

Characteristics of Reality in Arthur Hailey's "Hotel"

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خصائص الواقع في فندق "آرثر هيلي"

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الخلاصة:

برزت الواقعية في كل اصعدة الحياة
لتسلط الضوء على جميع قضايا الانسان
بإيجابياتها وسلبياتها وكما تعكسها الحياة
الواقعية. وكما يعتبر الادب مرآة تعكس
الحياة ، فانه يتناول الواقعية كحركة ادبية
تجسد الخصائص انفة الذكر. وكما يعكس
الادب المشاكل الواقعية ويقوي الجوانب
الاخلاقية ويدعو الى اصلاح المجتمع.
يعتبر الروائي الامريكي ارثر هيلي
احد الروائيين الحديثين الذين جسّدوا
الحركة الواقعية الادبية في اعماله الادبية
التي تشهد له بالابداع الروائي. وقد اسهم
هيلي ككاتب محترف بتحف ادبية عديدة
تعكس الحياة الحديثة بصورة واقعية
وخاصة في رواية الفندق..
الكلمات المفتاحية: الواقعية ، التهرب من
الواقع، البرجماتية، الادب

Abstract:

Realism appears in all aspects of life to shed light upon all human issues in negative and positive ways as they are reflected in real life. Literature is considered as a mirror of all aspects of life. It deals with realism as a movement that embodies these features. It reflects practical problems, empowers moral sides and also calls on reforming society. Arthur Hailey is one of the modern novelists who has embodied realism in his literary works to bear witness for his mastery of the genre. As a professional writer he contributes so many masterpieces reflecting modern life in realistic way especially in his novel *Hotel*.

Key Words: Realism, Escapism, Pragmatism, and Literature.

Introduction

This study deals with the Realistic Movement found in Hailey's novel *Hotel*, and how it states the realistic life by depicting various aspects of society. In fact, the realistic novels appeared in literature in a very early period and they can be seen in various literary works of famous writers such as Chaucer, Defoe, Austen, Dickens ... etc. But as a dominant literary trend, Realism is associated chiefly with the 19th century novel of middle, or lower class life. The outstanding works of realism in 19th – century fiction include Honore De Balzac's *Illusions Perdues*, Gustave Flaubert's *Madam Bovary*, and George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, and in early 20th century fiction Arnold Bennett's *the old wives* and Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*. Also, in America realism has affected writers such as William Dean Howells, who has formulated the first theory for American realism.

Baldick defines the movement of realism as “a mode of writing that gives the impression of recording and reflecting faithfully an actual way of life” (Baldick,2000:281). So the most important characteristic of realism is reflecting faithfully an actual fact of life or imitation of life as it is, it is a record and description of daily life as it is. Therefore, realism is the attempt to represent subject matter truthfully, without artificiality and avoiding artistic conventions, implausible, exotic and supernatural elements. In *Glossary of Literary Terms*, Abrams and Childs, P., & Fowler, R. in *The Routledge Dictionary of literary Terms*, have stated that the difference between Realism and the Romantic Movement by asserting that "the romantic movement presents life as we would have to be more picturesque more fantastic, more adventurous than the actual"(Childs,2006 and Abrams, 2007.s. v. Realism).

In the present time, literary works show the meaning of realism and its difference from romanticism in all aspects as a return from solitude to society, from nature to industrial society, from concept and idealism to all issues which touch the personal life, from spiritualism to pragmatism, from optimism to agnosticism and from lyricism to criticism and reform.

In consequence, The Realistic Novels are known for their style that gives the effects, presents the life and the social world as they seem to the common reader without any collapses. So, the realistic movement deals with daily life of human being by using simple language to present different realistic themes. Arthur Hailey is one of the Realistic writers who introduced the features of this movement in his works. *Hotel* (1965) is the famous novel written to describe the hotel's industry and styles of

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life in the closed places in order to depict the human beings' associations inside the organization.

