

The blue hotel and crane's attitude of life essay



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In the short story "The Blue Hotel" written by Stephen Crane, important themes are exposed such as human behavior, violence, drugs, honesty, nature. Through the story, Crane presents hints to these themes however; the most prevalent themes are the conflicts between man and society, man against nature, and the self destructive theme. By examining these themes, Crane's attitude towards life is revealed.

The conflict between man versus himself is exhibit in many parts of the story. For example, when Swede feels that everybody in the blue hotel wants to kill him. These men are going to kill me" (pg 232) He feels that everybody in the hotel is angry at him and they want to kill him. None the less, Swede is just been paranoid since he could have been under the influence of drugs such as alcohol.

The self destructive behavior that Swede exhibits is the direct result of the atmosphere in which he has placed himself. However, the main reason that reflects the self destructive theme in this story is when Swede recovers himself from the fear of death and picks up a fight with Johnny. He defeats Johnny in the fight, but ultimately Swede's self destructive ambitions leads him to his death when he ignites a fight with the gambler and he is stabbed him to death. The self-destructive behavior of Swede's personality reveals that in Crane's eyes humankind is prone to self destruction by its own acts. For example, the destruction of the planet by the constant and increasingly depletion of natural habitats and natural resources that at one point will destroy humankind.

Besides the self-destructive behavior in Swede's personality another theme that helps us to understand Crane's attitude in life is the man against society theme. The man versus society theme in this story is clearly reflected in Swede against the people in the Blue Hotel. The Blue hotel will represent a society since Johnny, the Eastern, the Cowboy, and Scully portray a unique group that could define as a culture.

For instance, when Swede tells Johnny that he is cheating in the card game. The dishonest behavior from Johnny disgust Swede to a point that he decides to quit. Swede's remarks regarding the dishonesty of Johnny clearly creates a conflict between the people in the Blue Hotel since no one thinks that Johnny is cheating. Perhaps for the Eastern, the Cowboy, and Scully, Johnny's behavior is a normal thing among the people in this little town in Nebraska. Moreover, for most of the people in the Blue Hotel the emotional instability of Swede's personality and his inexplicable fear for his life is seen as something wrong. However, the lack of honesty and the fact that Johnny is a thief is acceptable for the Eastern, the Cowboy and Johnny himself.

The cultural differences and the contrast in principles exhibited by the people in the Blue Hotel and Swede's create conflicts that at some point caused the death of the main character. This is why Crane says that " Every sin is a result of collaboration" (pg 245) because everyone at the Blue Hotel story is responsible directly or indirectly for Swede's death for been careless and for their lack of action to stop what is unethical in their society. This theme will agree with Crane's attitude towards life since in our society similar events has occurred where negative behaviors have been rewarded and positive actions have been punished.

For example, despicable acts have been done such as slavery, war, discrimination for different reasons that only history could explain, but people have lacked the courage to stop them such as the case of the Easterner who did not speak out regarding Johnny's cheating acts. Finally, another important theme in the story *The Blue Hotel* that explains Crane's attitude of life is the theme of the man versus nature. This is a critical theme since reflects the ultimately philosophy of the author of this story. For example in the quote " One viewed the existence of man then as marvel, and conceded a glamour of wonder to those lice which were caused to cling to a whirling, fire -smitten, ice-locked, disease-stricken, space -lost bulb" (pg242). In this quote the author definitely puts nature as the ultimate ruler of the human destiny and it is nature that determines human's actions. An example that shows that nature determines human's action is the fact that when Swede wanted to leave the hotel, the owner stopped him with the excuse that outside was a terrible snow storm. Also when the Crane says " Some of the scarred and bedabbed cards were caught up from the floor and dashed helplessly against the farther wall"(pg) Here, it is the wind that destroys the game and puts people in awkward situations having to restart a game. However, it is nature's actions that make the reunion of these men at the Blue Hotel possible.

The terrible weather in the story represents anger and violence. The weather keeps the foreigners inside the hotel which later on caused these men to find their inner evils and finally the death of Swede. Therefore, by looking at the man versus nature theme, Crane's point of view about life is also discovered because the author puts a great emphasis on the role of natural

phenomenon in the human behavior. The author of the story *The Blue Hotel* portrays a small town in Nebraska as a civilized town where in a few years the train will arrive and major improvements will come. None the less, the attitude of people will not change if the values and principles of its inhabitants it is not reshaped. By analyzing the different themes present in this story, the author's attitude of life was discovered. For instance by analyzing the theme of man versus society in this story, it was found that the author believes that our society values negative behaviors more than positive acts in specific occasions.

Moreover, the self-destructive theme in this story shows that the author believes that human beings tend to promote self destruction by their own actions as was the case of Swede. Finally, by examining the man versus nature theme, it is concluded that nature plays a major role in people destiny and behavior. From my point of view, I agree with Crane's philosophy since human beings tend to be selfish and consequently self-destruction is part of our inner souls. For example, the destruction of the planet by the constant and increasingly depletion of natural habitats and natural resources that at one point will destroy humankind.

Also, the fact the human beings are careless for others, similarly to what the people at the Blue Hotel experienced when Swede told them that Johnny was cheating. Finally, the belief that nature plays a major role in our lives, this is true since many events in our society have been changed by nature. For instance, natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions that have changed societies completely.