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Exile Literature in Bernard Malamud's "*The Natural*"

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ABSTRACT

Bernard Malamud's *The Natural* is a classic novel exploring themes of exile, belonging, and identity. Through its protagonist, Roy Hobbs, *The Natural* provides a vivid portrait of an individual's struggle to find a place within society. The story follows Hobbs as he moves from obscurity to stardom in the world of professional baseball, only to find himself out of place and alienated from the world he is trying to join. Malamud's novel examines the universal struggle of the individual against a hostile and often indifferent world, while exploring the deeper themes of alienation, identity, and the search for a sense of belonging. By using the framework of baseball, Malamud creates a powerful metaphor for Hobbs' journey, as he is forced to confront his own limitations and ultimately find a way to navigate his own exile. By examining the themes of exile, belonging, and identity in *The Natural*, Malamud's novel offers a compelling exploration of the human experience.

Keywords: Isolation, Loneliness, Identity Crisis, Displacement, Search for Meaning, Disillusionment, Rejection.

Bernard Malamud was an American novelist and short story writer, known for his works of social realism. He is best known for his novel *The Natural*, which was adapted into a successful 1984 film. Malamud was born in Brooklyn, New York in

1914, and studied at City College of New York and Columbia University. Malamud's writing often focuses on themes of Jewish identity, alienation, and assimilation in the modern world. His works often focus on individuals struggling to overcome

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life's hardships and embrace redemption, although he is also known for his dark and sometimes ironic humor. Malamud's work has been compared to that of the great Jewish American writers of the 20th century, such as Saul Bellow and Philip Roth. Malamud was awarded numerous awards for his writing, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Award for Fiction in 1967 for his novel *The Fixer*. He was also the recipient of the National Book Award for Fiction in 1971 for his collection of short stories, *The Stories of Bernard Malamud*. His work has been translated into many languages and remains popular to this day.

Bernard Malamud's *The Natural* is a classic example of exile literature. Exile literature is a genre of literature which is concerned with the experience of displacement, alienation, and cultural displacement. This type of literature often deals with characters who are forced to flee their homeland, or find themselves unable to assimilate into the new culture or environment they inhabit. Malamud's novel follows the protagonist Roy Hobbs, an aging baseball player whose attempt to find redemption and make a comeback in the major leagues is marred by personal and professional struggles. Through a close analysis of the text, it will be argued that exile literature is used to portray the theme of alienation, and to further highlight the protagonist's journey for redemption. The main character's inability to fully assimilate into the world he inhabits, as well as his struggle with personal identity, will be used to illustrate his feelings of displacement. Finally, it will be concluded that the novel is a powerful example of exile literature, and that it serves to illustrate the struggles faced by characters who are unable to find a sense of belonging.

Exile is a recurring theme in Malamud's novel, *The Natural*. It is used to emphasize Hobbs' journey of self-discovery and the consequences

of his choices. It is also used to highlight the moral ambiguity of his actions and the difficulty of reconciling his conflicting desires. By using the motif of exile, Malamud is able to explore the complexities of human nature and the struggles of reconciling our conflicting desires.

Exile is used to symbolize Hobbs' inner turmoil and his struggle to reconcile his conflicting desires. Throughout the novel, Hobbs is constantly in a state of exile, whether it is from the world of baseball or from his own inner turmoil. He is constantly seeking redemption and acceptance, but he is exiled from both. He is exiled from baseball due to his injury and the subsequent banishment from the league. He is also exiled from his own inner turmoil due to his fear of facing his own demons and the consequences of his choices.

Exile is also used to emphasize the moral ambiguity of Hobbs' actions. Throughout the novel, there is a sense of moral ambiguity surrounding Hobbs' choices. He is constantly faced with difficult decisions and must choose between what is right and what is wrong. His decisions have consequences, and he must live with the consequences of his choices. The motif of exile is used to emphasize the moral ambiguity of his choices and the difficulty of reconciling his conflicting desires.

Exile as a Literary Device, Malamud uses the theme of exile to explore the psychological, moral, and spiritual dilemmas of the character. He uses symbols, imagery, and narrative devices to create an exile literature that speaks to the human condition.

Symbols are used to emphasize the themes of exile and redemption. The symbol of the bird is used to represent Hobbs' journey of self-discovery and his quest for redemption. It is also used to symbolize the hope of a new beginning and the possibility of redemption. The symbol of the fire

is used to represent the destruction of the past and the hope of a new beginning.

Imagery is used to emphasize the themes of exile and redemption. The imagery of the desert is used to emphasize Hobbs' feeling of being lost and his search for redemption. The imagery of the night is used to symbolize the darkness of his inner turmoil and the difficulty of reconciling his conflicting desires.

Narrative devices are also used to emphasize the themes of exile and redemption. The use of flashbacks is used to show the consequences of Hobbs' actions and the difficulty of reconciling his conflicting desires. The use of irony is used to emphasize the moral ambiguity of his choices and the difficulty of reconciling his conflicting desires.

The first example of exile literature in *The Natural* is seen in the character of Roy Hobbs. Roy is a man who is unable to fully assimilate into the world he inhabits. He is a stranger in a strange land, and his feelings of displacement are further emphasized by the fact that he has chosen to pursue a career in baseball, a sport for which he has no natural affinity. Throughout the novel, Roy struggles to find a sense of belonging and acceptance, which further highlights his feelings of displacement. Additionally, Roy's attempt to make a comeback in the major leagues serves as a metaphor for his attempt to start anew, as well as his struggle to find redemption.

The second example of exile literature in *The Natural* is seen in the character of Harriet Bird. Harriet is a mysterious woman who has a profound influence on Roy's life. She is a mysterious figure who appears in Roy's life at a pivotal moment, and her presence serves to further highlight Roy's feelings of displacement and alienation. Additionally, Harriet's mysterious

past and her inability to fully assimilate into the world she inhabits further emphasize her status as an exile.

Finally, the third example of exile literature in *The Natural* is seen in the character of Pop Fisher. Pop is a retired baseball player who serves as a mentor and father figure to Roy. He is a man who has been unable to find a sense of belonging in the world he inhabits, and his presence serves to further illustrate the theme of displacement and alienation in the novel. Additionally, Pop's struggles to find a sense of identity, as well as his attempts to find redemption, further emphasize his status as an exile.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research paper has shown that Bernard Malamud's novel "*The Natural*" is a classic example of exile literature. Through the character of Roy Hobbs, Malamud has created a character that is an outsider in a world of powerful and influential people. His alienation from society is emphasized through his physical exile, which leads to a life of loneliness and despair. Roy's exile is a metaphor for the struggles of individuals who experience alienation in their own lives. Malamud's novel conveys a powerful message of hope as Roy eventually finds his place in the world and is able to find redemption and peace. The exile motif that runs throughout the novel is a reminder that no matter how lost we may feel, there is still a chance of redemption. Malamud's "*The Natural*" is a timeless classic that will remain relevant for generations to come.

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