

C O N C L U S I O N

The present work is an intensive study of those fictional works of Stephen Crane and Ernest Hemingway which deal with war and violence. The term 'war' as used in this dissertation implies not only the actual military conflicts but also its effects on the psychological and spiritual life of the characters involved in or associated with wars. War is thus, seen as a central organizing principle in the fiction of Crane and Hemingway. As maintained in the foregoing chapters, the study is comparative in orientation.

The assumption behind bringing together these two major-American novelists is that war-fiction is also a sub-genre of American fiction tradition. The argument further developed, implies that war is an expressive metaphor for the 'American Experience'. Since preoccupation with war and violence is common to the art of both Crane and Hemingway, I have tried to examine Crane's influence on Hemingway's fiction. Keeping this purpose in mind, I have analysed the plot-structures, characters, themes and stylistic features in the war-fiction of Crane and Hemingway.

As seen earlier, I have divided this dissertation into four chapters and each chapter takes up a separate theme for careful examination. The first chapter examines the outstanding features of plot construction in the war fiction of

Crane and Hemingway. My effort has been to discover central organizing principle underlying their plot-structures and to identify the distinctive features of their plots. The next chapter on characters establishes similarities in their art of characterization. The chapter dealing with themes lists up their major thematic concerns and examines their attitude to common thematic preoccupations. Among the themes analysed here are war and violence, the nexus between war and life, death and destiny, Nature, Courage and heroism, ethics and alienation. This chapter establishes that Hemingway shows the closest affinity with Crane at the level of themes. The chapter dealing with style analyses the syntactical structures, sensory depictions, metaphors, imagery and other narrative techniques employed by Crane and Hemingway.

The critical analysis of the thematic and stylistic features in the war-fiction of Crane and Hemingway establishes that their plots mainly consist of exciting interactions between violent external forces and their protagonists, between ruthless machines and men. The plots are largely preoccupied with the depiction of the individual and collective suffering, variegated emotional reactions and material and moral confusions following the violent encounters. The action mostly takes place in the midst of Nature and quite often Nature, with its ambivalent attitude, complicates the action in their works. Both Crane and Hemingway employ fatal wounds as a device for the development

of their plots. They build episodic plots linking together significant events concerning the lives of their protagonists. The central, structuring principle in the plots of these two novelists is to show the absurdity in the lives of their protagonists and to emphasize the destructive, irrational nature of life and the universe.

It also establishes marked similarities in their art of characterization. The analysis shows that the characters of both the novelists are products of crises who struggle to cope with formidable challenges by deploying the qualities of heroism and stoicism. They have distinctly psychological dimension about them. They are beset with comparable situations and adopt identical attitude to external pressures. The fiction of Crane and Hemingway is peopled with a large number of unidentified characters, angry, impatient and pitiable. We come across the recurrent depiction of the wounded and dying soldiers, weary, worn out and helpless. Through the analysis of characterization, the dissertation establishes that Hemingway belongs to the tradition of war-fiction founded by Crane.

As a result of careful analysis of the major themes in the war-fiction of Crane and Hemingway, it is established that their war-fiction treats similar themes like war and violence, war as a metaphor of life, Nature and its ambivalences, morality and alienation. It establishes the

fact that their perceptions regarding these phenomena have much in common. It shows that both the novelists adopt questioning attitude to conventional morality. They also share, to some extent, the naturalistic view of the impact of the external forces on human destiny.

The dissertation establishes that both Crane and Hemingway employ comparable stylistic and narrative devices. Both make considerable use of imagery and symbols in their war-fiction. Like Crane, Hemingway too, frames simple, syntactical structures and sets high value on the directness of style. The use of irony and contrast is quite dominant in the works of both the artists. They practise some naturalistic techniques in some of their novels. The tendency to use symbolism is common to the art of both the novelists.

I hope it has been established in my dissertation that Stephen Crane exerted influence on the literary sensibility of Ernest Hemingway. This study of the plots, characters, themes and style in the war-fiction of Crane and Hemingway shows, I hope, that the two writers form a kind of common pattern in writing about war, and that they form a sub-tradition in American fiction dealing with the theme of violence. Crane anticipates most of the thematic preoccupations and stylistic features which distinguish Hemingway's war-fiction. In that sense, Crane is the most important predecessor of

Ernest Hemingway. Moreover, the sub-tradition of American fiction which the two writers ably represent stands out as an important aspect of the American Experience. Viewed in this perspective, Crane's The Red Badge of Courage acquires a greater importance as a fictional classic than it has been ascribed to it so far. In conclusion, therefore, it can be said that with Hawthorne and Melville, Crane is one of the founders of the tradition of the American novel. Similarly, being an able successor to Crane, Hemingway has a greater centrality to modern American novel than has been recognized. In any case, with Dos Passos and Mailer, Crane and Hemingway can be considered to be the most important war-novelists in America. If, as argued in this dissertation, war is seen as a metaphor for the American way of life, Crane and Hemingway can be counted among the major literary artists voicing the American experience. Moreover, it can be concluded that a comparative study of these two novelists tells us a little more about each of them; and this 'little more knowledge' justifies a comparative study of the present kind.