Characteristics of Realism in Hailey's time

The realistic novel is a mirror of the whole human life, it reflects all pictures of society and daily life and depict the world as it really is. It reflects practical problems and includes a moral purpose and invites readers to reform society. William J. Long in his book *English Literature*, states that “the novelists tell a story which pictures human life, and at the same time call us to the work of social reform, or drive home a moral lesson” (Long,2000: 559).

The realistic novels deal with political issues and religious questions, they are also concerned with the criticism of laws, institutions, social dogmas of life. Although they are set in a familiar setting , realistic novels often do not impose or preach on personal beliefs, ethics and morality.

The realistic novel is endowed with ordinary or humble characters in extraordinary or adventurous situations. The whole elements are involved, and the common folk talking about the world and all its trials and comforts are portrayed working towards sensible outcomes of their personal dilemma.

A realistic novel can be characterized by its complex characters with mixed motives that are rooted in social class and it operates according to highly developed social structure. The characters interact with the other characters and undergo plausible and everyday experiences. These characters use humorous show with their tricky circumstances. They also use humor as a form of self –conservation. They reflect their individual differences as characters (personal idiosyncrasies) or through language (verbal humor with word misuse, misinterpretations or irony) or as situational (bumbling, goofy or astonishing cases).

Most of realistic novels use colloquial from of a language as a contemporary everyday life, reflecting the characters' social class, culture and setting. The allow the use of dialectic, slang or phrases endemic to where the story takes place. The theme of realistic novel shows how a protagonist tackles growing up situations that require him to become less immature and less self-absorbed. They also show how the protagonist awakens or reveals how he is an ordinary person to his role (which is extraordinary) as a cooperative member of a community .

Problem novels have realistic themes that reflect whole controversial problems of the day, such as the problem of ethnic minorities or drug use

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, child abuse and sexual issues with characters showing melodramatic reactions within predictable plots. Their story lines are typically based on social topics. The language used in realistic novels is a regular language that emerges in middle-class in America and England. It could be understood easily because it is a contemporary language.

Realistic novels mostly presents middle-class society and working men and women circumstances. Who are endowed with regular names that give them the illusion of being real people. They show parents engaging in family politics, or workers struggling against an oppressive social system. The realistic novel might include too many pages to describe such works and how they look and feel like. The aim of this detailed description is to render scenes, objects and characters as life – like as possible. If readers could feel like they are experiencing the reality of the characters on the page, they would be more likely to approach such material as believable realistic human beings.

The dominant theme in realistic novel is concerned with the development of individual as an autonomous being who should be accorded with his own inalienable rights. This doctrine is apparent in realism's preoccupation with the individual as an object of interest. Most texts are about the development of an individual person as he struggles to overcome social barriers. The central character often engages with some type of antagonist, whether external or internal, in order to achieve the truest version of self that is possible to this extent; both character and plot are heavily influenced by the ideas circulating at the time.

Realism witnessed various alteration in its history, thus novelists passed over into the movement of naturalism to give a more accurate depiction of life than realism Baldick 2000 states that “in the work of some novelists, realism passes over into the movement of naturalism in which sociological investigation and determinist views of human behavior predominate”(p.281).

Realistic Features in *Hotel*

Arthur Hailey (1920-2004) has written a relaxation literature in which he uses realistically descriptive methods, and does extensive research into the settings of his stories. His novel can be considered as non-fiction sociological novel. He also uses a multi plot technique, changing scenes just where story is the most suspenseful. These two traits make the directors motivate to adapt the novel to movie in 1967 and 1983 and Aaron Spelling has turned it into television series.

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Commercial success of Arthur's *Hotel* has advanced his skill to connect fiction with facts, which has great effects on readers. According to "The Treatment of Setting Novels", Maliskova 2008 mentions that: "It is a fact that Anglo-Saxon literature always considered the setting as a decisive part of novel organization. However, it always served and supported the plot and to a great extent exemplified the psychological aspects of characters" (P.19).

