water, the oiler, the strongest one, leads the group. He jumps in, first followed by the cook and the correspondent swimming slowly and the captain. The oiler leads the group to the shore safely but did not survive. This story shows the opposite of the concept of survival of the fittest, since the strongest person of the group did not survive. The strongest person is the one who is supposed to keep control and to lead the others and this is exactly what the oiler did in this story. The story shows how the strongest person takes control of the group but does not always turn out the best for him. The oiler did his best to lead the group to the shore, but he was the only one who died in the attempt.

2.1.6 Fate and determinism.

Stephan Crane's influence on Darwinism theory is clearly shown in his short story "The Open Boat", where the life of the four men was controlled by their fate.

The four men were fighting and struggling in the harsh sea to survive but the cook, the correspondent, and the captain did survive, and the only one who died was the oiler when he was trying to reach the shore.

Crane highlighted in the story that the oiler's life was controlled by his fate. Even though he was the strongest of the four men, he was the only one who died in the end.

"The correspondent, schooled in the minor formulae, said: "Thanks, old man." But suddenly the man cried: "What's that? He pointed a swift figure. The correspondent said: "Go". In shallows, face downward, lay the oiler. His forehead touched sand that was periodical, between each wave, clear of the sea" (35).

Crane's line shows that the oiler was not the master of his fate. Although he was the bravest one, he was the only one who died after two nights in the rough sea. None of The characters in "The Open Boat" have control over their boat; rather nature was totally in control "She seemed just a wee thing wallowing, miraculously top up, at the mercy of the five oceans. Occasionally, a great spread of water, like white flames, swarmed into her."(Crane 13).It appears that the men are totally not important to the natural forces and they have no control over their fate.

To conclude, Patrik Dooley points out that the men had no control over the boat, rather nature was the controlling one "Through their confrontation of an indifferent universe. The survivors appreciate both the limits and the possibilities of human effort and human community" (Crumbley 40).

The four men have spent the whole time struggling to reconcile their personal beliefs with the indifference of tide, wind and water. The will of the four characters to survive in such a harrowing situation has nothing to do for the powerful blows delivers upon them. Their will was pre-determined.

Conclusion

After reviewing Crane's use of naturalism in "The Open Boat" we can notice how Crane intended to show the indifference of nature toward humans and show how little control they have over Nature, and in the other hand, the strength of man to survive. Nature does not regard anyone special and will go on its way no matter how seemingly destructive or lethal its consequences will be to man.

Chapter three

The role of environment in

“To Build a Fire”

Chapter Three: The role of environment in “To build a Fire”.

Introduction

Following to the previous chapter, we aim in this chapter to highlight the indifferent of nature toward individual's struggle for survival through an examination of the important elements of nature and how it affected the characters by its uncaring .

3.1 Naturalism in To Build a Fire Themes.

3.1.1 The neutrality of Nature

The protagonist, the nameless man struggled with the extremely harsh and dangerous icy Nature environment when he climbed the mountains of Yukon in an attempt to join his friend's camp. He was described as a man with no imagination because he underestimates the cold, he does not really understand that he could die while climbing the icy mountains. “The trouble with him was that he was without imagination. He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances”. (London 01) The man had little concept of exactly how cold -18 could be.

Jack London displayed clearly the theme of the indifference of Nature toward humans, and it's uncaring about mankind's fate. Nature was coldly uncaring to their existence and struggle as London mentioned that the man has no control over the cold weather and the natural elements when he said “High up in the tree one bough capsized its load of snow. This fell on the boughs beneath, capsizing them. This process continued, spreading out and involving the whole tree. It grew like an avalanche, and it descended without warning upon the man and the fire, and the fire was blotted out! Where it had burned was a mantle of fresh and disordered snow” (06).

Another example mentioned by London that Nature is a formidable opponent. The man is surprised several times by how quickly his hands go numb when he removes his gloves. His toes go numb as soon as he sits down to eat, these lines clearly show that Nature has no concern for his existence. He built a fire under a tree to save his fingers from freezing drops a load of snow on the fire and the fire was dead. It is clearly obvious that the man was helpless and shocked when his attempt at lighting a fire failed by the uncaring Nature.

3.1.2 Man versus Nature and struggle

Jack London uses the two characters the man and the dog to highlight the conflicts between instinct and reasoning. The natural setting of the story embodies the extreme side of the harsh, deadly, and unforgiving environment in every way. Nature does not go out of its way to hurt the man, it would be just as cold without the man's presence. London pictured the ability of Nature to destroy humanity not carrying about whether the man lives or dies. He presented the power struggle between man and Nature, and how mankind is weak against the power of Nature.

