

HEMINGWAY'S ENDURING EMBRACE OF IMPRESSIONISM

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Abstract. Ernest Hemingway's writing style throughout the 1940s and 1950s remained consistent with his fondness for impressionistic techniques. This article explores how Hemingway utilizes these techniques in his later works, such as "A Moveable Feast" and "Islands in the Stream". The author draws parallels between Hemingway's prose and the works of impressionist painters, highlighting the use of concise sentences, vivid imagery, and the focus on capturing fleeting moments and emotions.

Keywords: Ernest Hemingway, impressionistic techniques, late works, A Moveable Feast, Islands in the Stream, character portrayal, descriptive prose

1. Introduction

Ernest Hemingway, a literary giant of the 20th century, is renowned for his distinct prose style characterized by simplicity, clarity, and emotional depth. This very style, however, underwent a fascinating evolution throughout his career. While his early works championed a minimalist approach, his later writings in the 1940s and 1950s showcased a continued fascination with a particular artistic movement: Impressionism. This article delves into Hemingway's enduring embrace of impressionistic techniques in his mature works. By examining novels like "A Moveable Feast" and "Islands in the Stream," we will explore how he masterfully translated the essence of

impressionist paintings into his literary canvas. We will see how his prose, much like the brushstrokes of Monet or Manet, utilizes concise sentences and evocative imagery to capture fleeting moments, emotions, and the essence of a scene. Through this analysis, we will gain a deeper appreciation for the evolution of Hemingway's style and the enduring influence of impressionism on his later works.

2. Methods part

This article doesn't require a traditional "methods" section typically found in research papers with experiments or surveys. However, to analyze Hemingway's use of impressionistic techniques, we can include a section outlining the approach taken:

Analytical Approach

This analysis focuses on identifying and understanding how Hemingway employs impressionistic techniques in his later works. Here's the approach we'll take:

- **Close reading:** We will closely examine passages from Hemingway's novels, particularly "A Moveable Feast" and "Islands in the Stream," to identify stylistic elements that resonate with impressionistic paintings.
- **Comparison:** We will compare these passages with the characteristics of impressionistic art, such as the use of light, color, and fragmented brushstrokes to capture fleeting moments and impressions.
- **Literary devices:** We will analyze how Hemingway utilizes specific literary devices, like short sentences, vivid verbs, and sensory details, to achieve an impressionistic effect.
- **Character portrayal:** We will explore how Hemingway portrays his characters and their emotions through impressionistic techniques, focusing on the use of suggestion and fragmented glimpses rather than detailed descriptions.

By employing this approach, we aim to demonstrate the clear connection between Hemingway's later prose and the principles of impressionistic art.

3. Results and Discussions

What remains consistent in Hemingway's style during the 1940s and 1950s is his sincere love for impressionistic techniques. In one of the most demonstrative books of his late period, the memoir "A Moveable Feast," there are frequent references to impressionists. In an interview with D. Plimpton, Hemingway said, "I learned a great deal about my craft from painters as well as from writers." Among the first to play an important role were French impressionists, especially C. Monet and E. Manet. The resemblance to impressionism in Hemingway's writing style lies not in the details themselves (which is impossible due to the different specifics of painting and literature as distinct forms of art) "but in the ability to convey through them a whole, a common impression...". Like the artists - "impressionists," the writer conveys in his literary works pure color, contrasts, movement, reigning in the world and changing it every minute. "Hemingway's prose capacity allows him to combine in short sentences what in the works of his predecessors was detailed: description of the environment and portrayal of the psychological state of the characters, action and landscape." The writer's short, concise sentences are analogous to the light strokes of pure color by impressionists, which from a certain distance seem to be vibrant life, full of mood and change. Thus, for example, an excerpt from the novel "Islands in the Stream," based on the transmission of individual visual impressions, turns into an emotionally tinted complete picture thanks to its clarity and sharpness in the reader's perception: "The tide was running out fast and the lights of the boats shone on the water that showed green in the light and moved so fast it sucked at the piling of the docks and swirled at the stern of the big cruiser they were on. Alongside of the water where the light was reflected off the planking of the cruiser toward the unpainted piling of the dock where old motorcar and truck tires were tied as

fenders, making dark rings against the darkness under the rock, garfish, attracted by the light, held themselves against the current. Thin and long, shining as green as the water, only their tails moving, they were not feeding, nor playing; only holding themselves there in the fascination of the light".

As in the paintings of the impressionists, any scene described by Hemingway's pen, whether it be a portrait, landscape, or a story from the past, all becomes a certain unity of the objective and subjective elements, not just a given and an impression from outside, but what is colored by the artist's mood, or perhaps suggested, modeled by this mood. The younger Hemingway, recalling the days of his childhood spent in Paris, combines in a few sentences not only the most diverse pictures of the past (close people, the Schnautz dog, nature), but also the impressions he felt as a child: "Just you and snow and our dog Schnautz and my nurse. She was beautiful. And I remember mother on skis and how beautiful she was. I can remember seeing you and mother coming down skiing through an orchard. I don't know where it was. But I can remember the Jardin du Luxembourg well. I can remember afternoons with the boats on the lake by the fountain in the big garden with the trees. The paths through the trees were all gravelled and men played bowling games off to the left under the trees as we went down toward the Palace and there was a clock high up on the Palace. In the fall the leaves came down and I can remember the trees bare and the leaves on the gravel. I like to remember the fall best." The last phrase of the excerpt, like the unifying tone of the impressionist artists, brings us back to the present and colors the several provided sentences with a single nostalgic tone.