Arthur's profession in *Hotel* has shifted the focus on the setting itself, emphasized a variety of its aspects and often reduced the plot to the minimum of standardized actions and motives. It can also be defined as a novel about a human activity but not about a human soul.

The author devotes his style just for the descriptions of different settings which make readers get interesting information about operations in such companies which are attractive for all people and they can get a picture of real state of affairs.

Unfortunately, his belonging to many nationalities like British, Canadian and American makes him unknown because the majority of people think that if a person has many nationalities, he will be lost in these different cultures which make a person socially unstable one.

In *Hotel*, Arthur Hailey gives the readers a full description and much information of hotels industries. He describes every place inside the hotel with complete details and this thing is an important characteristic in realistic novel so as to depict the whole image with negative and positive picture objectively. For example when Hailey describes the hotel with its minute details:

small signs, but significant: a newspaper left in a chair and uncollected a half – dozen cigarette butts in a sand urn by the elevators a button missing from a bell-boy's uniform tow burned-out light bulbs in the chandelier above .At the St. Charles Avenue entrance a uniformed doorman gossiped with a news Vender, a tide of guests and others breaking around them. Closer at hand an elderly assistant manager sat brooding at his desk, eyes down. (Hailey1965. P. 84)

Also we can find the same idea in the paragraph below, it is a picture of another place inside hotel that includes elaborate description:

while speaking they had moved from the corridor into the hallway of the suite, a tastefully appointed rectangle with deep broadloom, two upholstered chairs, and a telephone side table beneath a Morris Henry Hobbs engraving of old New Orleans. The double doorway to the corridor formed one end of the rectangle. At the other end, the door to the

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large living room was partially open. On the right and left were two other doorways, one to the self-contained kitchen and another to an office-cum-bed-sitting room, at present used by the Croydon's secretary. The two main, connecting. (Hailey1965. P. 10)

In *Hotel*, Hailey shows the daily life inside the hotel with the major problem and conditions of the work found in every place and time. Also this refers to another concept of realistic novel, when the author discusses the condition and problem of working people and the complaints “ from the eleventh floor about some sort of sex orgy, on the ninth the Duchess of Croydon claims her Duke has been insulted by a room- service waiter , there is a report of somebody moaning horribly in 1439, and I have the night manger off sick, with the other two house officers otherwise engaged” (Hailey1965. P. 2).

Another example about the same point when he describes the workers' internal honesty and dignity as he says:

One cleaner, old Meg Yetmein, who had worked nearly thirty years in the hotel, walked awkwardly, though anyone noticing might have taken her clumsy gait for tiredness. The real reason, however, was a three-pound sirloin steak taped securely to the inside of her thigh. Half an hour ago, choosing an unsupervised few minutes, Mag had snatched the steak from a kitchen refrigerator. From long experience she knew exactly where to look, and afterward how to conceal her prize in an old polishing rage en route to the women's toilet. There, safe behind a bolted door, she brought out an adhesive bandage and fixed the steak in place. The hour or so is cold, clammy discomfort was well worth the knowledge that she could walk serenely past the house detective who guarded the staff entrance and suspiciously checked outgoing package or bulging pockets. The procedure- of her own devising- was foolproof, as she had proven many times before. (Hailey1965. P. 57-58).

As other workers show their loyalty to their works as in this example:

Would the bastards do it at home?' Mrs. Shoulder snapped at the male night worker who had separated the offending tablecloths from a larger pile of ordinarily dirty ones. 'By God – if they did, their wives would kick their arse from here to craptown. Plenty of times I've told those jerk head waiters to watch out and put a stop to it, but what do they care?, Her voice dropped in contemptuous mimicry. 'Yessir, yessir, I'll kiss you on both cheeks, sir. By all means write on the clot, sir, and here's another ball – point pen, sir. As long as I get a great fat tip, who cares about the goddam laundry?' (Hailey1965. P. 62)

