

The Concept of Morality in Hemingway's Novel 'The Sun Also Rises'

Jerald Robinson. J, J. Jainy Osben, A. G. Sujithra

ABSTRACT: Hemingway is an American author whose works portray largely on the theme of death. This article emphasis on the concept of death and the absence of moral values. Very few characters such as Brett, Robert Cohn and Priests are taken for the study. Hemingway proposes good values through the depiction of immoral values. It is represented by various characters in the novel. The ethics of existence is seemed to be at stake. The depiction is quite ironical. Lady Brett is the prime character of the novel. The whole novel revolves around her. She is portrayed as very weak in her instinct beyond the definition of religious ethos and reasoning. The author is very particular about passing the message of morality to the reader in an ironical way. There are numerous elements on the theme of morality spread across the novel. Hemingway uses several indicators and scales to measure the amount of good and bad. The portrayal is to identify different attitudes and uniqueness of the individual characters. This article also analyses the work psychologically that causes the person to become an addict to certain habits such as sex, smoking and alcohol. The article also discusses the cultural differences in reality and among the characters themselves.

Key words: morality, psyche death, addiction,

I. INTRODUCTION

The world runs smoothly because of the good values of human beings. Though Science and Religion are separate entity but, built on the values of life. Everyone must adapt to the value system. If the values are not adapted we can sense the disturbances in the relationship system created in between humans or the creation or human and creations. The relationship is built upon the value of love and so, Love is the prime value of life. Relationship is created with the creation and the creator due to love. It can be classified into several categories. It depends on the nature of relationship we create among each other. The concept runs the entire world. Love reveals two layers of values, they are good and bad. When one's love adapts good values, it actually supports the environment and causes harmonious living. It becomes negative when it is not followed.

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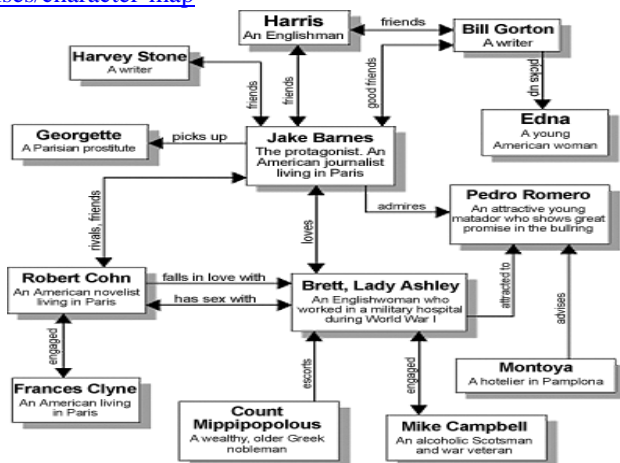
Ernest Hemingway, being a war hero emphasizes on the moral values of humans life through insinuate references through his characters in his novel "The Sun Also Rises". After the disturbing world war he felt the absence of good values of life. The absence of it created vagueness and emptiness in life. It is obvious to realize as there are many incidences take place in the novel to show us the morals of life. We are able to understand when we read it in between lines. Hemingway hails from a well-respected conservative community which has great respect for the ethics of life. He takes part in number of sports like boxing, water polo and football. He has a passion for outdoor adventures and living in remote or isolated areas and watch bull fighting. His novel reflects his personality diplomatically through several characters in the novel. Through Jake Barnes, he criticizes some of the characters such as Robert Cohn as he narrates the story. He appreciates and depreciates the good and bad qualities of Robert Cohn which have irritated the narrator of the novel. It is observed from Hemingway's life history that Jake Barnes and Robert Cohn are the reflection of Hemingway. This article is going to reveal how the moral values are focused through immoral values of life.

II. MORAL VALUES OF LIFE

Hemingway, though he is from the world of lost generation, wants to focus on the aspect of morality of life and the essence of human existence. This is evident from his letter to his editor Max Perkins that the "point of the book" was not so much about a generation being lost, but that "the earth abideth forever";(54) he believed the character in The Sun Also Rises may have been "battered" but were not lost.

Hemingway scholar Wagner-Martin writes that Hemingway wanted the book to be about morality, which he emphasized by changing the working title from Fiesta to The Sun Also Rises. He claims that the book can be read either as a novel about bored expatriates or as a morality tale about the protagonist who searches for integrity in an immoral world. He differentiates the values of love through the character Brett and Robert Cohn. Love and lust are not one and the same but, both can lead to sexual life. Lust is the physical desire or longing to have a physical contact alone. We could see Robert Cohn's love for Brett is one sided, so, she goes with Cohn only to fulfil his bodily satisfaction. There are two ways we can look at; 1. True love leads to sex. 2. Lust leads to sex. The first one is depicted through Robert Cohn's first wife whom he could not live with but hesitated to give divorce out of pity. The second is depicted through the character Lady Brett, Georgette and all her men.

