Spotted Horses Vs. Mule In The Yard Essay, Research Paper

Spotted Horses Vs. Mule in the Yard

William Faulkner wrote two short stories, which are alike in many aspects. Spotted Horses and Mule in the Yard are short stories that both involve comic animal chases and financial transactions. Even though the stories are written by the same author, have similar characteristics, and share similar plot features, they are entirely different stories. The stories are both examples of interpretive literature, however Spotted Horses is a more interpretive short story than Mule in the Yard because Spotted Horses fits Perrine s profile of interpretive literature, and Mule in the Yard seems to replicate Perrine s profile of escape literature.

According to Laurence Perrine in his seventh edition of Literature: Structure, Sound and Sense he states the definition of interpretive literature is Literature written to deepen and broaden and sharpen our awareness of life. Interpretive literature is not candy coated. It allows its readers to experience the trials and tribulations of life. By using graphically realistic plots and endings, which are consistent to those in real life, interpretive literature achieves a higher literary value than escape literature. Interpretive literature allows its reader too step out of the fantasy world they might be living in and focus on what the world is really about. One might say an interpretive story provides insight to understanding. Not only understanding of ourselves, but our neighbors, friends, family or anyone else we might encounter.

Escape literature is the complete opposite of interpretive literature. Escape literature is written purely for entertainment. Escape literature takes it s reader out of the real world and into a fantasy world where everything works and happens just like we want it to. This is a world where the ending always has closure. Escapist authors hardly ever end on a bad note. They want the reader to leave the pages of their story satisfied, and having a sense of contentment. Perrine s example of escape literature is Cinderella. Cinderella s life goes from rags to riches in one night. She marries a prince and lives happily ever after. According to Perrine the most common expectations of escape literature readers are the sympathetic heroes or heroines, the suspenseful plot which one exciting event proceeds another, the resolved happy outcome, and the theme. Escape literature themes confirm the reader s previous opinions of the world. Readers of escape literature read for pleasure not to gather knowledge on how to survive in the real world.

The difference between escape literature and interpretive literature has nothing to do with the absence or presence of morals, facts, fantasy, or history. The main difference between the two is the purpose for which the story is written.

Mule in the Yard by William Faulkner is an interpretive story. However, Spotted Horses is a more interpretive story. Even though Mule in the Yard is interpretive, it has a few escape literature qualities. The protagonist for Mule in the Yard was Mrs. Hait, and the antagonist was Snopes. The central conflict between the two of them was that Snopes had succeeded in killing Mrs. Hait s husband and getting away with it. Justice being served resolved the conflict. Snope s fraud attempts where discovered by the insurance agency, and Mrs. Hait got her revenge by shooting his mule. This explains your typical reader friendly escapist ending. Where as, in Spotted Horses , the ending is more unresolved. Spotted Horses uses a more true to life situation where what the reader would stereotype as an unhappy or indeterminate ending because justice was not served and good did not prevail over evil.

Spotted Horses is a more interpretive story than Mule in the Yard because of the plausibility of the coincidences. The entire passage about the fire in Mule in the Yard seems impossible. The chances are slim to none of Mrs. Hait leaving the bucket of hot coals and the pile of fire priming pitch pine needles set next to the stairs leading down to the seller, where Snopes just so happened to leave the door opened. None of it really seems possible. Spotted Horses has a few coincidences, but they are somewhat debatable. The fact that Eula Varner was pregnant and had to get married, so Flem Snopes married her to be able to take advantage of her family more thoroughly was one instance of coincidence. We know from experience many people use their position on to move up in the world. By manipulating the people in a situation, one can many times either profit or better them as a result. Flem may have just been working to better himself by answering the door while opportunity was knocking. This may have not been a coincidence. William Faulkner may have simply used this instance to aid in his characterization of Flem Snopes.

Another of Perrine s expectations of escape literature can be described as a busy plot . This is where something is always happening throughout the story to keep the readers attention. The plot used in Mule in the Yard resembles the description. There is always something going on between Mrs. Hait and Snopes. Mrs. Hait s husband gets killed, she and Snopes fight over money, Mrs. Hait s house burns down, she and Snopes fight over money again, Snopes gets busted for fraud by the insurance company, and Mrs. Hait shoots a mule all this happens in ninety paragraphs. Once again, Spotted Horses is proved to be the more interpretive of the two stories because it s plot was not written for entertainment. There is no suspense in Spotted Horses .

Mule in the Yard is not a bad story. It is actually an interpretive piece of literature. There are some instances where it could be borderline escape literature, but overall it is interpretive. When compared to Spotted Horses , it is the more escapist of the two.