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Also, there are workers show humors and tricks during dealing with the residents in the hotel like this:

Someone who had to struggle and grunt a bit with heavy luggage was likely to earn bigger tips than a youngster who swung bags as if they contained nothing more than balsa wood. One old – timer, who actually was strong and wiry as a mule, had a way of setting bags down, putting a hand over his heart, than picking them up with a shake of his head a carrying on. The performance seldom earned less than a dollar from convinced the old man would have a coronary around the next corner. What they did not know was that ten per cent of their tip would find its way into Herbie Chandler's pocket, plus the flat tow dollars daily which Chandler exacted from each bellboy as the price of retaining his job (Hailey1965. P. 4-5)

Other characters show their professional and great ability in dealing with residents in hotel working. They can guess if the resident can pay or not if he is a good person or not. In real life there are many people who have this ability and can face their vocational life. So, this point reveals a realistic characteristic in the novel:

His approach would be discreet and friendly. If the guest showed ability to pay, or agreed to put a cash deposit on his bill, their parting would be cordial. However, if his earlier suspicions were confirmed, the credit manager could be tough and ruthless, with the guest evicted before a big bill could be run up. (Hailey1965. P. 76-77).

In addition to that, the novel refers to the important issues in American society, especially in the courts of law, it is a kind of discrimination, the courts refuse black person witness in American courts in state of Louisiana for this example Hailey refers:

I would have to be a witness. An' let me tell you, Mr. McDermott, no court in this sovereign State of Louisiana is gonna take a nigger boy's word in a white rape case, attempted or otherwise. No, sir, not when four upstanding young white gentlemen say the nigger boy is lying. Not even if Miss prey Scott supports the nigger boy, which I doubt her pappy would let her, considering what all the newspapers and such might make of it. (Hailey1965. P. 40)

In *Hotel*, the narrator, Arthur Hailey describes the life inside the closed places exactly in the kitchen of the hotel, the life inside kitchen it is so active all the day, the aroma of the food makes the self so pleased, the active cooks and waiters also run of trucks of food and the noise or sounds of plate and orders. It is a life in simple way that attracts readers'

interests when they read about this hotel operations. The narrator could depict the faces of guests in the restaurant when they look at the smoke of food:

As Andre Lemieux nodded, the head waiter's arm swept down. The cooks with tapers ran down the line of tray, igniting them. The double service doors were flung back and fastened. Outside, on cue, an electrician dimmed the lights. The music of an orchestra diminished, then abruptly stopped. Among guests in the great hall, a hum of conversation died. Suddenly, beyond the diners, a spotlight sprang on, framing the doorway from the kitchen. There was a second's silence, then a fanfare of trumpets. As it ended, orchestra and organ swung together, *fortissimo*, into the opening bars of *The Saints*. In time to this music, the procession of waiters, with flaming trays, marched out.

Oh, when the Saints, Oh, when the Saints, Oh, when the Saints go marching in ... From the kitchen, waiter after waiter, in trim blue uniform, marched out in step. For this moment, every last man had been impressed. Some, in moments only, would return to complete their flames reared up like beacons *Oh, when the Saints, Oh, when the Saints, Oh, when the Saints go marching in ...* From the diners, a spontaneous burst of applause, changing to handclapping in time with the music as waiters encircled the room. For the hotel, a commitment had been met as planned. No one outside the Kitchen could know that minutes earlier a crisis had been encountered and overcome. (Hailey 1965. P. 315-316)

Conclusion

In his novel *Hotel*, Arthur Hailey uses many important characteristics of realistic novels which are discussed in this paper. He focuses on the closed places and the shape of social relationships in these places, also he describes them in a realistic way for this kind of life in their positive and negative shapes. Hailey succeeds in depicting all the characters in his novel as they are in their ordinary life with an objective attitude, and he considers this narrative part of the realistic movement with all its manifestations.

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