The protagonist was tortured by cold when his cheekbones and nose went numb and become worse as he lost touch and grasp of his hands; London said “This man did not know cold.” (London, 04) and “He was losing in his battle with the frost.”(09)

Despite all his attempts to build a fire to warm his frozen feet, he failed in front of the natural powers and natural forces “He knew there must be no failure. When it is seventy-five below zero, a man must not fail in his first attempt to build a fire that is, if his feet are wet. If his feet are dry, and he fails, he can run along the trail for half a mile and restore his circulation. But the circulation of wet and freezing feet cannot be restored by running when it is seventy-five below. No matter how fast he runs, the wet feet will freeze the harder” (London 05).

The protagonist thought that the low temperature will not be a serious danger as London mentioned “such fact impressed him as being cold and uncomfortable, and that was all” (01). The

man's lack of intellect about the temperature put him in a hard situation to handle. He did not consider it as a serious problem, he barely believed it when London said "it certainly was cold" (04). He knew it was cold, but he did not acknowledge its consequences. Allowing the environment to kill the man indicates that he is weak both mentally and biologically,

The cold was too much to be handled, it drifted the man to the idea where he kills the dog and buries his frozen hands to war: his numb fingers. "He remembered the tale of the man, caught in a blizzard, who killed a steer and crawled inside the carcass, and so was saved. He would kill the dog and bury his hands in the warm body until the numbness went out of them." (London 08)

Nature does not go out of its way to hurt the man; it would be just as cold without the man's presence as well.

3.1.3 Instinct over intellectualism

The dog is the main character in the story. It is not just a companion, it is a key symbol that represents animal instinct. It's considered a part of the Nature world.

London mentioned in the story that there were no intimate feelings between the husky dog and the man, and their relationship was based on a mutual relationship "there was no keen intimacy between the dog and the man" (04). The man was not friendly toward the dog, he only used it as a tester to the roads on many occasions, and the dog followed him out of fear and need of survival, it finds in the man a source of protection and warmth.

The dog has a great instinctive understanding of its situation and its surroundings as London saying "Its instinct told it a truer tale than was told to the man by the man's judgment" (02)." The dog did not know anything about thermometers. Possibly in its brain, there was no sharp consciousness of a condition of very cold such as was in the man's brain. But the brute had its instinct" (03).

The dog survived because its instinct and physical abilities are superior to the man's intellect. He was familiar with the conditions instinctively. The dog portrays knowledge and wisdom as a comparison to the stupidity of the man.

The dog's instincts tell it that the weather is extremely cold, and if he did not warm itself it will die, even though that he did not understand the concept of temperature, but its instinct served its survival. On the other hand the nameless man did not believe that the cold is serious danger. He understood the concept of temperature but did not acknowledge its consequences. At the end of the story, the dog remains alive, leaving the man's body behind in the snow. London portrays the power of nature over humans and the arrogance of those who think otherwise.

The dog made quick efforts to lick the ice off its legs, then dropped down in the snow and began to bite out the ice that had formed between the toes. This was a matter of instinct. It did not know this. It merely obeyed the commands that arose from the deepest part of its being.

“It had wet its feet and legs. Almost immediately the water on them turned to ice. The dog made quick efforts to get the ice off its legs. Then it lay down in the snow and began to bite out the ice that had formed between the toes. The animal knew enough to do this. To permit the ice to remain would mean sore feet. It did not know this. It merely obeyed the commands that arose from the deepest part of its being.”(London 06)

3.1.4 Hopelessness and pessimism

While reading Jack London's short story we can easily notice that the pessimistic tone was the predominant theme of the entire story. London described the opening set of the story as a pessimistic theme, he described the Yukon's harsh winter and the icy cold environment “there was no sun nor hint of sun” (01) which clearly made the naturalism pessimistic tone very intelligible.

The effort of the nameless man to cross the freezing Yukon's trail was in vain, and struggle against the hostile environment of the Yukon begins to become apparent. The protagonist lost his temper and cursed, London wrote "He was angry and cursed his luck aloud. He had hoped to get into camp with the boys" (05)

An example of losing hope when London declared that the man's attempts of lighting a fire were in vain, and when he tried to light the matches, the matches box falls from his hands and seventy matches sticks fall into the snow.

London's protagonist's efforts in returning the feeling to his numb fingers and toes made him panic and started to run "running around like a chicken with its head cut off" (09), but as soon as he falls, he knew his certain death. So, he decided to face death with dignity "It was his last panic. When he had recovered his breath and control, he sat up and entertained in his mind the conception of meeting death with dignity."(15)

Another example of helplessness is when the nameless man decided to kill the dog but he was helpless and could not neither draw nor hold his sheath-knife nor throttle the animal.

