

Ernest Hemingway and Eugene O’neill: Exploring the Realization of the American Dream

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ABSTRACT: The term ‘**American Dream**’ refers to the belief that everyone without the consideration of the fact – where they took birth and in which class, can attain their success in such a society where improvement is possible for everyone. This dream of America is achieved not through chance, but through hard work, risk taking and sacrifice.

The term was first coined by the historian and the writer James Adams in his bestselling book, “**Epic of America**”. In the book he described it as the dream of a land where life should be better, full and prosperous for everyone by giving opportunity to each according to ability or achievement. He even asserted that this definition of ‘**American Dream**’ would be difficult to interpret for the European aristocratic class. This dream is not restricted to the financial sector only but a dream of social order where each man and woman should be able to attain to the fullest stature for which they are capable and become eminent in the society regardless of their background.

KEYWORD: American Dream, Culture, Society, Identity, Alienation.

INTRODUCTION

The term ‘**American dream**’ can be set in the Protestation of Independence which believed that all people are treated the same and are owners of particular rights. These rights are life, liberty and hobbies of happiness. In a society grounded on these principles an existent can lead life to the fullest as he desires. Achieving ‘**American Dream**’ required political and profitable freedom as well as rules of law and private property rights. Without them, individualities cannot make the choices that will permit them to attain success, nor can they have confidence that their achievements will not be taken away from them through force. The ‘**American Dream**’ promises freedom and equivalency, the freedom to accumulate wealth, the occasion to lead staid life and freedom to live according to one’s own values indeed if those values are not extensively granted.

Home ownership power is constantly portrayed as a case of attaining the ‘**American Dream**’. It is a symbol of fiscal success and independence, and it means having the capability to control one’s own lodging place rather than being subject to the evil geste of a landlord. Owning one’s own business and becoming one’s own master is also depicted as another significant aspect of the ‘**American Dream**’. In addition, access to education and healthcare has been cited as rudiments of the American Dream.

Socialist **Emily Rosenberg** in her book, “**Spreading the American Dream**” identified five factors of ‘**American Dream**’. These are faith in a free request frugality; support for free trade agreement and foreign

direct creation; promotion of free inflow of information and culture and acceptance of government protection of private enterprise.

The American Dream was supported by a number of factors that communicated USA avail over other countries. For newcomers, it is fairly insulated geographically, enjoys temperate climate, culturally different population, abundant natural coffers including oil painting and long plagues – generating food and income for the country and its residents.

The spread of settlers into native American lands, slavery, the limitation of the vote to White manly coproprietaire along a list of others and a long list of other shafts and challenges have undermined the realization of the Dream for numerous who live in the United States.

Methodology

The paper is both descriptive and analytical. In writing this methodology, primary and secondary data have been used. Primary data is from some selected novels of some selected novelists and secondary data includes reference books.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the paper is to provide a comprehensive understanding of American socio-cultural and political identity from the "**American Dream**" perspective in some selected American novels. The study shows how the novelists represent not only affection but persistently arouse a gloomy ambience through their novels. The novels are concerned with the matter of self-questioning, obsession, individual displacement, quest for origins and identity.

NOVELS OF DISCUSSION

The world that Hemingway and Eugene O'Neill created through their workshop of art is the world that is unquestionably theirs. It is a small member of the 20th century world that they lived in. because it was a period of disillusionment, full of death, despair and destruction, it has just been released from the grip of the world wars. Behind the background of such a tough situation they took out their pen and started writing novels which are considered a masterpiece in American Literature. Here are a list of Nine Best Novels and the discussion on the said theme written by **Ernest Hemingway** and **Eugene O'Neill**:

1. The Sun Also Rises (1926)

This novel opens with an epigraph taken from Ecclesiastes "**one generation passeth down and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth ever**", easily indicating that he had written the novel for his coevals. This is further emphasized by the both epigraphs "**you are all a misplaced generation**" as Gerteude Stein called them. Hemingway was thus writing about a group of people who were hopeless, un- happy in their pursuit of happiness and intended it to be a '**dawn tragedy with the earth abiding ever as the idol**'.

Elaboration of a Misplaced Generation

A number of youthful people of this misplaced generation, American Deportees are leading a demoralised life in Paris after the war. It is a group of wounded people, wounded either physically or mentally as an outcome of the war. In the world after the war, they are fully lost and bewildered because the values which served immensely before the war were now spare, they cannot guide them towards the pretensions they have. They are lost souls leading lives of quiet despair. They are into heavy drinking in an attempt to quieten their inner voice. They indulge in free and casual coetus and coetus has eventually brought its appeal. It has no further appeal than drinking a glass of beer.

