The Importance of a Dystopian Hero in Sara Gruen’s *Water for Elephants*

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Abstract
Humanity has always wanted to find peace, order, and justice in a perfect world. Yet, this longing manifested in literary works, has been touched by the dark side of reality, transforming Utopia into Dystopia; a world of conflict and chaos. Sara Gruen (1969) captivates this undeniable reality in her novel *Water for Elephants* (2006) and shows that the so called ideal society can still have a tragic flaw. This study intends to prove the existence of a Dystopian world in Sara Gruen’s novel *Water for Elephants*, and how it is shaped within a miniature society of a circus. In the life of this circus, the elements of Dystopia come together to portray the degeneration of society during the Great Depression of (1929 – 1941) in the United States of America; creating a world everyone thought at the very beginning was Utopia. Therefore, this study unravels the layers of perfection and shows the flaws of this so called perfect man-made world (the circus) by using the theoretical approach of the term Dystopia and applying it to the novel, one finds that the events that lead to the hero’s abandonment of everything because of the Great Depression in America, ends with the hero’s triumph over shackled circumstances in which he is played as a pawn. This feature of ending oppression and fighting for his and his society’s freedom is a major quality of a Dystopian Hero; in contrast, a Utopian Protagonist stands aside, simply being objective in society as he studies the perfect laws and nature of such a perfect world.

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