

Free creative writing on points of interest in "the open boat"

People



Stephen Crane spent about thirty hours in an open boat on 1 January 1897 and years later he published the story that became a reflection of his experience. "The Open Boat" wasn't just a description of those thirty hours; it was a short story that related to Crane's main beliefs and concerns about the society (Spofford 316). There are some main points of interest in the story - its motifs of nature's indifference and brotherhood that unite in the face of it.

At the center of the story Crane puts indifference of the universe and the nature of human suffering and plight and how the men stand together in their brotherhood, facing a cruel universe (Schirmer 222). "The Open Boat" is a story about four men united together, who all have to struggle with the situation they got in - they have to spend more than a day in a small boat, trying not to lose hope and survive this situation.

Men in the boat have to accept the fact, that they are left completely alone and not even God can hear them, so they start to lose faith. Most men usually feel themselves important and cannot just understand that the universe does not care if they live or die. As the story progresses, the men start to be frustrated, because nothing happens and the nature doesn't respond to their suffering.

The story proves that there is nothing worse than indifference - people want to be recognized, they want someone to address their problems and to get some response. A lot of men see other people's suffering, but they believe that when they have their own, they won't be left alone. So when the people in the boat understood that even in such tragic situation, nothing changes around them, they started to feel desperate. The only thing they saw was an

endless sea and detached waves.

Later, Crane admitted that he never felt so angry in his life: first, he was sad and didn't know what to do, and then he started to be furious and ended up acting like a manic, swearing at the universe (Spofford 317). He was frustrated, because of this indifference and the same thing was reflected in his short story - the men had to spend so much time on that small boat, struggling with such indifference that they lost everything to believe.

The correspondent was saved by the big wave that took him to the shore and probably the same wave was responsible for Billie's death. The irony is that Billie was the strongest among these four men, but he was the only person, who didn't manage to survive. The fact of his death rejects Darwin's evolution theory that the strongest species will live. In the face of such circumstances they were all equal and their physical attributes were not that important - oiler's death didn't have any sense and proved that the nature can be both kind and cruel. Billie's death in the story proved that people are just the victims of nature's irrationality.

Another point of interest is how men stood together in this disaster, even when they may have lost faith and all their beliefs; they were united together in their loss of hope. The author wants to show that people shouldn't blame the society, because in the end, the society and the brotherhood are something they can rely on, especially when it seems the universe doesn't care about their despair. "The Open Boat" celebrates human efforts on acting together and their solidarity (Dooley 50) - the brotherhood was a source of moral power for the people in the boat. They were together all these long hours and when the time seemed the most desperate, they still

had each other.

The sea and the boat with people in it symbolize a man's life, how people live and hope for a better future, but they often have to face the world's cruelty and different obstacles on their way. In the story, the waves represented these obstacles - people worry about them and pay a lot of attention, but as they get older, they seem to take less about such things. Even in the story, men's perception of the waves changed, in the end of the story they were just pacing and it seemed they weren't a part of the drama at all. Why do people start to care less about everything around them? Maybe it happens, because they face the indifference of the universe, when their hopes and dreams of being important to some higher powers are crushed. First, they cannot believe in it, and then they start to feel angry and even cheated and in the end, they have to accept the fact that nothing depends on the universe, they are responsible for their lives.

In the story, Crane describes the feelings of a man, who understands that the universe does not care that much about him and won't even notice if he's gone - the man wants to throw bricks at the temple, but he hates the fact that there are no temple and no bricks (Schirmer 228). Four men in an open boat didn't have any bricks, so they had to live with that feeling of frustration on such a tiny boat. And the most interesting point is that they understood they can't do it alone, they have to unite with others, because of the sympathy they felt for each other. These are two main motifs of the story - indifference of the nature and people's struggling with it in their community, how these men were able to survive with the help of their bond.

Works Cited

Dooley, Patrick K. *The Pluralistic Philosophy of Stephen Crane*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1993. Web. 21 July 2015.

Schirmer, Gregory A. " Becoming Interpreters: The Importance of Tone in Crane's " The Open Boat"." *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910* 15. 2 (1982): 221-231. Web. 21 July 2015.

Spofford, William K. " Stephen Crane's " The Open Boat": Fact or Fiction?" *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910* 12. 2 (1979): 316-321. Web. 21 July 2015.