Here is the picture depiction chart of relationship ties in *The Sun Also Rises* taken from <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/s/the-sun-also-rises/character-map>



The above chart clearly shows the affairs between the characters. The idea behind Hemingway's Cohn is something from a strong cultural background where Hemingway seems to come from. It is a view of Jewish men in common on women, how a woman must lead her life among men in the world. That may be, why Hemingway had to force such character in the novel. It is not religious but moral. Brett, as usual keeps changing the man of affair very often. A parallel can be drawn between Brett and Georgette by the inclusion of Georgette as a prostitute in the novel which has nothing much in the story but, just to denote the morality of her life with reference to Brett. The message given through the character is to be loyal to the one who is very sincere and dedicated. Lady Brett could not resist her lust for man when she sees someone who could inspire her, she persistently goes after the man until she gets a fulfilment. She says that she loves Jakes Barnes but she could not resist her instinct. There are many references to show the bad value of Brett in the novel such as these, "I'm goner. I'm mad about Romero boy. I'm in love with him, I think." She also states, "Oh, Jake," Brett said, "We could have had such a damned good time together." (*The sun Also Rises*.183,247). Romero inspires her and she wants to go with Romero. That is why Georgette is drawn for comparison. Through this we can assess that Hemingway's intention is to make the reader feel the absence of moral values and enforce the value in the mind of the reader.

People want to pretend to be somebody to cover their self. Here, Brett has a boy cut like man. She acts like man. She refers herself as "chap". All her attitudes and her values demonstrate that she wants to be different from others and allure man of any nature. In total, she acts as a stumbling block for men's life. Robert Cohn is also the one who befall a prey for it. The author makes a special reference to him as a Jewish character. The notion for announcing someone to be a Jew is of two reasons one is to mock for being different from the world and other is to wonder on the values and the treasures of life the scripture possesses. These are followed by the religious Jews. Robert Cohn though he is a Jew, he does not want to be treated as a Jew in the university he studied. Hemingway raises a note on Anti-Semitism which reveals that he appreciates the values of life. Robert Cohn

exhibits his inability to accept himself as a Jew in the material world; denotes the lack of self-acceptance, tries to cover and pose himself as a different personality of the world. According to the scripture, Jews are the chosen people of God. They have a strong bond with the almighty, moreover, the scripture, the Old Testament of The Bible (The Torah) is written by the Jewish Sages. As they have very strict norms of life and values, they cannot mix with the material world, the life of vanity. They are also not allowed to intermarry with gentiles but, Robert Cohn does it. The idea of materialism is conveyed through the priests who are all going for the fiesta by the train. The author creates a tension in the mind of the reader by portraying the journey to fiesta episode in chapter 9 of "The Sun Also Rises". We could assess the value culled out of the scene. People, who talk too much about the values, never tend to follow it. For example, the priests who supposed to have divine connection and be a best model for others to live neglect the values and fail to practice it. The dining-car conductor in the train states that all the seats for dining are reserved for particular community of people (priests) suggests that they are seeking priority rather than giving place for the hungry and aged, "They're all reserved," the dining-car conductor said. "There will be a fifth service at three thirty... Do you know that gang of pilgrim fathers have cornered the dining car until half past three this afternoon?" "...It certainly shows you the power of catholic church. It is a pity you boys aren't Catholics. You could get a meal, then, alright." "When do we Protestants get a chance to eat, father?" (*The Sun Also Rises*, pp.85-88). It is an attack on the Catholics for neglecting the values of life. These references give a realistic picture which is to signify that their attachment for material benefits is given first preference. A priest supposed to give up and help others to lead a peaceful life should give others a chance first. This idea can be defended with the verses in Luke 14:8-11 from the New Testament.

III. RESULTS

We found in some places in the novel, Robert Cohn also has taken the same path as those catholic priests who want to live the life of the material world. But, he could not constrain himself from revealing his true self. He demonstrates the true value by apologizing with Jake Barnes after his fight with him. He cries like a child and asks for forgiveness. He too forgives others. Robert Cohen is not built on Ego, Jealous but built on appreciation, belief in others, caring, commitment, compassion, cooperation, courtesy, dedication, forgiveness, friendship, gratitude. He indulges in mistakes but, he is able to come back and reconcile with his friends as the saying goes, 'to err is human'. It is true that all men and women make mistakes but, realizing and reconciling helps to stabilize in the path of harmonious life. The values 'The Sun Also Rises' communicates are enormous. It makes the reader to feel the values as one reads the novel.



IV. CONCLUSION

The instances in the novel generate volume of values that are missing in our day to day life. Hemingway relates missing values to the death of the bull in the fiesta. It is a signifier. The game acts as an archetype. The bull is the most admirable and vigorous animal in general. Similarly, the good values or ethics are the most admirable in a person's character that creates inspiration for others. But, when the values are missing the result leads to vanity of life. Hemingway seems to have enforced such a scene to depict a parallel between the values of life and the bull in order to suggest how we handle values in our life. We do not let the values live to be followed but, we kill it as we lose the interest in it. I could not discuss all aspects of the values that each character revealed in the novel, so, only few important characters of the novel been discussed here. Thus, it is concluded that Hemingway novel, "The Sun Also Rises" depicts the missing values of life.

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