

examples of attitude in literature

Examples of Attitude in Literature play a significant role in shaping the reader's understanding of characters, themes, and narratives. Attitude in literature can refer to the perspective or emotional stance of a character, narrator, or author toward a subject, which can influence the tone and mood of the work. This article will explore various examples of attitude in literature, examining how different authors convey their perspectives and how these attitudes affect the overall message of their works.

Understanding Attitude in Literature

To comprehend the examples of attitude in literature, it is essential to define what attitude means in this context. It encompasses feelings, thoughts, and behaviors that characters exhibit toward other characters, situations, and even themselves. Attitude can manifest through various literary devices, including:

- Character Dialogue: What a character says can reveal their attitude.
- Narrative Voice: The tone and style of the narrator can reflect their attitude.
- Symbolism: Objects or events may carry attitudes that represent broader themes.
- Imagery: Descriptive language can evoke feelings that reflect an attitude.

Attitude contributes significantly to character development, plot progression, and thematic exploration. Let's delve into some notable examples across different literary genres.

Examples of Attitude in Fiction

1. "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen

In "Pride and Prejudice," Austen employs a critical attitude toward societal norms and class distinctions. The protagonist, Elizabeth Bennet, displays a spirited and independent attitude, challenging the expectations placed upon women in the early 19th century.

- Dialogue: Elizabeth's witty exchanges, especially with Mr. Darcy, illustrate her critical perspective on societal expectations.
- Narrative Voice: Austen's use of irony and sarcasm reveals her attitude towards the superficiality of social class, particularly in her portrayal of characters like Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine de Bourgh.

Through Elizabeth's journey from prejudice to understanding, Austen critiques the rigid social structures of her time.

2. "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" conveys a complex attitude towards the American Dream. The narrator, Nick Carraway, exhibits a mix of admiration and disillusionment regarding the opulence and moral decay of the 1920s.

- Narrative Voice: Nick's reflective and sometimes judgmental tone underscores his conflicting feelings about Gatsby's grand aspirations contrasted with the emptiness of the lives around him.
- Symbolism: The green light at the end of Daisy's dock symbolizes Gatsby's unattainable dream, highlighting the illusory nature of the American Dream.

Fitzgerald's attitude ultimately reveals a critique of the pursuit of wealth and the moral compromises it entails.

3. "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee

In "To Kill a Mockingbird," Lee adopts an empathetic attitude towards social justice and racial inequality. Through the eyes of Scout Finch, the narrative explores themes of prejudice and moral integrity.

- Character Attitude: Atticus Finch embodies a principled attitude, advocating for justice and understanding even in the face of societal bias.
- Imagery: The descriptions of Maycomb and its residents evoke feelings of both comfort and discomfort, mirroring the complexities of human behavior.

Lee's attitude fosters a deep sense of empathy, encouraging readers to confront their own prejudices.

Examples of Attitude in Poetry

1. "The Waste Land" by T.S. Eliot

Eliot's "The Waste Land" presents a fragmented and disillusioned attitude toward the post-World War I world. The poem's complex structure and varied voices reflect a collective sense of despair and confusion.

- Imagery: Vivid images of desolation convey Eliot's critical attitude toward modernity and its discontents.
- Allusions: References to various cultural and literary texts reveal a sense of loss and the search for meaning in a fractured society.

Eliot's attitude captures the existential angst of his time, making it a seminal work in modernist poetry.

2. "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou

In "Still I Rise," Angelou expresses a defiant and resilient attitude toward oppression and adversity. The poem serves as an anthem for empowerment and self-affirmation, particularly for Black women.

- Repetition: The phrase "I rise" underscores a powerful attitude of perseverance and strength against societal barriers.
- Imagery: Angelou's use of confident and vibrant imagery celebrates resilience, contrasting the struggles faced by marginalized individuals.

The poem's attitude is one of hope and determination, inspiring readers to rise above their challenges.

Examples of Attitude in Drama

1. "A Streetcar Named Desire" by Tennessee Williams

Williams' play presents a complex attitude towards desire and reality through the character of Blanche DuBois. Her tragic flaws and delusions reflect an attitude of fragility in the face of harsh truths.

