CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSION

The literary writers have been viewed as imitators, makers, craftsman, realists, expressionists, impressionists but as Wayne Booth says that a writer can choose his disguise but he cannot choose to escape. Each and every writer makes a commitment the moment he sits down to write. Commitments are as varied as the variety of writers and based on different political, social, theological and moral philosophies. Thus in literature, a writer who commits an act in writing actually commits himself to the act of writing. He does so to put across a general message that is particularly related to the world of one’s times.

Hemingway wrote at a time when the entire West was struggling to recover from the cultural blows it received at the end of nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century. It was a transitory time when a generation of sensitive young writers found it difficult to catch up with. Hemingway is a writer who witnessed and experienced the cruel realities, which the first few decades of 20th century produced at large. He offers a precise and an exact description of whatever happens. He is a conscious artist who is obvious in his short stories as well as in his novels. He uses language meticulously with every word tested.

Baker says that his words form a less elation, each in order besides the others. It is a very great quality… The aim – the achievement – of the great prose writer is to use words so that they shall seem new and alive because of their juxtaposition with other words and this gift Hemingway has supremely. Of all the events to affect Hemingway’s creative sensibility was war, because he actively participated in the
World War I as wartime correspondent and as ambulance driver and had also received serious injuries.

We are impressed by his freedom and boldness in dealing with life and character. Hemingway viewed the First World War with horror and dismay, and also had doubts as to the ideology that inspired it. Few have written extensively about the war but the First World War was the greatest single cause of an attitude toward human nature in general which is the most obvious feature of serious contemporary American fiction.

Contemporary American fiction opens with Hemingway. He is a scrupulous artist who will use no material which he does not see how to assimilate to the terms of his art. His novels are large in scope, most accomplished in techniques and the strongest in effect of anything he has written and it demonstrates that he does indeed have something to say, something positive and toxic which he has never said before. Certainty with the explicit power of the present statement. He has never been insensitive to fineness or greatness in human nature. In his study of the truth he has preferred to follow an inductive, an empirical method, beginning with the simplest, the most palpable elements of human experience those most readily tested. He proceeds with extreme caution to the determination of higher compounds and more complicated formulas. He finds a subject that justifies the positive statements about human nature. It was personal experience what the First World War did not offer him and was at length brought within his actual range of observation in the Spanish struggle against fascism. His social consciousness was not a prior assumption, a matter of literary ideology. It was the slow growth of experience and observation, observation both of himself, of his own reactions and of certain types of people and
behaviour for which he felt a special affinity. In his novel of the Spanish war, the transcendental values of courage and of love are presented more at length and more explicitly and to these are added in positive and explicit form the social virtues of faithfulness and of devotion to the humane ideal which goes under the name of the republic.

Hemingway said that books should be about the people you know, that you love and hate not about the people you study up about. If you write them truly they will have all the economic implications a book can hold. His views on man in society were determined in 1930’s by two main considerations:

1. He was a veteran of World War I and he knew what war was really like.
2. He was a veteran newspaper correspondent who had matched with increasing disgust and hatred the post war machinations of European diplomats and dictators in their struggles for power.

The Nobel award praised Hemingway for honestly reproducing the genuine features of the hard conditions of age. His world is one in which things do not grow and bear fruit, but explore, break, decompose or are eaten away.

Hemingway said in his speech while accepting the Noble Prize in 1954:

*Writing, at its best, is a lonely life. Organizations for writers palliate the writer’s loneliness but of doubt if they improve his writing. He grows in public stature as he sheds his loneliness and often his work deteriorates. For he does his work alone and if he is a good enough writer he must face eternity, or the lack of it, each day.*
For a true writer, each book should be a new beginning where he tries again for something that is beyond attainment. He should always try for something that has never been done or that others have tried and failed. Then sometimes with great luck, he will succeed.

How simple the writing of literature would be if it were only necessary to write in another way what has been well written. It is because we have had such great writers in the past that a writer is driven far out past where he can go, out to where no one can help him.