Another example of losing hope is when London said that the man decided to kill the dog in the hope to warm his hands after the second fall, he realized the inevitability of death and stopped fighting and decided to face death with dignity "he sat up and entertained in his mind the conception of meeting death with dignity" (09)

The protagonist was told by the old man that he should never travel out there alone because of how cold it gets. The man didn't listen and had to pay major consequences from less than 50 below zero temperature. His arrogance put him in hard situation with Nature, he fall in into a hidden pool which is very bad when the temperature is below zero. He felt started to lose any sign of hope and he thought about how stupid he was for not listening to the other man about not

traveling here alone and at night because of how extreme cold it will get. “That man from Sulphur Creek had spoken the truth when telling how cold it sometimes got in this country. And he had laughed at him at the time! That showed one must not be too sure of things. There was no mistake about it, it was cold.”(London 07)

3.1.5 The Survival of the fittest

Survival of the fittest is a major theme in Jack London’s short story. The main conflict was not only between man versus nature but also between man and dog versus nature. Within the story, we can easily notice that both the man and the dog were fighting to survive, and the fittest of them will survive at the end. Jack London wrote about a man who decided to take a journey alone through the Yukon in the extreme cold, the temperature was 75 degrees below zero. The man had no experience, and had a lack of respect for the nature.

As the story progresses, the nameless man was described by London as a man without an imagination; he did not see the significances in things “He was quick and alert on the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances” (01) London declared from the very beginning that the environment was harsh, dark and cold. And because of the man’s lack of imagination, he put himself in a life or death situation. He ignored the signs that nature given him and did not care about the hard situation that put an end to his life. "He knew the coldest snaps never froze these springs, and he knew likewise their danger"(03)

As the action progressed, the man started to realize the danger around him, London said “The fear quickly became poignant as he realized that it was no longer a mere matter of freezing his fingers and toes, or of losing his hands and feet, but that it was a matter of life and death, with the chances against him” (09)his numb hands threw him into panic and he started to run blindly until he finally knew that he is losing a battle with the frost, so he thought to sleep off to death and die with dignity “It was his last panic. When he had recovered his breath and control, he sat up and

entertained in his mind the conception of meeting death with dignity.”(09) The protagonist did not realize the harsh conditions until it was too late.

Meanwhile, the dog has its wolf instinct to rely on, he knew exactly that it is in danger by its instinctive sense. It did survive because its physical abilities are superior to the man’s intellect. London declares “The animal was depressed by the tremendous cold. It knew that it was no time for traveling. Its instinct told it a truer tale than was told to the man by the man’s judgments”. (02). In the end, the dog remained alive leaving the man’s body behind and seeking out other humans who will provide him food and shelter.

He thought that the only way to survive this cold weather is to kill the dog and crawl inside its corpse to get warm. The environment merely remains the same brutally cold and does not care at all about the man's survival. It was important to believe natural instinct. The man was considered smarter than the dog, however, the dog survived and the man died. This was because that the dog knew what it should do to keep it warm whereas the man knew little about the nature.

3.1.6 Fate and determinism

Most of the nineteenth writers like Jack London were influenced by Charles Darwin's theories on evolution. Where humans are not masters of their lives and their lives are determined by their fate. Naturalism maintains that individuals do not have free will, but that their environment shapes their behavior.

London’s short story “To Build a Fire” continues to show us that the deterministic environment is more important than man’s free will. The protagonist’s absence of morality and his lack of knowledge about the extreme cold weather did not allow him to reach the camp of his friends and did not allow him to realize how dangerous is to build a fire under a spruce tree. It was too late for him to realize that he is sooner or later going to die “He was losing in his battle with

the frost.”(09) These lines show that the man’s fate is mapped, and his ignorance of nature’s warning was an evidential determinism of his death.

Hence, we can see that the man did not have any free will, and he is not the master of his own life, but it is already shaped by his fate. The protagonist's destiny is predestined by nature and he is just put up as an observing existence without any effective action. The man’s fate has been determined by the cold weather. It was certain that he would suffer in the snow. He couldn’t change the nature; the weather wouldn’t be less or more cold because he was there. The man also couldn’t decide whether he wanted to be trapped into the water or not. The nature decided the terrain itself. The man needed to have specific skills to be able to survive in these harsh conditions, but he had to many weaknesses to survive, and these weaknesses had determined his fate and lead him to death. The events of the story were linked to each other, therefore, only one mistake could lead to serious problems. Initially, the man had to be responsible for his own decision of traveling in such a cold weather. He had already got the warning from the old-timer and suggestion to bring a partner with him but he still neglected it and brought death to himself. The author wrote “It was his own fault, or instead, his mistake” (London09) to show that the man had to face his consequence of making a wrong decision. If he noticed the place that he built the fire was inappropriate, and travelling alone in such cold and dangerous weather he might survive.

Conclusion

The death of the man by the indifferent environment indicates how human beings are weak in front of the power of nature, while the survival of the dog is instinctive. we have seen that it is not the strongest that survives always at the end, but the one who creates and uses his capacities to adapt to the different situation. Therefore, survival is not related to power of being ready to face danger, but everything is determined by the will of nature.