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One of the characters who plays a major part being the one who tells the story is Jake Barnes. He is a reason for the **First World War**. He is another misplaced soul who has been hit in his genitals during the war and so cannot ever anticipate to lead a general sexual life as he has been rendered impotent. Lady Brett Ashley is an ultramodern day interpretation of Don Inan. She goes around reducing all the men who came in contact with her. She falls in love with Jake Barnes but because of his authority cannot consummate their love. She has common relation with nearly everyone she comes into contact with. She has an affair with a Jew named Robert Cohn and also rejects him like a used towel. Cohn thinks largely of her and he couldn't be careless as far as she is concerned, but he has come a non-reality for her. He is on the other hand an emotional Jew. He cannot forget that he is Jew and cannot stop beating his musketeers for hurting his feelings.

The degenerate gang moves to Painplona in Spain to watch the jubilee in which there are bull-fights each single day. Then they have a wild time, endlessly drinking and being jocular. A new matador named Pedro Romero has arrived and moments later by Lady Brett who has had numerous suckers, falls in love with him and together they run down to Madrid without informing anyone. Robert Cohn had beaten down Romero for sleeping with Brett and now he feels as though he has been defeated by the unnoticeable courage of the youthful bullfighter. He also sluggishly fades down from the picture.

The further upliftment in the story is that Romero proposes marriage but Lady Brett is much older than him and she thus came to the final conclusion that she cannot destroy the chances of a youthful and promising bull-fighter. She entangles herself from all kinds of bonding with him. Jake Barnes feels shameful because he had introduced Lady Brett to Romero and comes to get her. In the end he comes to indeed with his sexual authority and without love. The novel comes to an end with the way it started. They are still an aboriginal group, depressed and damned. Lady Brett shares how good it would have been if she and Jake could have been suckers. And Jake answers, "**Yes', Isn't it enough to suppose so!**"

The novel thus is woeful in the effect. The group it discusses is fully alienated from society. They had a life that receded from general experience. They could only regard and catch fleetingly what they named as having a good time. But noway originally get it.

2. A Farewell to Arms (1929)

This novel, published in 1929 when the **First World War** had begun, epitomizes the American reaction to the war and its effect. An American, Lieutenant Frederic Henry is in the Italian ambulance unit. He falls in love with a British nanny Catherine Barkley. Henry who was relatively normal both in his station to war and Catherine changes after he is injured on the Italian war front.

He falls truly in love with Catherine and he becomes relatively responsible and bounded towards the war too. Catherine is devoted to Henry to the extent that Henry cannot help falling greatly and emotionally in love with her. They spend a summer full of love and passion in Milan where Henry is recovering and eventually Catherine becomes pregnant.

Henry as early as possible has to go back to the front. He leaves a pregnant Catherine who, having refused to marry him, gives assurance to him that all shall be well. At the front he gets each one depressed by the long drawn war and the Italians are ultimately forced to retreat. During this retreat Henry nearly comes head to head with the brutal realities of war and his nausea and despair with war is complete as the Military police accost him and he faces prosecution at their hands. He escapes by jumping into the Tagliamento swash and comes to Catherine.

He comes searching for her and eventually finds her in Streesa. There the suckers are united and become joyous again. Still, again faced with the perils of arrest the suckers flee to Switzerland where they set up an insulated revel in the mountains. But also as Catherine's time for delivery comes near they come down to consume where Catherine dies in childbirth. Henry is left alone.

Hemingway upholds the disaffection of man through Henry and the struggles that man visited by crunches have to go through in a reverse world.

3. Death in the Afternoon (1932)

Hemingway was traditionally an outdoorsman. He was immensely captivated in bull-fighting, big game stalking, fishing etc. His interest in bull-fighting dates to the time when he was in Paris. He thus had access to all the details in relation to bullfighting. **Death in the Afternoon** chronicles bull-fighting. It contains occurrences describing the art of bull-fighting and the ethics of the bullring and the troubles to which the bull-fighter are particularly exposed. Hemingway upholds how death is the final reality and how man realises his eventuality only in the face of death. He shows this in the life of the bull-fighter who is analogous to an ultramodern idol who could give meaning to his actuality by the manner in which he constantly faced death in the bullring.