I have spoken too long for a writer. A writer should write what he has to say and not speak it.

(Excerpts from Hemingway’s Noble prize acceptance speech read in his absence by John Co. Cabot, The then United States Ambassador to Sweden.)

Ernest Hemingway’s technique of writing suggests his refined sensibility. When it is functioning at its highest, it has always worked upon at immediate objective level which translates ideas into terms of concrete things. Hemingway’s writing in fact is not written, it is lifted out of nature and very artfully and adroitly tumbled out upon the page; it is the brute material of every day proletarian speech and feeling, he writes the prose of reality. His writing begins with first person plural; something like “we” which signifies we the no-combatants, the onlookers not yet engaged in action, looking across the river and plains to the mountains watching troops and kings going by, hearing that things are going bad and observing what the cholera can accomplish and this “we” reaches to “I” and finally gives way to the
protagonist per se like Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*. Sometimes he gives way to “you”. Thus, he has adopted the “we” method of narration coupled with poetic method to give powerful effect of fiction. Hemingway was aware of the craft of fiction writing. He wanted to make a fine craft, which would be realistic amending and re-amending his views, concepts, themes and words several times, eliminating some or many of the things he imagined and accepting something different which suited the work. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg, was his view.

The techniques of Hemingway’s writing keeps on changing from time to time. Initially, he used the small sentences of simple nature, which he probably had learnt in his career of journalism. This brought him the fame in the writer’s world. With the passage of time and in the later period of his life, he adopted the use of more complex symbolic pattern, abstract words, overstatements, and direct emotional appeal. His pattern of thinking is also reflected in his writing. From his works, one can observe that Hemingway has been changing his views from time to time. In the 1920’s his views were that ‘no country but one’s own is worth fighting for,’ but two years later he espoused for the Loyalist cause on Spanish Civil War and said ‘here is only one form of government what cannot produce good writers and that is Fascist system of government, if the war is lost all of those things like equality, liberty, fraternity, personal happiness are lost.’

Hemingway has truths to tell, not stories. He has only a single simple truth, what he offers to us is his own pained discovery that life is harsh and dull. Hemingway has been able to transcend the material and contingent reality into
metaphysical and the universal plane. His truth becomes A Truth for all ages and all
times to come.

Hemingway had a deep concern for the plight of the common man who was
awakened to bitter realities after the World War I. Hemingway could have chosen
elite issues for his fiction as most of the modernist novelists in Europe and America
did. He, however, chose to write about the common man who was the worst victim of
the war. This is one reason why I am invariably drawn towards the Hemingway
fiction.

Hemingway’s world is ultimately a world at war. War either in the literal
sense armed and calculated conflict, or figuratively as marked everywhere into
violence, potential or present and a general hostility.

The Spanish Civil War has never been described so convincingly and
realistically as written about by Hemingway. It is clear that there is a permanent and
representative quality about Hemingway’s treatment of the Spanish civil war. This
study is intended to reveal some of those important aspects of his art which have
remained so far untouched or have received inadequate treatment at the hands of his
critics. One of the important findings which is one of Spanish civil war is to
underscore the limitations of the clichéd approaches to Hemingway which tends to
focus attention either on his personal and psychological obsessions with war or
gregards it as an escape from the realities of life. The depths of Hemingway’s
understanding of life and his masterly treatment of war fiction has not been
understood by many critics. This study shows that it would be a mistake to explain
Hemingway’s interest in the Spanish Civil War as an interest limited merely to a
contemporary event, it was rather a part of an expression of his concern with the
general predicament of man. It reveals that Hemingway views this war not as a momentous event only of his time but rather he makes it serve as an artistic device to underline some universal and eternal truths of life. He has like all great artists presented the most complex and profound truths of life in a seemingly simple manner.