General conclusion

General conclusion

In the nineteenth century, American literature witnessed a new literary movement called naturalism; it is term used to describe an advanced realism. Naturalism is a word derived from nature; it is the suggestion that art and literature should present the world and people just as science shows they really are. It developed in America in the nineteenth century after it appeared in France by Emile Zola.

Many writers of the nineteenth century had influenced by this movement, such as Stephen Crane and Jack London, their literary works made great contribution to the history of literature. They played a great role in the American naturalistic literature. They were strongly influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution.

In our examination of the two short stories, we mainly focused on analysis the thematic features of naturalism through Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat" and Jack London's "To Build a Fire". We have divided our work into three chapters. In the first chapter we dealt with the biographical elements of both writers, an over view of the two short stories, Naturalism and the influence of Darwin's on those writers. The second chapter and the third chapters were devoted to examine the role of environment on the two short stories and manifest the thematic features of naturalism.

To conclude our research, we have noticed that both Jack London and Stephen Crane share the same use of naturalistic themes in their works. This study clearly explained that the characters of both short stories were victims of harsh and uncaring environmental, and how their were not their own masters of their lives, they could not surrender and rise above their will.

In both short stories the writers tend to demonstrate the idea of “survival of the fittest” and how man’s need to find meaning in the sufferings of his solitary existence, in an environment which is both hostile and indifferent towards his suffering. Thus, this work can be extended to a further study discussing the issue of psycho analysis in both works, since the harshness of nature has altered the psychological state of the characters portrayed in the two short stories.

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Abstract

This study attempts to investigate the manifestations of naturalism and examine the naturalism themes in the two short stories of two outstanding American writers, named Stephen Crane and Jack London. We seek to show the ways in which Stephen Crane's short story "The Open Boat" and Jack London's "To Build a Fire" display the role of environment in shaping humans destiny, and to examine the forces of Nature and their effects on the characters of the both stories. Stephen Crane and Jack London reveal the indifference of Nature toward humans and highlighted the conflict of man against nature. Our special aim is to explain how these two American writers share the same literary style in their stories which make them belong to naturalism. In fact we seek to show not only the content but also the forms are examples of naturalist features.

Key words: Naturalism, Stephen Crane, The Open Boat, survival, battle cold, snow, fire, nature.

Key words: the man, the dog, cold, snow, fire, nature.

Résumé

Cette étude a pour objectif d'enquêter les manifestations du naturalisme et d'examiner les thèmes du naturalisme dans les deux nouvelles des deux écrivains américains exceptionnels nommés Stephen Crane et Jack London. Nous cherchons à montrer comment la nouvelle de Stephen Crane « The Open Boat » et « To Build a Fire » de Jack London montrent le rôle de l'environnement dans le façonnement du destin de l'homme, et d'examiner les forces de la nature et leurs effets sur les personnages des deux histoires. Stephen Crane et Jack London révèlent l'indifférence de la nature envers les humains et mettent en évidence le conflit de l'homme contre la nature. Notre objectif principal est d'expliquer comment ces deux écrivains américains partagent le même style littéraire dans leurs histoires qui les font appartenir au naturalisme. En

fait, nous cherchons à montrer non seulement le contenu, mais aussi les formes qui représentent des exemples de traits naturalistes.

Mots clés : Naturalisme, Crane Stephen, The Open Boat, survie, froid de combat, neige, feu, nature.

Mots clés : l'homme, le chien, froid, neige, feu, nature.

المخلص:

نحاول في هذه الدراسة ابراز مظاهر المذهب الطبيعي ودراسته في كلتا القصتين القصيرتين لاحد أبرز الكتاب الامريكيين، هما ستيفن كرين وجاك لندن. نسعى في هاته الدراسة ان نبرز الطرق التي عبر بها الكاتبين ستيفن كرين "القارب المفتوح" و "ان توقد نار" لجاك لندن دور الطبيعة في تحديد مصير الانسان. ودراسة مدى قوة الطبيعة وتأثيراتها على شخصيات كلتا القصتين. وقد كشف كل من ستيفان كرين وجاك لندن عن عدم مبالاة الطبيعة بالإنسان وكيف سلطا الضوء على صراع الإنسان ضد الطبيعة.

الهدف الرئيسي من هاته المذكرة هو ابراز التشابه في اسلوب الادبي لهذان الكاتبان في قصصهما مما يجعلهما ينتميان إلى المذهب الطبيعي نسعى ايضا إلى إظهار ليس فقط المحتوى بل الشكل ايضا.

كلمات مفتاحية: التيار الطبيعي، ستيفن كرين، القارب المفتوح، الأدب الأمريكي، النجاة، كفاح.

كلمات مفتاحية: الرجل، الكلب، البرد، الثلج، النار، الطبيعة.