

**CHAPTER V**

**CONCLUSION**

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The foregoing study is an attempt to present a comprehensive critical statement on the thematic concerns of Ernest Hemingway's short stories. His novels have been studied by critics all over the world. Equally significant are his short stories dealing with a variety of issues an outlet to his tales as if he undertakes to provide through these stories.

The present dissertation has sought to examine how the post-War stories of Hemingway portray the disturbance and dislocation of this 'inner terrain' in the context of war, violence, and death. The stories from the collections "*In Our Time*" and "*Men Without Women*" thus explore a variety of modes in which the 'inner terrain' is deeply affected by the universal tragedy of warfare leading to a complex scenario of social and political relationship.

War represents the urge for power. It underlines a threat to human values. The First World War had a negative effect on social and political life. It had paralyzed life at a massive scale. People had to encounter death of friends, relations and near ones. There was mental and physical exhaustion. The stories like, 'In Another Country,' 'Big Two-Hearted River,' 'The Revolutionist,' 'A Simple Enquiry,' and 'A Very Short Story' deal with the effects of war.

Hemingway was himself a party to the cruelties of war. Being sensitive in his perception and mature in imagination he could depict the trauma with all its force and intensity. The World War I engulfed

the entire America and it shattered all the hopes of speedy recovery and renewed good life. The effect of this debacle was miserable. The World war collapsed the economy of the American industry resulting in a shutdown making millions of people jobless, aimless and rootless. Financially bankrupt and morally frustrated people lost faith in the very system itself.

Hemingway depicted the horror and the evils of modern warfare, its widespread destruction and unravels the pangs of unimaginable suffering and misery. The sordid lives of the soldiers, the exposure to the brutalities, callousness, leading to psychic disintegration all these form his fictional world. The First World War in fact, brought in its wake such widespread feeling of insecurity and collapse of values that the decades following it were widely recognized as a period of unparalleled spiritual desolation and a decay of civilization as a whole. The psycho-sociological aftermath of the First World War resulted in a sense of insecurity and chaos and man found himself rootless. A sense of dismay and mental disintegration resulted in lack of values. In a broader sense the plight of Hemingway's heroes serve as a critique of the predicament of the modern man who is subjected to loss of faith in love religion and a comprehensive understanding of life and peaceful existence. The skill and matter with which he mirrors these dehumanizing forces make him a gifted writer.

His short stories particularly those which appear in the two collections that have been focused upon and analyzed critically show powerful impact of the events both good and bad the Hemingway had to undergo during his initial stages. His experiences in the World War I as an ambulance driver and as a soldier on Italian front where he received serious injuries in a shelling incident had a very deep impact

on his mind and psychology. The lesson he learnt from this experiences was that to survive in this world and to emerge victorious one requires an extraordinary courage endurance and self-confidence.

His falling in love with Agnes, a nurse in the hospital at Milan and rejection by her affected his sensibility and transformed his consciousness, his ideas of life and love and marriage, joy and suffering, death, pain and suffering throughout his life.

The two collections "*In Our Time*" and "*Men Without Women*" deal with the period from 1923 to 1929. during this period, he witnessed certain misfortunes. Naturally the stories written deal with death, unfulfilment, disillusionment, sleeplessness, nightmares, rituals as a means of healing the psychic wound, suffering, violence, abnormal sex relationships , rebellion against traditional beliefs, and lack of values.

Hemingway was advised and encouraged by other American writers in Paris like F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, and Ezra Pound. As a result, in 1925 his first important book, a collection of stories called "*In Our Time*," was published in New York City; it was originally released in Paris in 1924. In 1926 he published "*The Sun Also Rises*," a novel with which he scored his first solid success. A pessimistic but sparkling book, it deals with a group of aimless expatriates in France and Spain members of the postwar "lost generation," a phrase that Hemingway scorned while making it famous.

The American writers of the generation that fought World War I have been called 'the lost generation.' The term refers to the fact that they felt that they could not maintain the traditional values of the past. It was instantly meaningful to Hemingway's readers. It signified the

attitudes of the post war- generation and especially those of the literary movement produced by young writers of that time. These writers believed generally that their lives and hopes had been shattered by the war. They had been led to a glory trail to death not for noble, patriotic ideals, but for greedy, materialistic gain of power groups. The truth was harsh and life was futile and often it was nothing, meaningless.