In the realm of arts Hemingway is one of the most famous of men. He is a living legend. His gift for writing is his marvelous capacity for sensitiveness to impressions. For Hemingway the world is created a new every morning and so vivid and refreshing is his rendering of it that material nature itself often seems in his pages to take on moral significance. Hemingway has a definite theme, the subject matter to discuss, a message to convey to the suffering humanity of the modern times.

In the realm of the arts, Hemingway is one of the most famous of modern men. Like Byron a hundred years ago, like Mark Twain, like Jack London, like Stephen Crane, in more recent times, he is a living legend. It is interesting to note that only Mark Twain, among the men here named, lacked what it is simplest to call “Byronic” elements in his character or career. Hemingway’s critical fortunes have ebbed and flowed but his public has known no wavering.

Hemingway is able to render everything in the sparest and most athletic style conceivable. Hemingway’s ideal is a prose “without tricks and without cheating”, and Joseph Warren Beach speaks suggestively of the “self-denying ordinance” he has passed upon himself in his attempt to see how far he can go with “a mere notation of objective facts.”

Hemingway uses the technique of understatement as verbal irony for conveying his vision in which something is deliberately represented as much less than it really is. Hemingway uses recurring images and repetitions of things and events.
Repetition has three concurrent functions in Hemingway’s works. It reflects the repetitive patterns in his vision, it shows how deeply Hemingway believed in his vision. More importantly, by using the technique of repetition in a variety of situations and in a number of ways he transforms it into a rhetoric instrument. When Hemingway’s men and women are trapped under different circumstances in novels, when the metaphor of game is repeated in various forms, when the motifs of luck and catharsis recur in almost all his major works, when the circular structure forms the basis of many of his novels, and when the cyclical pattern of action is recreated in several works, he uses the means to obtain a better understanding of the world. Hemingway has worked with various types of characters in various situations and with different temperaments, but most of them come to the same conclusions about the world.

Hemingway rarely interprets his juxtapositions for us: he will tell us what his characters said or did, but he leaves us to our own resources in the matter of interpretation. He uses key phrases as a composer uses them, and Joseph Warren Beach compares him, in this aspect, to Henry James, though Hemingway employs the device more for emotional effect, as James does, for clarification of meaning.

The brutality of the Hemingway fiction world has led many of us to think of the author as a kind of caveman of literature. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Hemingway has the sensitive modern’s interest not only in literature, painting, and music, but in the problem of the meaning and values of human life. He is a sensitive man who has been terribly hurt by life, and who dwells upon horrible things partly to convince himself that he can “take it”, and partly because he does not dare ever to let life catch him “off guard” again. It is the fashion to ascribe all this to his experiences
in World War I and to make him the very type and symbol of the generation whose illusions were destroyed by the war. He does not write about everyday life - the poor, dear, foolish life. Instead, he is concerned with the ultimate crises of human experience, to surprise the human soul naked as it faces up to an ultimate challenge.

He seeks insight into life not through thought or any psychological mode but by invoking his characters in some dangerous physical action which would give them a full and true view of life. He does not only deal with the necessity of facing violence but also shows us the way through which we can triumph over it. Herein lies the greatest value of his work. His novels, short stories and reporting everything gives the reader a glimpse into a man who simply wanted to find truth through words. The books provide a deeper historical context. Hemingway not only became a war hero in World War I, but he also served as a war correspondent for decades. There is perhaps no other writer in history who had a more intimate relationship with combat between men than him. It provides a voice from a man who knows the deeper melancholies of soldiers and the longer ramifications of war. Whether he is telling the story of a soldier adapting to civilian life or describing the brutality of men at war, he always strikes a note of truth that hits deep with the reader. Nothing feels false, and that is because he always saw his fiction as a way to capture a deeper honesty than that of a reporter. He tells about the human experience and the human spirit.

