

HEMINGWAY’S HEROES; EPITOME OF INTEGRITY AND COURAGE

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Abstract

The present study aims at an American writer, Ernest Hemingway’s heroes who are Epitome of integrity and the courage. The genius of Hemingway who was influenced by parental, cultural and literary background. Every writer is the product of his age, in which he lives but Hemingway is an exception in this respect. The period was marked by widespread breakdown of traditional standard of conduct which took place during and after the World War I. war had brought a sense of insecurity among the people. It was a intense soul searching amongst the writers and artists. Besides, it set them free to reflect on a new meaning and the worth of human existence. There are a number of new authors who must be regarded as special product of the age of freedom. Among them, one is Ernest Hemingway. A man like Hemingway could not remain untouched by the happenings of the world around him. The present intends to depict search for peace in the ‘war torn’ society. Here Hemingway has given vent to the basic problem of the ‘being’ that is the problem of ‘existence’. His thinking was influenced by his own experiences as well as by contemporary American Society.

Keywords– , War; Ridden society; Search for being; Courage; Death.

Introduction

Ernest Hemingway, one of the major American novelists of the century and legendary figure, aroused great controversy. It is a wonder how a man like him, with life full of fishing, big game hunting and fighting could find time to write such a large number of novels and stories. These novels and stories are full of adventures. But it must be remembered that there is nothing legendary either about the life of Hemingway or his works. There is no doubt the world of Hemingway is limited one. But his idea though few are Grande. His range may be narrow but it is definitely not shallow. The ideas of Hemingway are grand and deep he has felt them intensely. As Medhavi asserts that novel are written from multiple sources of personal and impersonal motivations, he writes “Within the realm of literature, marginalized voices emerge, echoing

stories of resilience, defiance, and societal upheaval” (p.34) Hemingway portrays only what happens to him and refuses to assert what he has not seen or experienced himself.

Hemingway was deeply influenced by the tragic and pitiable condition of mankind. He saw men, tortured, frustrated, disillusioned, disappointed and moving towards inevitable disasters. He has explored this truth in his works. Hemingway was a strong man of definite opinion who lived a various life devoted to the artistic creation and to active participation in the world. As Carlos Baker has said, in *Earnest Hemingway: A Life story*, the standard biography, at an early age Hemingway developed the “Wheel determination to be a free on tapped by tradition, living his life in accordance with pragmatic principles.”

The second decade of 20th century “rouge” in its wake such widespread feeling of insecurity and collapse of value as a by-product of World War first that is was but natural for this widespread experience to find a powerful eco in diverse literary and artistic works. In T S Eliot *The Waste Land*, In the poetry of W B Yeats, W H Aunden, Stephen Spender and Ezra Pound, the mood of restlessness despite produced by the war brought about an overwhelming sense of spiritual exhaustion. The fiction writers of the war ravaged generation, like Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, Proust, Kafka, Hemingway, Scot Fitzgerald, Sartre and others portrayed the green situation of men in the post-war world in their own unique ways. In broader sense, what these writers wrote represented the individual’s length in the post World War situation where they face live without the conventional resource of strength derived from organised religion personal faith or philosophy.

Writings of those post-War year Scott Fitzgerald Observed in an essay “*contemporary job of mine had began to disappear into the dark law of violence*” According to a passage in John O’ Hara’s Writing which may be taken as autobiographical, O’ Hara acknowledges that he read Hemingway ‘ At that in impressionable age when all reading trend to become an imaginary extension of experience’ O’Hara’s Nobles gives us that world of the younger generation ‘ no longer so young, But still sustaining a fiction of youth’, Where there was ‘less of nature to exploit’ but ‘more of mankind’. It is the world of the ‘lost generation’ below moral condemnation, played out to the doom.