This book made him, almost instantly, an international celebrity identified with an entire generation, torn by war and grieving throughout the Roaring Twenties for their lost romantic idealism. Hemingway was a retrospective writer as his technique and mental sets were determined by the past. From the beginning of the role of his fame, Hemingway displayed an American discomfort with the public role of writer and intellectual that necessarily was his on the evidence of his published work.

An attempt has been made through this study to focus on the kind of experiences he had undergone during most of his post-war years. He remained basically in Paris, but he traveled widely for the skiing, bullfighting, fishing, or hunting that by then had become part of his life and formed the background for much of his writing. His position as a master of short fiction had been advanced by *Men Without Women* in 1927 and thoroughly established with the stories in *Winner Take Nothing* in 1933. Among his finest stories are "The Killers," "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro."

Hemingway's prose style was probably the most widely imitated of any in the 20th century. He wished to strip his own use of language of inessentials, ridding it of all traces of verbosity, embellishment, and sentimentality. In striving to be as objective and honest as possible,

Hemingway hit upon the device of describing a series of actions using short, simple sentences from which all comment or emotional rhetoric have been eliminated.

The short fiction entitled "*In Our Time*" ranges from childhood experiences well into his first marriage. It is a matured work of art. Each story is so directly composed that the narration seems like a pane of perfectly clear glass through which one simply sees what is happening. All of Hemingway's stories are intended to create subjectively rounded accounts of the events they describe. It seems that he had studied his life carefully whatever he heard or saw in order to fix in his memory the authentic perceptions which were the raw material of his writing. Hemingway depicted the life of the people, who have been deprived by World War I, of faith in the moral values in which they had believed, and who lived with cynical disregard for anything but their own emotional needs.

Hemingway summed up the matter in his title "*Men Without Women*." Women are closely associated with the home-symbol. Although at times they stand in opposition to men, even in a kind of enmity, cannot be the whole truth about it. It includes the men of simple characters and primitive emotions, such as prizefighters, bullfighters. He wrote of their courageous and futile battle against circumstances.

One of the major themes of *In Our Time*, as well as in other works by Hemingway, is how people can and must deal with the modern world. Life after World War I, as many authors--such as Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot, and our own Papa Hemingway--indicate, was a much more confusing and overwhelming time than life before the Great War. The war opened up the eyes of the

world to mass destruction, powerful nationalism, and heavy machinery. One of the results of this awakening was that many people felt completely helpless while interacting with the new world. Much of the literature of the modern period attempts to deal with these problems.

The preset dissertation is divided in five chapters. The first chapter deals with his life and works. Without understanding his life, we cannot study his work because majority of his novels and stories are highly autobiographical. They are based on his life experiences. The number of stories in the collections "*In Our Time*" and "*Men Without Women*" are based on personal experiences. We get background of each and every story from understanding the typical life of Hemingway. The readers are also stunned by the experiences and challenges accepted by the writer. Some critics criticized him and his writings saying that Hemingway is a bullfighter, a big-game hunter, a trout-fisher, a boxer, and a war veteran rather than a writer. But it is not true. He is an excellent writer who transforms his life experiences into his writing. He knew that what he was writing and for whom he was writing.

The second chapter deals with the development of the form short story as a literary genre. The development of short story in to England, france, , Russia have been discussed at a glance. This chapter discusses the American tradition of short story. At the end of this chapter, an effort has been made to show Hemingway's place by means of his contribution to the development of American short story.

The third and the forth chapter are the core part of this dissertation. In the third chapter, the focus is laid on the thematic concern of the writer as it appears in the collection *In Our Time*. The fifteen stories appeared in this collection have been discussed

thoroughly. For the convenience the chapter is divided into eight sub chapters focusing the themes like Racial Discrimination, Quest for Feminist identity, War and its Aftermath, Violence, Broken Love-affairs, Match-fixing, Marital Conflicts, and Alienation etc. I have tried to concentrate on the themes that have not been dealt with are carried out by other prominent writers and critics. The themes like Racial Discrimination in the stories like 'Indian Camp' and 'The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife' and Quest for Feminist Identity in the stories like 'Cat in the Rain' and 'Out of season', have been newly traced. This would definitely add into the corpus of studies on Hemingway's Short stories.

Short stories like 'A Very Short Story' and 'The Revolutionist' 'Soldier's Home' show the post war injuries that had rendered the young men helpless, rootless and aimless in their life. A few of them focus on the evils of about the war. The disaster brought by the war was not limited to physical loss but also it affected the psychology of the nation. It brought about a tremendous sense of loss in terms of moral, social and political values.