*Hemingway* is the type of writer that does not exist today and perhaps never will. He was an artist. His writings and muses cannot be thrown into the categories of left and right or even right and wrong. He examined the human spirit and the relationship between a man and woman, man and man and, most poetically, man and himself.
He has a message for mankind that one must have courage, endurance and act one’s part honestly and well against all heavy odds of life. The silence of his heroes during the time of crisis is more eloquent than speech. Life is continually a sorry affair, but what he seems to say is that pessimism is not the right attitude to adopt in such a predicament. Why not rise above it by cultivating courage, endurance, and developing the virtue of fortitude? These qualities, if inherited, can see us through the farrago of life. He is no cheap moralizer. He may have no flaming idealism, but, taken together, his novels constitute his answer to the problem how to live. In his novels lie his answers to the problem how to live in this world full of pain and cruelty.

Hemingway is devoid of theology, but he is not insensitive to moral ideas. The highest value which Hemingway upholds in life conveys the greatest and most valuable message for mankind that when fate traps you, all you have to do is to be brave and face its consequences with calm. He sees ultimate doom together with man’s passionate fondness for being alive. Extinction may well be the end of all, but for Hemingway and his heroes this only emphasized the need to live each moment fully and keenly. For Hemingway dying well is equal to living well. The lesson we get from his works is that man must behave with dignity when he is under stress and he must show self reliance when confronted by many problems.

The thirties have often been described as the decade that the locusts hath eaten; there seemed to be a deathwish prevalent everywhere, a feeling that there is nothing that ‘will do us good’, a sense of futility. In fiction the dystopian mode was fast catching on. It was a war on all idealism. But Orwell, though a rebel in his own way, was not the man to reject all aesthetic and moral codes. In an essay entitled “Orwell as an Old Etonian,” Martin Green wrote:
The postwar generation, to which Eric Blair belonged turned away from the fathers, away from the old styles of manliness and seriousness, towards brilliant and playful modes of art. Eric Blair could not belong to a generation which defined itself by such a gesture.

Thus he was the odd man out, cultivating an old style of manhood when others had rejected it, holding on to an out-dated concept of patriotism, and to a sense of the individual self when the race was on for merging with crowds. Spain attracted a number of young minds. Orwell was also one of those attracted. But here again he refused to be one of a system. His courage was of the kind which throng on independence. He fought in the war, was injured, wrote about it and found the experience a valuable “object” lesson for it taught him “how easily totalitarian propaganda can control the opinion of enlightened people in democratic countries”. Language was one of his major concerns. The present concern with the linguistic inroads into human consciousness, and the structuralist developments also take us back to Orwell. He was responding to Stuart Chase and B.F. Skinner; now the Chomskian hypothesis and Steiner’s quarrel with him remind one of the issues as defined by Orwell. The function of criticism and the concept of art which take the moral stance for granted had begun to change with Orwell. He was begging to distinguish between good art and moral purpose and has life split perhaps now been completed.

Orwell inherited a great deal from the two strands of the nineteenth century liberal tradition, and responded to the ideas in various forms and in different ways – as a study of his work will show. He took the idea of non-conformism far beyond its
original scope and had begun to see the cracks in the concepts related to freedom and equality. He was wary of state control specially in its non-humanistic attitudes. He was wary of imposition of all kinds even if it was directed towards education or cleanliness. Heir to the tradition he had grown up in, he rejected it by trying to move outside it. Yet, a residual element remained and this grew in its own different way.

Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society* writes of him:

> His interest lies almost wholly in his frankness. With us, he inherited a great and humane tradition; with us, he sought to apply it to the contemporary world. He went to books, and found in them the detail of virtue and truth. He went to experience, and he found in it the practice of loyalty. A tolerance, and sympathy. But in the end…. The dust is part of the case.

Orwell, like Milton, asked for the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties. He also added that he wanted the liberty to “feel”. And feeling in itself projects a value-system: it was a desire to see everything strictly in human terms. It meant facing failure and the idea of self-destruction, to it also meant looking straight at the face of progress which was like the snake-haired head of Medusa.