- Character Dialogue: Blanche's poetic and often evasive language reveals her attempts to mask her vulnerability and maintain an illusion of grandeur.
- Symbolism: The streetcar named Desire symbolizes the uncontrollable forces that drive characters towards their fates.

Williams' attitude towards the intersection of desire and despair shapes the emotional landscape of the play.

2. "Death of a Salesman" by Arthur Miller

In "Death of a Salesman," Miller critiques the American Dream through the character of Willy Loman, whose misguided aspirations lead to his downfall. The pervasive attitude of failure and disillusionment is palpable throughout the play.

- Narrative Structure: The play's non-linear timeline reflects Willy's fragmented psyche and deteriorating mental state, emphasizing his inability to cope with reality.
- Symbolism: The seeds Willy plants symbolize his futile efforts to cultivate success and legacy, underscoring his tragic attitude towards his life's worth.

Miller's attitude provides a stark commentary on the pressures of conformity and the tragic cost of unattainable dreams.

Conclusion

Examples of attitude in literature are diverse and multifaceted, shaping the reader's experience and understanding of a narrative. From the critical lens of Jane Austen in "Pride and Prejudice" to the defiant voice of Maya Angelou in "Still I Rise," authors utilize attitude to convey deeper meanings and provoke thought.

Through the exploration of characters, narrative voice, and literary devices, readers can appreciate the layers of meaning that attitude adds to literature. Ultimately, the attitudes expressed by authors and characters serve as reflections of their contexts, inviting readers to engage with the complexities of human emotion and societal norms. Literature not only mirrors reality but also shapes our understanding of the world through the attitudes it conveys.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an example of a character displaying a positive attitude in literature?

In 'Anne of Green Gables' by L.M. Montgomery, Anne Shirley consistently maintains an optimistic attitude despite her challenging circumstances, showcasing resilience and hope.

How does the attitude of the narrator influence the story in 'The Catcher in the Rye'?

In 'The Catcher in the Rye', Holden Caulfield's cynical and disaffected attitude shapes the reader's understanding of his struggles with identity and belonging, impacting the overall tone of the novel.

Can you give an example of a negative attitude affecting character relationships in literature?

In 'Pride and Prejudice' by Jane Austen, Mr. Darcy's initial pride and haughty attitude create tension and misunderstanding in his relationship with Elizabeth Bennet, highlighting how attitudes can lead to conflict.

What role does attitude play in the character development in 'The Great Gatsby'?

In 'The Great Gatsby', Jay Gatsby's hopeful attitude towards his dreams ultimately leads to his tragic downfall, illustrating how attitudes can drive ambition but also blind individuals to reality.

How is the theme of attitude explored in 'To Kill a Mockingbird'?

In 'To Kill a Mockingbird', Atticus Finch's calm and principled attitude in the face of prejudice

teaches his children about empathy and moral integrity, emphasizing the importance of a positive outlook in challenging times.

What is an example of a character whose attitude changes throughout a story?

In 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens, Ebenezer Scrooge's attitude transforms from miserly and bitter to generous and joyful, illustrating the power of redemption and the impact of self-reflection.

How does attitude affect the protagonist's journey in 'The Alchemist'?

In 'The Alchemist' by Paulo Coelho, Santiago's positive attitude and belief in his personal legend drive him to pursue his dreams, highlighting how a constructive mindset can lead to fulfillment and discovery.

What is a notable example of irony in a character's attitude in literature?

In 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' by Oscar Wilde, Dorian's initially carefree and hedonistic attitude masks his moral decline, creating an ironic contrast between his external beauty and internal corruption.

Can you provide an example of how societal attitudes are reflected in literature?

In 'The Handmaid's Tale' by Margaret Atwood, the oppressive societal attitudes towards women are vividly portrayed through the protagonist Offred's experiences, emphasizing the impact of collective beliefs on individual lives.

How does Mark Twain use attitude to convey themes in 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn'?

In 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn', Huck's evolving attitude towards race and morality reflects the broader social issues of his time, showcasing his internal conflict and growth as he challenges societal norms.

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