

The Delineation of Despair through the old man and the old waiter in *A Clean Well-Lighted Place*: Ernest Hemingway

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Abstract

Ernest Hemingway's distinguished writing style is unadorned, because of his earlier career as a newspaper editor. This style provokes the thoughts of the author and furnishes with ideas to drop this paper. Ernest Hemingway usually conveys messages directly. In this *A Clean Well-Lighted Place*, Hemingway provides a plenty of meaning by providing 'nothingness' in a story. The meaningless story contains more meaning; sometimes silence speaks more in the toughest situation. The representation of the characters in this short story endows with strong subject matters. The old rich man, the old waiter and the young waiter are purely significant by their features. The despair beyond money is the main idea of this story. The author tries to bring out the idea of Hemingway with his narrative style. Critics often say that his writings are supported with dialogues. This paper pens the ideas of Hemingway through his short story *A Clean Well-Lighted Place*.

Key Words: Despair, Hemingway, subject matters, *A Clean Well-Lighted Place*, nothingness

Introduction

This paper is an attempt to bring out the ideas on Ernest Hemingway's *A Clean Well Lighted Place*. While reading this Short Story; the researcher can take this story as a model for the short story. It contains three pages, yet it is endowed with lot of information. Focusing on Biographical Criticism, it is necessary to consider him a human being and also a writer. Being a writer, he never forgets to include his experiences or his influences in his writings. After his marriage with Hadley Richardson, his *Three Stories and Ten Poems* is published. After the divorce of Hadley, the short story *A Clean Well Lighted Place* is published in 1933. This period allows her to feel that there is no meaning in life. There is no specific story. Nobody knows anything about anybody. This emptiness and this nothingness lead the author to reread and review this short story and pen it as a paper. To view this short story for biographical criticism, it is necessary to avoid autobiographical elements. For analyzing biographical criticism, the author should avoid repeating the biography.

The Delineation of Despair

Ernest Hemingway depicts existentialism in his short story. His short story follows absurdity which is rarely in use in his period. Ernest Hemingway provides ideas obviously. He never allows the reader to imagine the scenes. He constructs the sentences in such a way that everyone should concentrate on the words and actions. Ernest Hemingway's narrative style controls the readers to contribute an essential basis for accomplishing biographical criticism on his work. From the proceedings of the dialogue and the activities of the old man and the young writer, the readers can acquire the essence of criticism.

This short story has no certain particular names for the characters. The two characters the old waiter and the young waiter are conversing and in forwarding their dialogues, there is 'nothing' and 'Nothingness', the readers can bring about the philosophy of existentialism. This story is just an incident, the event begins in a café, with an introduction of rich old man drinks and ends up with the old waiter who reaches home from the café thinking of the old man and his loneliness. The basic essence of existentialism that is meaningless and the search of true meaning in personal life is portrayed in his story.

This story is written after the First World War and also before the beginning of the Second World War. All the people in that period live in a confused state of mind that there is no meaning for their life. Ernest Hemingway whole heartedly produces the character of old man with all the wealth and the riches, but feeling lonely for not having anything in his life. The personalities shown in the short story shape and supply structure to the short story. Within this small short story, Ernest Hemingway reaches the heart of the readers and fixes up with many ideas which will enable the future readers to do rereading and reviewing his writings further.

The old waiter and the young waiter in the short story remain silent and make the readers to be a silent listener. There is an emotional blend in the characters, the young waiter could not wait for the old man who is drinking too much and sitting in the café. He has a wife who is waiting for him in his house, but the old man does not have anyone at his house. The old waiter is thinking of him and he can understand his loneliness and his depression. Because of this depression he attempted suicide the previous week. Finally when the café is closed this old waiter cannot close his remembrance of this old man. Ernest Hemingway in this short story he exposes his mental illness and his depression. Hemingway usually concentrates on the external details.

In this *A Clean Well Lighted Place*, one can find only three characters, the old rich man, the old waiter and the young waiter. In the story, hemingway visualizes a girl and a soldier, they are not connected to this incident. It is just for us to picture the scene.

His writings are notable for celebrating the human values. The Old waiter celebrates the old rich man as a human being. As a human being, one should understand the fellow humans' feelings. The old people when they are alone, they are filled with depression. The persons who are suffering from old age, they usually feel unhappy with others. They do not want to proceed in their life, they never enjoy themselves, and they do not have any humors sense in their daily activities. They never take quick decision. This old rich man also has a same feeling, so he attempted suicide the previous week. They think that they are helpless and useless.

All the living things have the right to live in this world. Ernest Hemingway always projects the idea of common sense in his writings. This is completed within four pages but Ernest Hemingway projects a general aspect of human beings in his writings. He wishes that the readers should go along with his idea. This is the responsibility of a writer to bring his ideas into actions. The young waiter calls this rich old man as 'nasty'. The old waiter supports him by saying that he is very 'clean'. This represents the old rich man loves simplicity and also cleanliness. Ernest Hemingway in this short story tries to say that after a certain age life will become difficult thing to pass through. The old man who is drinking brandy at the clean well lighted café is literally deaf. Ernest Hemingway produces this nature purposefully. He becomes old and he does not care for the traditional behavior. His age and his loneliness without any one support in this world make him behave like an uncaring for the other's feelings. So he sits in the morning late hour, he does not think of the waiters.

The old waiter can understand his feelings because he is also sailing in the same category. This old man responding to this society implies nothingness in the world. Hemingway through these two old man characters provides us the real subject matter to the society. The young waiter cannot wait for this old man. The young waiter and the old waiter are the true representations of this world. This is the narrative style of Hemingway. A writer should take the responsibility of representing the society in their writings. Hemingway does his part with full keen enthusiasm. Hemingway does not believe in the lengthy description, the story is enhanced with dialogues. When the readers begin to read, they could not stop because they cannot stop when the conversation is going on. "Though the young waiter calls this old man as 'nasty', the old waiter defends him by saying that he is a great believer of cleanliness and light. I guess the story that tops them all for leave out was '*A Clean, Well Lighted Place*', I left everything out of that one... May be my favorite story." (Hemingway)

This is Hemingway's favorite short story. Whatever he decides or wishes articulate to the readers the story ponders and comes out or it comes out with more imagination power. On searching on this story, one can find many ideas and thoughts that is imbibed in this story. In his introduction to *A Farewell to Arms Three Novels by Ernest Hemingway* (Scribner's, 1962) xiv – xv, Robert Penn Warren climbs

In... *A Clean, Well Lighted Place*, we find the best description of this world that underlies Hemingway's world of violent action... the sleepless man... the man obsessed by death, by the meaningless of the world, by nothingness, by nada – is one of the recurring symbols in the work of Hemingway. In this phase Hemingway is a religious writer. The despair beyond plenty of money, the despair that makes sleeplessness beyond insomnia, is the despair felt by a man who hungers for the sense of order and assurance that men seem to find in religious faith, but who cannot find grounds for his faith. (Warren)

Conclusion

Hemingway takes his responsibility as a writer and he once again proves him as a great stylist artist in writing. His narrative style is unique in such a way that there are no one to compare along with his style. With this sense, he continues his writing and reaches its peak in his

writings. Hemingway's perception of this world is very interesting. On reading his life and also his works, the author can find the purpose of life. Everything on this world has a purpose to move on. The old rich man feels 'nothingness' in his life and his respond to his 'nothingness' to the life is the real subject matter. Hemingway represents 'nothingness' and 'meaningless' through the character of the old man and the old waiter.

A Clean Well-Lighted Place is a story which is in deep thought in despair. Ernest Hemingway's characters stand erect and give their ideas to this world.

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