

Antiheroism in Raymond Chandler's Red Wind

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Narrative Setting and the Antiheroic Atmosphere

Quote: 1 "The wind was making enough noise to make the hard quick rap of 22 ammunition sound like a slammed door, even if one heard it. I went back into the cocktail bar" (Chandler 3). The quote reflects the darker side of society, whose miseries made Coepernik immoral and alienated from society. His story portrays morally complicated paths. Red Wind uses an anti-hero that does not present murder in a small urban bar that takes the reader to the period of the '940s to '50s. Anti- the Hero navigates the corrupt landscapes of the depression era in Los- Angeles. The antihero concept reflects the darkest sites of human nature through Raymond Chandler's "Red Wind." Red Wind uses the concept of anti-hero to create the scariest character that best explains the human psyche.

War, Modernity, and the Rise of the Antihero

Quote: 2 "The war is a turning point to produce antiheroic protagonists in literature, and it has encouraged critical studies examining previous works regarding "anti-heroism" (Miller). The historical assessment of the literature depicts that authors used the genres of anti-heroes between mid- mid-1940s to 1970s. History indicates that World War II played a significant role in the creation of anti-heroes. The American soldiers who survived in war faced mental complications that later influenced their personalities. The film industry finds traditional heroes unrelated to capturing reality, so they create anti-heroes. The main factor that differentiates between the hero and anti-hero is morality.

The narrator highlights self-oriented traits promoted by the culture of anti-hero. "However, a modern anti-heroism in the earlier twentieth century is a response to the uncertainties of people about traditional values; it is a response to the insignificance of human beings on modernity and their drab existence; it's a feature of modernism and its zeitgeist" (Neimneh). The creation of anti-heroes helped the authors and storytellers to capture the aspect of self-interest. People after depression developed self-oriented traits that resulted in their disengagement from societal wellness. Anti-heroes experienced the injustices that influenced them to take revenge. Imperfections and flaws of people after the great depression made the iconic heroes less realistic. Anti-heroes replaced heroes to represent the imperfections, ambiguities, and faults of human society.

Corruption, Dishonesty, and Moral Ambiguity

Chandler develops corrupt cops to manipulate the wrongdoings of an anti-hero. The story possesses all the qualities of anti-heroism and is a bit dark. The anti-hero is a flawed hero that lacks the qualities of a good hero. The concept of anti-hero emerged from the Greek theater that survived in the form of a character archetype. The antagonism was present in history and is not a modern character. Anti-Hero is the opposite of a hero and lacks moral values. A hero is a person who possesses all good qualities, such as morality and fairness and is steadfast. However, the anti-hero lacks moral values and often becomes a reason for unpleasant happenings. The main difference between a hero and an anti-hero is the ability to choose right over wrong. He never inflicts pain on others and can choose actions that do not lead to the destruction of humanity. Anti-heroes do not care about the consequences of their actions and choose any action without the difference between right and wrong. The moral flaws of the anti-hero include attributes that make him less right. The common flaws include alcoholism, violent temper, uncontrollable emotions, and infidelity.

The narrator uses dishonesty and alcoholism to reflect anti-heroism through Copernik. "The cop yanked Waldo's wallet out, went through it rapidly and whistled. "Plenty jack and no driver's license." He put the wallet away. "O.K., we didn't touch him, see? Just a chance we could find did he had a car and put it on the air." (Chandler 2). The quote reflects alcoholism and explains it is one of the attributes of anti-heroism. The society that suffered the consequences of depression lacked the strength to control their emotions and relied on alcohol. The scene presents the character of a cop who appears as an anti-hero. Copernicus is a corrupt cop who portrays the injustice and moral illness of the American culture. Copernik symbolizes the corruption, dirt, and destruction of the American culture.

Urban Culture and the Great Depression

Chandler conveys the dark side of the sub-urban culture through the creation of anti- anti-hero. The reason to construct the anti-hero to perform certain tasks is the fact that good people cannot always end injustice. Actions have some consequences that can make a person look wrong. Abstract principles of justice do not operate in the real world, and actions cause repercussions. The concept of anti-hero indicates that people have to choose sometimes violence that deviates them from their moral values (Chandler).

The narrator speaks about how the Great Depression in America and Los Angeles influenced anti-heroism. The great depression gave birth to morally weak characters such as Travis Brickley, Jay Gatsby, Michael Clore, Marlowe and John Dalmas. The characters broke laws to take revenge. Though anti-heroes remain morally flawed, they also possess qualities and perform certain actions that reflect the rightness of their character. Anti-heroes emerged during the nineteenth century and flourished throughout the era.