If Scott Fitzgerald is a chronicler of jazz decades that is the 20s, Hemingway is a bard of the lost generation as a whole in his writing, one finds the length of a man in a world phased with constant war, moral and spiritual vacuum, pessimism and nada. In such a world, survival is the constant obsession of the Hemingway’s hero in order to survive, he has to adopt the Hemingway’s court or Hemingway’s attitude holding tight violence, pain and death and to the achievement of grace under pressure. He who wishes to survive must be tough with himself as also with the world. It is this primitive quality that Hemingway adheres to in his works. Dedicated artist, he is sensitive to the variations of time and paints things as they are. In this Attempt he is not reluctant to depict the sexual life of the people__ There hypocrisy and frustration in sex matters as Medhavi and Sahay rightly established “the Politics of Gender is considered as the primary way through which one person is identified and evaluated by society” (p.192).

Dos Passon and Norman Miller says, Hemingway is one of the major war novelists of America. He lived with danger all his life, Nobel Prize winner and best-selling author, Hemingway put down what really happened in action.^{5t}

The trail of misery left behind by the First World War was largely responsible for Hemingway’s preoccupations with the war theme and the war caused chaos in society. It disrupted the life not only of the common people but also that of the writers who begin to apprehend total disruptions of the human race. There was pessimism in the air and man was

hesitating between faith and unfaith the war number his conscience that ultimately resulted in the loss of human identity moral and spiritual disaster the whole atmosphere was stepped in terrors of darkness, destructions and death. In his introduction to *Men at War* Hemingway writes: “The last war during the year 1915, 1916, 1917 was the most colossal, murderous, mismanaged butchery that has ever taken place on earth. Any writer who said otherwise lied”.(Ernest Hemingway, *Men at War*, ppxiv-xv)

Hemingway is fully conscious of the horrors of war. He hates it and also the politicians whose mismanagement, gullibility, cupidity, selfishness and ambitions make it inevitable. From the beginning Hemingway had been concerned with the rejection of a heart and many alien universes in which violence, suffering and death are the rule, and which in terms of what human beings are. In *Our Times*, Nick Adams, as a young boy is bowed into contact with violence, brutality and suffering of the world around him in the story *Indian Camp* Nick comes face to face with both birth and death. The theme of brutality and suffering is introduced when an Indian woman undergoes a caesarian without an anesthetic and other proper medical equipment, and her husband cuts his throat as he could not bear the scream of his wife. Nick as an observer, witnesses both the Indian mother's physical pain in childbirth and the emotional pain which led to the suicide of the Indian father. This violent incident had a deep psychological impact on the young boy who had in store for him other similar violent situations in life.

In the story the doctor and the doctor's wife, Nick gradually become aware of the parental conflict in his family and in order to avoid tension-laden home atmosphere he goes to seek solace in the piece of the Michigan woods, even as Nick avoids the unpleasantness, the author makes the reader feel certain that eventually Nick will be forced to come to terms with the conflicts his parents represent and with the violence of his time manifest in its self even on the domestic level. In *The Killers*, Nick finds himself caught in the coils of fast violent action which he cannot at all control. He is tied and gagged, along with Sam, the cook of the lunchroom where two gangsters waited to kill an ex-prizefighter Ole Anderson. This unexpected experience of threatened violence leaves Nick appalled. Never before had he comprehended the potential for total evil in human nature, the tendency for impersonal destructions, the willingness to kill just to oblige your friend when Nick goes to escape from his accepted fatal attitude wholly inexplicable to the young Nick ‘I can't stand to think about him waiting in the room and knowing he is going to get it. It's damned awful’ Nick leaves the town only to encounter further evil and brutality in the world around him.

In *The Battler*, Nick is introduced to violence of the very beginning when he is knocked off a moving freight train at night by a brakeman. He further learns that violence can break out without reason later on alongside the track he encounters a former prize fighter Ad Francis and his Negro companion Bugs. His meeting with them on a depressing situation in life as how the society has forced them to live as outcasts and the animal level to which humanity had been reduced Nick both as an observed and minor participant in the violent human drama gets all his illusion of peace shattered and in overtaken by a curious desire to further understand and explore the human condition prevailing ‘In Our Time’. Thus it can be seen that from the very start, Hemingway was concerned with projecting human pain and suffering resulting from senseless violence, evil and brutality by making his very first protagonist undergo characteristics initiating rituals in a chaotic and absurd world.