Orwell wrote to Cyril Connolly, “Everything one writes now is overshadowed by this ghastly feeling that we are rushing towards a precipice…” (CEJL I, 362) There was nothing glorious about war, the myth had already been exploded by the happenings of the First World War. The stench of the human body, the sleepless nights and the bureaucratic set-up are the same in every war. Orwell’s own
experiences of the Spanish Civil War were still fresh in his mind. And the soldier in
the trench, he realized, was neither concerned with patriotism nor hatred.

Orwell in now acknowledged as one of the most significant writers of the
twentieth century. His literary achievement is examined as novelist, as essayist and
political writer, as journalist, and as satirist. There is no rigid dividing line in Orwell’s
life and work between aesthetic and polemic. His whole life was a complex interplay
between the two and it is precisely this aspect – the continuous fusion of an artistic
with a political intelligence – which makes him a writer of such unusual and
compelling interest.

In an essay written in 1948 he defined a novel as a story which attempts to
describe human beings, and – without necessarily using the techniques of naturalism
to show the acting on everyday motives and not merely undergoing definition, will
also contain at least two characters, probably more, who are described from the inside
and on the same level of probability – which, in effect, rules out the novels written in
the first person.

It is correct at this juncture to raise the question: to what extent was Orwell an
original writer? It seems clear from internal evidence and from his own statements
that at the outset of his career as a novelist he intended to conform to conventional
standards of the genre: he wanted to write enormous naturalistic novels with unhappy
endings, full of detailed descriptions and arresting similes, and also full of purple
passages in which words were used partly for the sake of their sound. And in fact his
first complete novel, *Burmese Days*, which he wrote when he was thirty but projected
much earlier, was rather that kind of book.
His novels are indications of an original mind seeking to achieve a literary form appropriate to the needs of the twentieth century. His strength lies in the vivid presentation of location and background, in the description of ‘the physical memories, the sounds, the smells and the surfaces of things’, in the illumination of moods and environments ignored by writers who had not undergone his own experiences of poverty and humiliation.

His first piece of work to be published was a patriotic poem, ‘Awake! Young Men of England’, which was printed in the Henley and South Oxfordshire Standard on 2 October 1914. He showed a copy of this to the headmaster’s wife who was sufficiently impressed with it and requested him to read it aloud to the assembled school. It is a piece of schoolboy jingoism, concluding with the arresting lines:

A wake! oh you young men of England,

For if, when your Country’s in need,

You do not enlist by the thousand,

You truly are cowards indeed.

(Quoted by J.R. Hammond, 3)

The poem is an indication of the impact of the First World War on his consciousness. The war dominated much of his school years; both at St Cyprian’s and at Eton mounting lists of dead and wounded were read out at morning assembly; former pupils only a few years older than he were serving in France. Gradually there dawned on him an awareness that his generation had missed a traumatic experience of immense significance. In his essay ‘Why I Write’ he stated that from a very early age, perhaps the age of five or six he knew that when he grew up he should be a writer. He
was also disillusioned with imperialism and with his own role within it, developing at last into a gnawing distaste for British dominion in India and elsewhere. Long afterwards he wrote that he already had vague ideas of writing books, but mainly because he could not go on any longer serving an imperialism which he had come to regard as very largely a racket. He had had five years in which to think out his role in life and his attitudes towards ‘the white man’s burden’ and had come to loathe colonial rule that it implied: when he came to write about it in *Burmese Days* he was expressing the pent up resentment and bitterness of years of reflection.

It is necessary to see him as a man in order to appreciate him as an artist. This might be said of Orwell, for it is necessary to see his life and work as a totality in order to understand the unusual combination of circumstances – in environment, psychology and temperament – which helped to shape him as an artist and mould his distinctive attitude of mind.

