

Compositional Analysis of Short Stories Collection “in Our Days”

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ABSTRACT

In the early 1920s, Ernest Hemingway began to explore writing literature in addition to his staff-writing position at "Toronto Star". His first attempts were unsuccessful and he was discouraged by rejections from "small publishers" and them not paying any fees. Fortunately, two stories survived the theft of his suitcase while travelling from Paris to Lausanne - one was sent to "Cosmopolitan" magazine prior, while the other remained in Parisian drawers. Soon, one of his miniatures gained publicity in "Little Review", which eventually led to the publication of his first book called "Three Stories and 10 Poems" with only 300 copies available. The success of the collection enabled the French publisher William Byrd to produce another set of short stories for an upcoming edition Hemingway had worked on during summer 1923.

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Introduction.

Literature analysis. The writer's demand for accuracy in composition has allowed them to include details that subtly indicate the passage of time. This can be seen quite clearly in stories such as "Revolutionaries" and "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot". In "Revolutionaries" the time period is directly indicated as 1919, however in other stories like "Cat in the Rain" or "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot" the allusions are less clear cut yet still significant, such as references to full cafes being frequented by foreigners or an old soldier's overcoat from Pedutsi; this allow readers to focus better on understanding character's personal experiences rather than things that have no direct reflection on their current situation but are more specific facts about their lives at a certain time period. In the short story "My Old Man" by the author, references are made to races conducted during wartime, as well as memories of life before the United States held a fractured state. Furthermore, "The Big River" focuses solely on highlighting Nick's mental state after surviving the war - an example of how his experiences have left him trembling with uncertainty. Crucially, these features shed light on our understanding of this small-scale text and allow multiple meanings to be interpreted. Overall, although not overtly present in all nine stories, a moral atmosphere characteristic of a postwar period is ever present throughout the work.

Analysis. The unifying theme of Ernest Hemingway's work "In Our Time" is war. All the interludes, stories, and even the characters are affected by its consequences in one way or another. Venturing through the pages, one can observe references to World War II and the Greek-Turkish conflict traceable to its second interlude scene where refugees from Thrace try helplessly to escape. This chapter clearly draws upon Hemingway's essay "The Refugees from Thrace" for its source material. War is multi-faceted in this collection of stories; from a father losing his son after he joins the army to an old man in Ossian convinced that God wants him to become a priest of war instead of living his days fishing for trout. It is more apparent than ever in this era how tragedy lingers on through times of peace and how history tends to repeat itself when it comes to senseless acts of violence.

In the eighth interlude, we are presented with a scene in which law enforcement officers murder thieves who were trying to escape in a truck. The reason for taking such a drastic action can be found in

Hemingway's report "Murder in Ireland. Price went up to \$400," which exposes the plot of American assassins infiltrating Ireland. During the 1920s, the United States was a hatching ground for gang wars and there was surge of Italian Diaspora as well. This gave rise to questionable and suspicious behaviors amongst law enforcement officers that ultimately resulted in extreme measures such as removing offenders from society by killing them.

At the beginning of the 20th century, reports written by witnesses to the plight of royal families in Europe began to emerge. One such report detailed an unfortunate fate for Greek monarchs that had been subject to betrayal, defeat and rebellion, thus leaving them unable to engage in activities they may have previously been involved in. Although not all European kings were placed in equally unfavorable positions, King George of Greece earned a special mention due to his particular plight. He was presented as a 'nice guy' who was subject to brutal circumstances under his rule, deemed the 'most unfavorable'. Thus, Hemingway describes with sympathy how this king was forced to corral along an incredibly bleak existence. He was assigned to this post by Revolutionary Committee last fall, and he will remain in office as long as it deems necessary to the revolutionary committee.

Discussion.

At first glance, it appears that Hemingway's story is straightforward, offering no apparent underlying message as he describes a seemingly happy American couple travelling through Europe. Upon closer examination however, the reader discovers that beneath the surface there are hints and nuances indicating the author's true intent. Through his attention to detail and subtle use of stylistic devices such as inference and emphasis, Hemingway provides readers with an insight into his core message which was meant to be discerned and understood upon careful reading. As such, we as readers are able to appreciate the text on a deeper level than we may have initially hoped for.