Thus, the Hemingway protagonist is alienated in more than one sense because of his experience of the war and the post-war conditions, putting him in a moral and spiritual vacuum. But despite the trauma war and disillusionment with the condition around. Hemingway's

protagonist do not lose all hope and faith in the human value they are still seeing trying to find some meaning in life, some order in the world, some avenue for an expression of personal courage ultimately what matters for the Hemingway's hero is the problem of accommodation in the chaotic post-war world their attempt is basically to transcend the nothing less which rewarded most of the existential writing of the period Scott Donaldson Has rightly drawn attention to the contrast between Hemingway's work and that of existentialists

The crucial distinctions in that Hemingway was not a philosopher, in his fiction he merely reported on life as he found it to 'Sartre', As John Clellon Holmes Commented, 'The meaninglessness is basically an idea, to Camus, the Absurd a concept' To Hemingway, On the other hand, they form part of his existence and what primarily interested him was the Individuals attempt to overcome despair in the face of some chaos. (p234)

After dealing with the problem of alienation in some of his short stories, Hemingway took it for the central theme in his first novel *The Sun also Rises*, set in post World War I Europe, full of disillusioned expatriates the tragic after effects of social disruptions after war tended to inhabit and betray the normal course of love, the incapacity for which is represented by the physical impotence of Jake and the sentimental futility of Brett. It is in this context of alienation that Jack Barnes' problem of learning to live in this world acquires a significance far more than what it appears to be on the surface Jack as a modern man is a rare phenomenon because of his consciousness of life without any norms and meaning and his senses of being different from others in a curious, through tragic way.

Conclusion

Hemingway's conception of the individual is relation to the community or of the individual's moral or social ethics changed with the passage of time. But he was never a morally neutral writer as some critics believed him to be he was always positively on the side of morality. He reminds us without lapsing into unrealistically simple optimism that human beings can affirming significant value to themselves, even as they face physical threats intellectual doubt and moral confusion. Almost all his protagonists follow a code of conduct very scrupulously and have a great devotion to certain virtues.

Richard C Grebhardt points out that 'Hemingway's ultimate position regarding human value is dual and holistic. It affirms and denies simultaneously in a way that acknowledges the essential complexities of moral truth and of modern life'.(The Hemingway Review, I No fall 1981 p 9)

Critics have been quick in finding autobiographical elements dominating the novel, representing Hemingway's own feelings in his relationship to his sons *The Finca Vigia* edition of the Complete short stories of Hemingway included in two stories *I Guess Everything Remind You of something* and *Great News from the Mainland* dealing with father son relationship which also reflect the anguish Hemingway sometimes might have felt in his role as a father.

Thus It can be concluded that Hemingway's range of theme is not wide and that he deals with the same kind of material both in his short stories and his novels taking for his theme some of his own experiences and central experience of his generation he brought out in the light of his own vision and plant of the individual in the world of our time. As Hemingway started his literary career as a short story writer, his earliest stories reflect his principal thematic concerns, and as he further explored and developed in his novels the theme of his short stories. It can be safely inferred that both his short stories and novels sprang from the same source of inspiration geared to two different forms.

It is difficult to see what future spiritual conditions Hemingway's optimism might refer to as some critics have noted that artistically Hemingway does not seem as convincing in the optimistic outlook of his later work as he does in the terse, understated despondency of the short stories and earlier novels. It has also been observed that even the optimism of *The Old Man and The Sea* is not unqualified and operates within the constraints of an almost deterministic order of existence Hemingway remained characteristically realistic and sceptical even as he allowed somewhat brighter view of life to his characters.

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