4. To Have and Have Not (1937)

This novel is about Harry Morgan, a native of Key West, Florida, who has dedicated his life to the single-breach trouble to keep himself, his wife and his children on the upper borderline of the have-nots. He makes his living by renting out his power-boat to a rich man for fishing passages. But the Depression destroys this source of income. A rich sightseer wishes payment for lost fishing tackle. He is impelled by situations to turn to illegal conditioning for plutocrats. And he tries to smuggle some Chinese citizens from Cuba into the United States, but this ends in havoc damage. Also on another occasion he is captured while smuggling unlawful liquor. He had been engaged in a gun-battle where he lost an arm and his boat which was sequestered. Driven by despair he attempts to help four bank stealers in escaping but realizes that in order to save himself from them, it is important to kill them. He is wounded terribly in his attempt to kill them. He is arrested by the seacoast guard and the novel ends with his stammering speech.

"A man.... ain't got no hasn't got any can't really isn't any way out...one man alone ain't got...no chance."

This is Hemingway's comment on the utmost form of disaffection and individualism and the opinion that man is floundering forever yet never becoming successful in a world full of hostile environments.

5. The Fifth Column (1938)

This is a play set against the background of the Spanish Civil War. Like his other novels, this is also grounded on his individual gestures and the Hero Philip Rawley has rudiments connecting him to Hemingway. He is an American war Pressman posted in Spain. He has left his cherished Dorothy Bridges, an upper middle class girl who expects him to marry her and settle into domesticity. But without knowledge to her, Phillip has become greatly involved in the war. He becomes an asset for the Republican a Fascist politician who supplies the names of the members of the Fifth column. Phillip has enlisted himself for the 'next fifty years' making Dorothy confused about the decision he had taken. He is a man who has left everything before and shall move only to go alone or with others of the similar perspective. He comes up with Dorothy to completely engage with the civil war. The story is recited in a bobby and purloiner style but the under-lying communication is man's freedom.

6. For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940)

This is Hemingway's most famous novel. Robert Jordan is an American levy assigned to blow up a ground in the hills to stop Fascist underpinning during the Spanish Civil War. He is a religionist in the proposition of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He is thus involved in humanity. And the story is about courage and resistance to despotism. When Jordan is assigned the task and he comes to the core, he finds that the guerillas are rather disorganized. They are reluctant to fight because destruction of the ground hovered their own

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security. Jordan gets help from Pilar, a gypsy woman and Anselmo who both are vehement in stating the importance of blowing up the ground. Pilar's hubby Pablo is against the scheme and turns out to be unfaithful. Amidst all these Robert finds himself falling in love with Maria, who suffers from cerebral injuries as she was ravished by the Fascists. The manner in which Hemingway has depicted their violent love is inflexible and unexampled. Their love is rendered with a Jeremiah quality to it.

After a lot of hassles, Robert Jordan is successful in blowing up the ground. But falling from a steed Robert is oppressively wounded. Still he has to decide whether to stay and cover the retreat of his companies or differently to go with them, risking their security. Robert decides to stay back for the safety of the guerrillas and for his love for Maria. Robert continues his fight yet meets a pointless death.

Robert Jordan as a idol is in a number of ways analogous to Frederic Henry but he differs as he realizes the variety that **"No man is an island, entire of itself"**.

7. Across the River and Into the Trees (1950)

Published after a gap of the times Across the River and Into the Trees is a post-war love-story set in Venice. Colonel Catwell, a growing man, was tormenting from a serious cardiac problem, he knows he is on the point of death and yet with his nineteen times old cherished Renata spends his time in Venice indulging in much drinking and many physical relationships.

Numerous critics regard this novel as a ludicrous attempt. The novel is thus regarded a failure as coming from the pen of Hemingway.

8. The Old Man and The Sea (1952)

This is Hemingway's topmost work. This fable of man's struggle with the natural world, of his noble courage and abidance won Hemingway the Pulitzer Prize and was also responsible for his being awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954. The lashings that Hemingway entitled for the erudite failure of **Across the River and Into the Trees**, this tale helped in reaquiring his character to his earlier growing position.

The Old Man and the Sea tells the tale of Santiago, an old Cuban fisher who has been unlucky for eighty four days in his attempt to catch hold fish. He has burrowing his skiff to the gulf-slucide for so long without any mileage. On the eighty fifth day, he goes far out into the ocean. On the ocean he thinks and recapitulates the youthful boy Manolin who used to accompany him and with whom he used to talk of better days when he was a great fisher and of the icons of baseball. In the autumn that day he hooks a giant marlin. The marlin is eighteen feet long, exactly two bases longer than the Skiff which Santiago was rowing. The marlin is so strong that it tows Santiago and his Skiff. For the day, night, the coming day and night it continues to hitch the Skiff. Santiago is exhausted but he doesn't give up moreover. It is a clash of both wit and strength and Santiago remembers a hand wrestling binary with a champion named El Champion.