The stories like 'The End of Something' and 'The Three Day Blow' is a continuous episode of broken love-affair. The lovers, Nick Adams and Marjorie, are star-crossed lovers. They do not know why they are breaking their relationships. The next story is repentance for the loss of love exhibiting it by drinking wine. The story like 'The Battler' shows how Nick has faced the violence in the road which has been aroused by the psychological disturbance of the well known former champion.

The stories like 'Cross-Country Snow', 'Cat in the Rain', 'Out of Season' and 'Mr. and Mrs. Elliot' focus on the marital conflicts. In



the first story, Nick, the protagonist has come for skiing in the Switzerland Snow and confronts with unmarried pregnant girl who reminds him his pregnant wife and his untimely fatherhood. The stories like 'Cat in the Rain' and "Out of Season' already discussed in the theme of 'Quest for the Feminist Identity' but they are also focus on the problems like Marital Conflict. Both the stories are having the foreign background i.e. the problem of expatriate. Both the stories have the same settings and there is a conflict between the couples. The story 'Mr. and Mrs. Elliot' is the total contrast to the first discussed story 'Cross-Country Snow.' The couple is very much helpless because they do not have a child as their heir. The end of the story is very tragic. Mrs. Elliot takes to Lesbianism and Mr. Elliot has taken to drinking.

The next story 'My Old Man' focuses on the match-fixing. It is a vital record of loss of values. The small child is shocked by the behavior of his jockey father to whom he loved very much. When he lived dishonestly he was accepted by the world but when he tried to live honestly he was driven away by the ruthless world. The last two stories focus on the revelation of Nick Adams when he comes back from the war. His trout fishing in the Fox River displays his effort to forget the bitter experiences of war.

The fourth chapter discusses the same kinds of themes but in the different context. The story 'Ten Indians' focuses on the racial discrimination of typical American father about the native Americans and hatred for black colour. The next story 'Hills Like White Elephants' focuses the issue of abortion which has become a burning issue of the contemporary world. The writer has used the iceberg technique in the stories. Hemingway has not spoken about the word

'abortion' but the readers understand it by the atmosphere created in the story.

The stories like 'The Killers' 'The Undefeated' and 'An Alpine Idyll' bring out the heart-stricken violence. The first story brings the world of gangsters. It unfolds the human life is totally surrendered before the violence and he becomes a victim. There is no time for defense also. The next story focuses on the game of bullfighting. The age-old bullfighter takes a challenge of winning the game by killing the bull tragically. There is violence rather than the valor of the bullfighter. The story 'An Alpine Idyll' is unbelievable story because the protagonist of the story hangs lantern in the mouth of dead wife's jaw while waiting for her burial. This is really shocking story and an epitome of violence.

The story 'Fifty Grand' focuses on the issue of taking bribe for loosing the match of boxing and earning fifty thousand dollars. There is a loss of values. The next story 'A Canary for One' focuses on the separated relationship between the husband and wife. They are trapped in a cage like a canary; a bird was captured by the American lady who does not allow her daughter to accept the love of foreigner. The stories like 'In Another Country, and 'Now I Lay me' focus on the effects of war that threatened men not only physically but also psychologically. The story (play) 'To-Day Is Friday' focuses on the Crucifixion of Christ.

The major themes of Hemingway's short stories are chosen carefully with great care, keeping in mind the artist's quest, a quest that led him to explore the possible avenues in which man may be able to redeem the world in his own eyes. Hemingway's short stories are a window to an era in which the very foundations of human civilizations

were shaken and in which, finally, the human to live arrests itself through the tumult and turmoil of life.

In several of his stories, Hemingway made the theme of war, killing, brutality and violence and became chronicler of the disintegrating modern civilization. His war experiences conditioned his attitude on life. His writings spring from his personal experiences and his great triumph is his ability to transform his early traumatic experiences into a compassionate ethic of responsibility. The struggles of the heroes in endless isolation against heavy odds are potent with a message to live life with challenges. His heroes enjoy their struggle unconventionally and whole-heartedly. Like Santiago, of the Noble prize winner novel "The Old Man and the Sea" Hemingway believes that life is full of struggle and that 'Man is not made for defeat. Man can be destroyed but not defeated.'

In this connection, Philip young asserts: " Hemingway's world is not one in which things do not grow and bear fruit, but explode, break and decompose; there is no mature brooding intelligence or grown up relationship of adult people in Hemingway"<sup>1</sup>

### References:

- 1) Young, Philip, *Ernest Hemingway*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1952, pp. 216-217.