



Literary Determinism in Stephen Crane's "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky"

By Julia Ramirez Perez



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Seminar paper from the year 2006 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 1,0, University of Tübingen, 6 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: In many of his short stories, Stephen Crane shows that his characters are ruled by a deterministic universe. The individual has no significant status in nature and is dominated by forces he is not able to protect himself from. These deterministic forces can be external, like the environment or the circumstances of a person, or internal, like his instincts, his experiences, etc. This text will try to show how the perception and the actions of the characters in "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" are determined. Moreover, it draws a connection between the multiperspectivity applied in the story and its consequences for perception. It will also explore to what extent the West plays a role as a determining force. 2 Literary Determinism Literary determinism is one of the features inherent in naturalism, which is "a type of literature that attempts to apply scientific principles of objectivity and detachment to its study of human beings" (Campbell, 2006). Men are seen as animal-like beasts, "governed by their instincts and passions" (Campbell, 2006). They live in a "universe that reveals free will as an illusion" (Campbell, 2006). According to determinism, "our decisions and the like and also our actions flowing from them are the effects of certain ordinary causal sequences" (Honderich, 2003). Thus, any human being is nothing but a plaything of nature without a chance to change the course of his life. Together with the struggle for survival, violence, and taboos, determinism is one of the core topics of naturalist literature (cf. Campbell, 2006). "Crane had a very deterministic perspective of life" (Backman, 1991: 83). In "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," he presents "man as a victim of external force and much in life as beyond his control" (Backman, 1991: 120).

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Literary Determinism in Stephen Crane's "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" By Julia Ramirez Perez Bibliography

- Brand: Brand: GRIN Verlag GmbH
- Published on: 2008-07-05
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .10" w x 5.51" l, .13 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 40 pages

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