At the very beginning of the story, in the hotel description, which stopped an American couple used anadiplosis: "They did not know any of the people they passed on the stairs on their way to and from their room. Their room was on the second floor facing the sea."¹ The phrase "their room" functions as anadiplosis to emphasize the importance of this place in the life of George and his wife. The entire world of these two individuals, for better or for worse, revolves around this single room. Although they may venture out every now and then, it almost seems that most of their time is spent in there. This not just in dry weather, but even during a downpour which further emphasizes the point being made with the repetition. It is clear that by using this literary device, the author wanted to draw the readers' attention to how important and essential their room was to them: "It was raining. The rain dripped from the palm trees."² General repetition of the word «rain» in the beginning, describes the weather, simultaneously sets the tone for the story.

In a heated dialogue between husband and wife about who should go to the street to get a cat, the husband kept repeating words associated with his position in the room: "her husband offered from the bed, the husband went on reading, lying propped up with the two pillows at the foot of the bed."³ George has little to get out of bed, he prefers a still life. His wife for the sake of the cat is ready to go in the rain, he also continues to lie on the couch. The characters are very different.

"He stood behind his desk in the far end of the dim room. The wife liked him. She liked the deadly serious way he received any complaints. She liked his dignity. She liked the way he wanted to serve her. She liked the way he felt about being a hotel-keeper. She liked his old, heavy face and big hands."⁴ Like an American hotel owner in everything. The repetition of the subject and predicate in the sentence creates

¹ <https://lingvistov.ru/blog/reading-club/reading-club-intermediate-cat-in-the-rain-by-ernest-hemingway/>

² <https://lingvistov.ru/blog/reading-club/reading-club-intermediate-cat-in-the-rain-by-ernest-hemingway/>

³ <https://lingvistov.ru/blog/reading-club/reading-club-intermediate-cat-in-the-rain-by-ernest-hemingway/>

⁴ <https://lingvistov.ru/blog/reading-club/reading-club-intermediate-cat-in-the-rain-by-ernest-hemingway/>

an emphatic effect, stressing the implications of the sentiment expressed in it. It appears that the narrator is feeling something towards someone who is not her husband; this person is instead identified as the owner of a hotel.

« A man in a rubber cape was crossing the empty square to the cafe»⁵. The story introduces us to a character who may be serving as a metaphor for the life of a young American, living in a state of limbo between the adventure and exploration of youth and the everyday mundanity of adulthood. Though their life is yearning for something more, something bigger than this self-imposed inertia, everyday feels small and easier to manage. It may have been an arbitrary decision made by the author, but either way it encapsulates perfectly this common struggle faced by many young adults.

“-There was a cat. - said the American girl.

-A cat?

-*Si, il gatto.*

-A cat?’-the maid laughed. A cat in the rain?’⁶

Cats have come to almost symbolize homelessness, desolation and abject loneliness, especially for the so-called lost generation. By having a cat in their home, it gives these girls a sense of stability and security knowing that there is someone waiting for them at home loving and caring enough to cast aside the sadness and loneliness they feel every single day. This is why the young nameless heroine of Hemingway's short story is willing to perform an eccentric act in order to acquire one of these cats; She goes out of her way to adopt one in order to bring comfort and companionship into her own life. It can be seen from the way the word 'cat' is repeated throughout the text, how much importance this topic has for our protagonist, as well as reflecting how heavily cats are associated with finding familiarity and solace during those difficult times.

Throughout the story owner of the hotel is called «padrone». Hotel owner is good character in the story, for his kindness to other. But still there is dualism about his mettle, but How could respectful owner of the hotel, not knowing the woman, her feelings, understand her restless soul –and send a servant with an umbrella and later bring a cat. The reason for such behaviour is he is old and too well aware of life and people. He is one of all, also alone among the crowds arrived and driving off. So much time he did not see joy and happiness in his life.

- *“I wanted it so much, "she said. "I don't know why one wanted it so much. I wanted that poor kitty. It isn't any fun to be a poor kitty out in the rain.”*⁷
- *“And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes.”*⁸
- *"Anyway, I want a cat," she said, "I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can't have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat".*⁹

George's wife repeats the words «*I want a cat*», as a mantra, trying to somehow hang on to the life that she had not but would want to have. Even though this desire is somewhat mitigated to end of sentence.