He had a passionate resolve to turn his back on the traditions, values and codes in which he had been so laboriously educated. The consequence of this disavowal was a receptiveness to new ideas and impressions and a willingness to abandon previously held beliefs – both refreshingly uncommon for one of his class and generation. He is the classic example of one who was brought up to accept uncritically a solid, conventional manner of life who then came to question its implicit assumptions and to challenge the structure on which it is based. In essence, he was a man who tore up the roots of the conventional manner of life to which he had been born and then had to find for himself new roots appropriate to his altered way of living. His excursions among down and outs in the years 1927-32, his experiences as a dishwasher in Paris, his travels in the industrial North of England and his involvement in the Spanish Civil
War were all in a sense voyages of discovery: attempts to see, hear and sample first
hand aspects of life previously unknown to him.

By birth, background and education he belonged to the bourgeoisie; by
attitude and inclination he belonged to the proletariat. This unresolved tension
accounts for the odd mixture of attitudes he embodied in his own person and for the
sense of ambivalence which can be detected in his writings. Despising the values of
the social stratum into which he was born, yet not fully accepted as a manual worker,
he held feelings and reactions appropriate to both. In the diary he kept in the closing
months of his life he wrote apropos ‘cultivated’ accents:

And what voices! A sort of over-fedness, a fatuous
self-confidence … people who, one instinctively
feels, without even being able to see them, are the
enemies of anything intelligent or sensitive or
beautiful. No wonder everyone hates us so.

Rayner Heppenstall, who knew him well in the 1930s, has remarked in a
memoir:

To us it was a curious mind, satirically attached to
everything traditionally English, always full of
interesting and out of the way information like Tit-Bits,
but arid, colourless, devoid of poetry, derisive, yet
darkly obsessed. There underlay it all some unsolved
equation of love and hate, some memory of childhood
nursed through Eton, through Burma, taken out and
viewed secretly in Paris kitchens or upon the thresholds of doss-houses.

Embedded deep within his make-up was a profound pessimism, a revulsion against human bestially which inhibited him from close friendships and darkened the closing years of his life. To him his literary work came before all else: before personal friendships, before his marriage, before his own health and happiness. ‘Writing a book’, he observed, ‘is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a long bout of some painful illness. One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven on by some demon whom one can neither resist nor understand.’ He was driven by a consuming passion to write which indirectly contributed to his death but which has earned for him a place alongside the great radical writers of the past.

Everyone one of George Orwell’s books is centrally concerned with crossing a barrier, a barrier which in the end divides man from himself and in every case the protagonist retreats behind it unfulfilled. Here Orwell presents himself as something of a war correspondent, but this is a correspondent who is as interested in his own reaction to events as in the events themselves. Soon we come to realize just how much emphasis is given to this orientation, for it is not too much to say that to Orwell the reality of a historical event is at least as much in his personal experience and expression of it as in its intrinsic truth. The objectivity and reality of the external world is accepted and it is the responsibility of the individual to strive to give an account of it and himself in it, true to his only yardstick, the evidence of his own sensations and perceptions. He may not get general credence for his evaluation but he will have accepted the concept of objective truth and in the process fulfilled his
responsibility to prove all things, thus displaying the freedom of his personal moral sense.

Viewing his life and achievement in perspective one cannot but derive encouragement from the story of this unusual, complex, engaging man. One has a deep sense of unfulfilled potentialities, an awareness that, had he lived, he could have accomplished much more in the fields of satire, allegory and radical journalism – fields which he had made so much his own. Unquestionably he would have gone on to write novels and essays in that spare, direct, astringent prose for which he is best remembered. Yet there is so much in his life and work for which posterity has reason to be grateful. Through his insistence on moral values in an age of materialism, his emphasis on human decency, his detestation of tyranny and intolerance and his abiding faith in the common man, he merits an honoured place in twentieth-century ideas as a man who fought throughout his career for the integrity of the human spirit. The entire weight of his energies over a span of twenty years was devoted to an insistence on fraternity, honesty and tolerance in all aspects of living and to the fraternity, honesty and tolerance in all aspects of living and to the exposure of any erosion of these values whether in language, political action, ideology or daily life. He was a man who strived honourably to guide his actions, public and private, by the truth. In doing so he gave us some fine and memorable novels, documentaries and essays and the memory of a fiercely independent and uncompromising spirit.