American Crime Fiction and Social Breakdown

The American authors of the nineteenth century created the suspense genre and brought more anti-heroes to display the grizzled, hard-drinking who walked the streets of mean urban America. The red wind portrays the degeneration of the urban American culture. The war and depression changed the lives of the majority of Americans. Urban America reflects selfishness and a disturbed society. Heroes in urban America were unfit to represent the societal ills. The authors find the need to construct a character that represents the issues and complexities of society. The changes in society and depression changed the characters of people. In a complex and mean world, the survival of a hero who only displays good qualities and includes no moral illness is difficult. The perfect hero in the selfish American world was not able to illustrate the reality. World War II resulted in a depression that made more people alcoholic. The heroes were morally perfect and lacked immoral practices such as drinking. Alcoholism was one of the essential traits of anti-heroes that represent the essence of realism.

Authors display depression and reality through anti-heroes. "After the atomic bomb exploded to end World War II, there was an upsurge of anti-heroes as main characters, as if to give voice to cynicism and angst of the post-nuclear war." World War II spread fear and terror that resulted in cynicism and mental instability among many people. Anti-heroes possessed traits of restlessness, short temper, and violence that best fulfilled the condition of human beings after World War II. The existence of a perfect role model in American [society after World War II](#) was not possible. The creation of anti-heroes helped Chandler and other authors to present the societal damages and transformations.

The anti-hero depicts many shades of dark and light that reflect more realism than the old depictions of heroism. "Instead of treating the dark side of human nature as inherently maladaptive, we provide an alternative view that, despite their costs, traits like these can confer reproductive and survival benefits for the individual" (Jonason, Webster and Schmitt). The world became so complex for the people who displayed morality and human values. The creation of anti- hero distinguishes between good and evil. The Great Depression followed World War II, which resulted in the complexities of the world. The reality could not ignore the darker side of depression in Log Angeles, and Americans suffered the repercussions of depression. Depression spread evil and made good less important for society.

People ignored the importance of good, and they found their survival was more important. Miseries and repercussions of the great depression include loss of jobs and shelter. People encountered difficulties in adjusting to new lives that resulted in their mental instability. The great depression resulted in the moral corruptness of society as people gave up on their moral values and did not believe in optimism. Depression in Log Angeles caused psychological influences on the people and resulted in changing behaviors. The lives of people before the Great Depression were simple, and societal values were more effective. The choices and decisions of people are linked to the differences between right and wrong.

Masculinity, Survival, and the Modern Antihero

Anti-heroism illustrates the weaknesses and imperfections that the males sympathize with to survive in their urban wildness. “It’s the apartment of some horrible man who swears anything for a few dollars. Now you’re trying to scare me” (Chandler 8). The quote reflects the low morality of Marlowe. One of the most striking features that separates the hero from traditional her is self-interest. The traditional hero engaged himself in actions that resulted in the best interest of humanity and society. The period after the depression made people more selfish, and their lust for power and money was one of the common elements.

Males that failed to take the role of effective heroes turned into anti-heroes. Anti-heroism reflects the failure of American males to live according to the expectations of society. The male who lacks the qualities of a true hero and thinks they are incapable of living up to society’s expectations become anti-heroes. They show a lack of tolerance and think they are more powerful than females and possess all the qualities that make them masculine. The weaknesses and imperfections of anti-heroes emerge from their interpretation of masculinity. Wrong happenings and societal illnesses encouraged them to take revenge for their miseries.

Anti- the hero, delivers delusion, bewilderment, and post-conventional beliefs about evil. The characteristics and roles played by heroes encourage male audiences towards moral values and societal correctness. Anti-heroes, on the other hand, deliver negative aspects such as violence, moral corruption, and cynicism. Anti-heroes promote intolerance, anger, and short temperament. The anti-heroes display disturbed past and family issues that make male audiences sympathetic towards them. Anti-heroes caused notable damage to society through the representation of the darker side of human beings. Anti-heroes lead to a dystopian society that eliminates moral correctness. The culture of anti-heroes displays societal ills and destructions that include murder, rage, fear and the deeper misanthropy of a corrupt society. Hypermasculinity appeals to the male audience, and they think more anger and intolerance make them different. Anti-heroes play destructive roles in society as they present criminals and killers as heroes that influence the young generation towards societal ills. The anti-hero character “Coepernik” represents the theme that he has his own rules and he can kill anyone who he thinks is wrong.

The anti-hero represents the complexity of modern life and has close relevance to the great depression. Moral ambiguity became one of the essential traits of the anti-heroes after the great depression and urbanization. The story lacks morality for the readers and persuades them towards restless. The past stories of anti-heroes depict that they have a miserable past and justify their immoral behaviors. The anti-heroes, in many ways, convey inhumane voices and create lucid reflections. Hypermasculinity appeals to male audiences more. The characters display that they are mentally weak and transmit insecurities. Not all males can assess the defeats of the anti-heroes, and they get inspiration. Though anti-heroes are different from heroes, they possess some similar traits, such as bravery and courage. The wind in the story reflects evilness and corruptness through the

character of Coepernik.

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