One of the common stylistic devices employed by Ernest Hemingway in his works is syntactic repetition, centering around the most important words in the text. By this technique, readers are encouraged to think further and attempt to decipher the mainly clandestine theme of the story. In many of Ernest

⁵ <https://lingvistov.ru/blog/reading-club/reading-club-intermediate-cat-in-the-rain-by-ernest-hemingway/>

⁶ <https://lingvistov.ru/blog/reading-club/reading-club-intermediate-cat-in-the-rain-by-ernest-hemingway/>

⁷ <https://lingvistov.ru/blog/reading-club/reading-club-intermediate-cat-in-the-rain-by-ernest-hemingway/>

⁸ <https://lingvistov.ru/blog/reading-club/reading-club-intermediate-cat-in-the-rain-by-ernest-hemingway/>

⁹ <https://lingvistov.ru/blog/reading-club/reading-club-intermediate-cat-in-the-rain-by-ernest-hemingway/>

Hemingway's works, he uses this device to imply the difficulty experienced in finding a soulmate. In particular, his story of a young American at a hotel host reveals much more in terms of its underlying theme when examined more closely through such writing techniques as *antonomasia* and syntactic repetition. Through these devices, we can understand better how tumultuous it may be to find true companionship in life and how small decisions can guide us on our journey to uncovering destiny.

In Ernest Hemingway's early works, there are no sign of colorful and exaggerated descriptions such as metaphors, epithets or similes, which are often seen in literature. This minimalistic approach gives his writing style a stark sense of realism, bare of any external emotional bluster or sentimentality; yet, under this façade lies a robust and meaningful body of work. This is not only true for his earlier works but also Hemingway's later publications too.

The irony present throughout Anais Nin's book "In Our Time" serves as a reminder of the darker tones of post-war life. Whether encountered in the title itself, a reference to a popular prayer, or within each of the works that comprise the collection, this ironic perspective runs through every piece. From stories such as "Three-Day Storm" where optimism is tinged with an awareness of what lies ahead for its characters, to those in which Nin appears more pointedly contemptuous and derisive ("Mr. and Mrs. Elliot"), this pervasive irony structures all of her works from this period. In depicting her observations of life after World War One in all its complexity, irony becomes an essential tool.

In Ernest Hemingway's "The Big River", nature provides solace to the protagonist, Nick, as he seeks to recover from the psychological wounds inflicted by war. Nick finds refuge in a familiar place where his emotional needs can be met by the peace and beauty of nature. He hopes that returning to such a peaceful setting will help him get back to an earlier time before war had changed his life and outlook. However, while Hemingway illustrates the strength of feeling evoked by returning to a pre-war paradise, he remains realistic in his depictions and avoids glorifying or idealizing this particular period in history.

To gain greater insight into Hemingway's prowess as a novelist, it is useful to analyze and compare his works with those from classic novelists all around the world. Doing so can also provide clues as to how Hemingway developed his writing style and approach over the course of his career.

For centuries, literary criticism has been striving to develop a theory of the story. The origin of the story can be traced back to *fabliau*, which was born from a simple joke, and then evolved over time into what we now recognize as stories. Spanish picaresque novels, for instance, were some of the first works to feature a stringing together of multiple cases in order to create a single narrative. As authors like Chekhov began writing more subjective stories with lyrical tones and plots that could be incomplete, we continued to witness changes in the evolution of the traditional story structure. However, despite all this progress and development, it is still difficult to provide a concrete answer when asked simply what a story is.

Conclusion. Ernest Hemingway was a uniquely creative writer whose life story bears similarities to the biographies of renowned authors such as Stendhal and Chekhov. Like them, Hemingway first embarked on his journey to learn about life before he set out to write it down. His time spent in newspaper work yielded ample experiences that he later used in his writings. Just like Chekhov's works, Hemingway's stories also reflect a profound appreciation of life and managing to capture and conveying the tragedy of the century in just a few words; an awe-inspiring feat accomplished by very few authors.

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