On the morning of the third day he succeeds in pecking the fish and pitching all his skill and waning strength he is suitable to lash the marlin to the side of the boat and he sets out on the return trip. On the way still, harpies attack and eat down the marlin. He fights with the harpies with all his strength and minimum means-a small cutter lashed to the cultivator. When he reaches the reinforcement he is fully exhausted and all that is left of the marlin is its shell. Santiago is defeated but not really, his triumph is his heroic struggle. Story ends with Manolin crying over Santiago's bruised hands and Santiago waking up the next day and making plans for the future but also again his struggle with the marlin and also the harpies has injured him. He sleeps on and dreams of once gests.

Theme of Alienation and Quest for Identity in The Hairy Ape by Eugene O'Neill

Alienation: The Major Theme of O'Neill

Man is a gregarious beast. A sense of stability, of security, of belongingness is important for his joy and serenity. He must have his levees nearly, in some home, in the love and affection of parents, musketeers and other relatives. When this sense of 'belongingness', this sense of harmony, is lost for one reason or the other, man gets pain from a feeling of insatiability and loss of confidence. He feels orphaned, defrauded and at bay. There was little ability of background in O'Neill's own life and this accounts for the fact that disaffection or loss of identity is the introductory theme of the utmost of his major works. Alienated from their sudden terrain, feeling lonely and isolated and unhappy, his characters constantly search for identity, for belongingness, and disintegrate and decay, when they fail to achieve similar identity.

Yank's Original Sense of Belongingness

Alienation and search for identity is also the introductory theme of the Hairy Ape; In the opening scene of the play, we find that Yank is relatively confident and proud of his valuable strength. He exercises great authority over his fellow-stokers, who respect his valuable physical capacity and obey him and are afraid of him. Yank is relatively satisfied, for, as he himself puts it, he 'belongs', while they do not 'belong'. He harbours no destructive romantic visions. He does not seek any escape into a romantic history of Paddy's dream, or the Utopia of Long's dream when the present errors would be righted through indigenous means. He is in perfect harmony with his work, and proud of the fact that he can eat smoke and coal and make the boat run at 24 knots an hour.

The Shattering Battle with Mildred

But Yank's sense of security, his sense of belongingness is soon shattered as he is brazened with Mildred Douglas who looks at him as if he were an 'hairy ape' and who calls him an unprintable beast. It is now that Yank becomes apprehensive of the fact that he does not "belong". He finds out that while he has been doing his work the world has been gradually but relatively fleetingly revolutionized by ministry, a revolution that has not carried him with it. He finds that a new world which disregards mortal rights and bournes has left him stranded. The one thing which made his life sufferable was that he felt that he "belonged", that he was a necessary, vital and mortal part of a social order. But now he realises that he counts for nothing as an existent. Says Winther, "If he could have reasoned it out easily, he would have known that. As soon as a machine known as an automatic stoker could be constructed, he would be thrown overboard. He would have known that the progress of invention is for the benefit of those who exploit the workers and not for the welfare of society as a whole. And this is not Yank's problem alone, but the problem of our whole social system. There are literally millions of men and women who are blood relatives of Yank in this ultramodern artificial world. Like Yank they have grown up in the faith that they "belonged":

"that they were a necessary and respected part of a social order, but they have lived to find out that they are nothing of the kind."

Yank in the Fifth Avenue

Like Yank in the Fifth Avenue, innumerable others stand on the sidewalks of the world, desolate, abandoned, indeed dominated and despised for being commodity they did not ask to be. **"They are forced to listen to the empty talk which flows like a scrap-choked swash from the empty minds of the defended bones."** Like Yank they must hear, as he heeded one bright Sunday morning on Fifth Avenue, while the fat bones came past him talking of the church service in the following way:

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*“Dear Doctor Caiaphas! He is so sincere!
What was the sermon? I dozed off.
About the radicals, my dear-and the false
doctrines that are being preached.
We must organize a hundred per cent American bazar
And let everyone contribute one-hundredth percent of their income tax.
What an original idea!
We can devote the proceeds to rehabilitating the veil of the temple.
But that has been done so many times.”*

Nothing could reflect more easily than this scene, the maximum ruin. of the ultramodern system to deal with the problem that faces Yank and millions of others. The system has evolved beyond control and each day the gap between Yank and his requirements grows wider. Furthermore and further the Yanks of the world realise that they do not belong.

