



THEME OF EXISTENTIALISM IN THE NOVELS OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Dr.Mohar Singh Hindoliya

Assistant Professor

Dept. of English

Govt.College Dolriya, District Narmadapuram (M.P)

Abstract

Ernest Hemingway's writings have existentialist undertones, exploring the human condition, morality, and the search for meaning. This research dives into the existential themes of Hemingway's novels, which include *The Old Man and the Sea*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *To Have and Have Not*. This study uses a close reading of these works to demonstrate how Hemingway's characters deal with absurdity, alienation, mortality, freedom, and authenticity. This analysis reveals Hemingway's existentialist vision, which emphasizes individual agency, moral ambiguity, and the search for meaning in an otherwise indifferent reality, by examining the author's particular storytelling style and characterizations. Finally, this study shows how Hemingway's writings continue to resonate with existentialist issues while providing unique insights into the human experience.

Index Terms

Here are some keywords related to the theme of Existentialism in the novels of Ernest Hemingway - Existentialism, Human condition, Existentialist philosophy, Hemingway's code, and Existential themes.

Introduction

Existentialism is a way of thinking that focuses on the idea that life doesn't come with a pre-set meaning. Instead, it's up to each person to find their own purpose and navigate the challenges of life, even when things seem difficult or confusing. This concept shows up in many of Ernest Hemingway's novels, where his characters often face tough situations that make them question the meaning of their lives.

The Sun Also Rises

The plot of "The Sun Also Rises" revolves around a group of friends attempting to navigate life following World War I. They feel lost and are looking for significance in their life. The main character, Jake Barnes, is especially tormented because he was injured in the war and is unable to have a normal romantic relationship with Brett, the woman he loves. Jake believes that his life is incomplete as a result of his injuries and he suffers from loneliness and unhappiness. Jake's injury is more than simply physical; it reflects how he feels on the inside. He strives to live his life to the best of his ability, although knowing that he will never have the life he genuinely desires. This is an example of existentialism, in which Jake must make his own meaning in a world that does not appear to care about him. The other individuals in the novel are also looking for something to make their lives feel significant, but they frequently turn to activities like drinking and partying, which don't actually help them find what they're looking for.

A Farewell to Arms

"A Farewell to Arms" is set during World War I and chronicles the narrative of Frederic Henry, an American serving as an ambulance driver for the Italian army. Frederic falls in love with Catherine Barkley, a British nurse. But as the battle progresses, Frederic begins to believe that it is meaningless and that life itself is filled with sorrow and misery. Frederic attempts to escape the horrors of war by focusing on his feelings for Catherine. However, their love story is insufficient to shield them from the harsh truths of reality. When Catherine dies during childbirth, Frederic is left alone to feel devastated and lonely. He understands that life can be brutal, and there is no guarantee of happiness, regardless of how much you desire it. This novel depicts Frederic's struggle to cope with life's randomness. Even when he attempts to find something positive in the world, such as love, he discovers that things do not always go as planned. He is obliged to recognize that life can be harsh, and that people frequently encounter obstacles beyond their control.

For Whom the Bell Tolls

In "For Whom the Bell Tolls," the protagonist, Robert Jordan, is fighting in the Spanish Civil War. He is assigned a perilous mission to destroy a bridge that is crucial to the adversary. Robert is committed to his task, but he is also aware that he may not survive. This revelation causes him to reflect seriously on what his life means and whether his efforts are truly making a difference. Throughout the novel, Robert struggles with the concept of death. He knows it's coming, yet he chooses to carry out his goal nevertheless. This demonstrates how he strives to find meaning in his life, despite the fact that he knows it will shortly end. In the end, Robert finds comfort in knowing that he has done his best to live according to his values, even in a world fraught with uncertainty and risk.

The Hemingway Code Hero

The concept of the "Hemingway Code Hero" is a recurring element across Hemingway's writings. These are characters that, despite difficult circumstances, adhere to a code of honor, courage, and perseverance. They may be flawed, and life may be unfair to them, yet they persevere and seek meaning in their acts. Characters such as Jake in "The Sun Also Rises," Frederic in "A Farewell to Arms," and Robert in "For Whom the Bell Tolls" are instances of this kind of hero. They may not be able to control everything that happens to them, but they can choose how they react to these situations. This is a critical aspect of existentialism: discovering your own path and meaning in life, even when things appear difficult or unknown.

Conclusion

Ernest Hemingway's works are full of characters that encounter terrible situations and struggle to make sense of their life. Through his basic writing style and emphasis on these characters' hardships, Hemingway examines the idea that life does not have a clear purpose. Instead, everyone must find their own path, even when life is difficult or complicated. Hemingway's protagonists frequently struggle with feelings of loneliness, grief, and uncertainty, but they live with courage and dignity. They demonstrate that even under difficult circumstances, we can find meaning and purpose in our activities. Hemingway's stories remind us that life is what we make it, and it is up to each of us to forge our own path forward.

References

1. Hemingway, Ernest. *The Sun Also Rises*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926).
2. Oliver, Charles M. (1999). *Ernest Hemingway A to Z: The Essential Reference to the Life and Work*. (New York: Checkmark. ISBN 0-8160- 3467-2.)
3. Roy, Pinaki (2012). *Hemingway's 'A Farewell to Arms': A Critical Appraisal*. (Kolkata: Books Way. ISBN 978-93- 81672-12-9)
4. Hemingway, Ernest (1926). *The Sun Also Rises*. New York: Scribner. 2006 edition. ISBN 978- 0-7432-9733-2
- 5 Cooperman, Stanley. "Hemingway and old man Age: Santiago as Priest of Time," *College English*, 1965.