The Psychological Impact of the Machine Age

In The Hairy Ape O'Neill reveals himself in sympathy with this hunt for identity. According to Winther, in this play the playwright examines in full the psychological counterations of the machine age. His forerunners might have shown how Yank lost his job and eventually through starvation was led to crime to support himself and family, or some analogous theme. But it should be remembered that Yank's problem was not loss of work. He could have had all the work he wanted. Likewise, O'Neill does not appeal to the feelings by having Yank lose a squeeze, mother, or children. Yank is alone as far as any family connections are concerned. It is not work that Yank is seeking. What Yank wants is to know that he “belongs”. He wants to find out what it is that has happened to the world which separates him from the conclusion that what he is doing is a necessary and a befitting part of the life of the world.

In pursuit of the answer to this problem he receives blows and cuts no personality lesser than that which is expressed in the typical speech of the assembly man who attributes to the workers all the sins of which he and his class are shamefaced. The real peril to ultramodern civilization is the assinity and timidity of the ruling classes. Therein lies the real drama of this play. Yank is more than existent. He is a symbol of the deep kick that rises like a surge against the whole structure of ultramodern civilization. He is a man crying out against a system which has not only exploited man's body but his spirit as well. The play is not a protest against low wages and severance, but it is a combination of the whole structure of machine civilization, a civilization which succeeds only when it destroys the cerebral well-being of those who make it possible. It is this which gives the play universality and enlists the sympathy and understanding of the followership.

Yank was unknown about distribution-vitally important as that is he wanted to be a creative part of the domestic structure, and no man working in the stokehole of a liner, or making the two hundred and fifty-sixth part of a shoe in regulation eight-hour shifts can ever “belong” in the same sense that man belonged as a creative worker in the eighteenth century. Yank is a kick against the mordant success of the machine age.

Yank's Rejection by the I.W.W.

O'Neill presents this clearly as Yank moves from one defeat to another, striving futilely to find some solution to his problem. In captivity he heard of the I.W.W. and was allowed to find among them an answer. They threw him into the road, just as the Socialists of the moment would deny him a place. *“The Socialists would*

not accept Yank, because Yank is a nonconformist, not a party man. What he wants is to be a creative worker proud of what he as an existent has created.” -(Winther)

Yank’s speech after he has been thrown from the I.W.W.’s headquarters is an unequivocal summary of the whole situation. O’Neill shows that stipend, distribution, shorter hours and all the rest of it is no result. Yank in the disguise of Rodin’s “The Thinker” reviews the full situation, ending by admitting that his greatest crime was that of being born. Yank speaks, pertaining first to the men who threw him out into the road.

Yank’s Rejection by the Hairy Ape

Yank is rejected by society, he does not belong to the world of man. But he cannot live in separation. He must have his levees nearly, if not in the world of mortals, then at least in the world of the beasties. Since Yank cannot move back and belong to man, he must move down and seek fellowships with the brute creation. Perhaps he would belong there. Search for identity becomes a preoccupation with him and eventually it takes him to the Zoo. There he stands face to face with a goon in its pen, addressed to it as to a family because he thinks that they both belong to the same club, the “**Club of the hairy apes**”. He shakes hands with it and sets it free. But alas! The goon crushes him to demise. It does not suppose that Yank ‘belongs’. Yank’s hunt for identity, meetly ends with his death.

In short, **The Hairy Ape** dramatizes an important aspect of the mortal dilemma in the machine age. Man does not live by chuck alone, spiritual health and well-being are also necessary. Man can be lonely even in a crowd. The tragedy of Yank is the tragedy of millions in the ultramodern age.

Conclusion

The multifaceted and evolving concept of the American dream has been delved into and studied for well over years. Since our nation and culture are not defined by a single participating past, religion or language, the ideals defined in the Constitution and the Protestation of Independence have allowed for the notion of the American dream to evolve over time, similar to how it has expanded and united ethnic and domestic classes. The ideas central to what one thinks of as the putatively dateless American dream have been present since the starting of our nation. The beliefs in individualism, tone fruition, and tone-reliance, which one understands as having the eventuality to fulfill his or her fortune and believe in the promise that life can be different, are beliefs that have been strictly interwoven into the fabric of American culture from the founding to the present. While the American experience is a narrative with a life cycle of its own, the public literature of America has inspired, documented, and reflected the elaboration of the American Dream. The American erudite canon has proved to be an important and vital catalyst of cultural expression that upholds and safeguards the aesthetics and principles of the dream. While there have been numerous voices and a multitude of perspectives in American literature that have portrayed rudiments of the American dream, the erudite workshop of Ernest Hemingway, Eugene O’Neill remain pillars of the American erudite canon because they consummately capture and uphold perspectives of the American dream that both celebrate its continuity and challenge the colourful shapes that it has taken.

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