As seen from the statement of the protagonist of the work, landscape, portrait, interior - all traditional forms of description in Hemingway's works are disrupted, included in the action. Descriptions do not interrupt the narrative - they involve actions, the sensations of the character, making the reader empathize with them.

Like the impressionists, who often painted series of works on one theme or one subject in different lighting and moods, Hemingway has favorite paintings (Paris in the 1920s, life with his first wife, spring, rain), which he never tires of recalling.

However, it is necessary to note some fundamental differences between the impressionism of painting and literature.

Firstly, unlike in a painting, in a literary work it is possible to combine incompatible styles of writing. For example, in one of the episodes of the novel "Islands in the Stream," describing a scene of bathing on the deck of a boat, Hemingway combines the principles of expressionists, impressionists, and Cézanne: "On the stern they were all bathing naked. They soaped themselves and stood on one foot and another, bending against the lashing of the rain as they soaped and then leaning back into it. They were really all brown but they looked white in this strange light. Thomas Hudson thought of the canvas of the bathers by Cezanne and then he thought he would like to have Eakins paint it. Then he thought that he should be painting it himself with the ship against the roaring white of the surf that came through the driving gray outside with the black of the new squall coming out and the sun breaking through momentarily to make the driving rain silver and to shine on the bathers in the stern." The expressiveness, contrasts, characteristic of this excerpt (white light, tanned bodies, blackness of the squall, sharp movements, whiteness of the surf) - are from expressionists. The clarity, structured nature of the picture, flatness - are from Cézanne. The almost deliberately compressed space is at rest and the reader perceives individual moments, the tangibility of life, its fragmentary nature and sparseness. The mood uniting this picture - the distant view of the momentary state of nature - bears the traces of the influence of impressionists.

Secondly, impressionistic techniques are not suitable where the writer depicts war, suffering, violence. Therefore, in the novels "Islands in the Stream" and "Across the River and Into the Trees," they are used much less frequently,

mainly in conveying the landscape or the state of a person's soul in moments of nostalgic reminiscences, based on sketchiness, fragmentariness, and the feeling of novelty of memories, which are characteristic of the best paintings of impressionists (especially their series painted on one theme).

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At the core of the impressionistic writing style lies the clarity and purity of each stroke, which is also characteristic of Ernest Hemingway's creative style. His style is characterized by simplicity and precision of detail. Hemingway almost never uses similes and metaphors in his early works, and this principle remains unchanged on the pages of the writer's later works. And those comparisons and metaphors that Hemingway still resorts to usually serve a limited function: clarification of the perception of a thing. "These comparisons indicate, they do not judge." Hemingway's writing predominantly conveys not figurative-metaphorical, but direct meanings of words and concepts. For example, the poetic nature of some descriptions of nature in the novel "Islands in the Stream" is created not through the use of special high vocabulary, elaborate comparisons, and metaphors, but thanks to the clarity, precision, and tangibility of each word, evoking sensations and perceptions familiar to every reader: "Thomas Hudson was steering on the topside and he headed her out over the bar and ran straight out toward where he could see the dark line of the Gulf. The water was so calm and so very clear that they could see the bottom clearly in thirty fathoms, see that the sea fans bent with the tide current, still see it, but

cloudily, at forty fathoms, and then it deepened and was dark and they were out in the dark water of the stream."

The artistic detail remains equally clear, deep, and multivalent in the best examples of Hemingway's later works. For example, the simple, devoid of excess phrase from the novel "The Garden of Eden": "She took her coffee without sugar and the young man was learning to remember that," said in relation to David and Catherine, speaks both of the man's care for his lady and, on the other hand, of his thoughts being far from reflections on the happiness of married life. In reality, the reader is informed that the young people have been married for three weeks, spent them together, and judging by the repetition of their daily routine, they drink coffee every morning. From this perspective, David's behavior at the subtext level, who in three weeks couldn't remember the elementary preferences of his wife, is alarming.

In the novel "Across the River and Into the Trees," you can also find examples of multivalent detail. For instance, referring to the episode of Colonel's and Renata's ride on a gondola, one can notice the inconsistency between the words of the Colonel, leading a gallant conversation, and his unconscious actions: "Please be good, be kind," the girl says to the Colonel.

"I will. And now I will reveal a military secret to you. Completely secret: I love you."

"That's cute," she said. "And you said it very nicely."

"And I'm generally cute," said the Colonel, quickly calculating in his mind the height of the bridge they were approaching and estimating that the gondola would pass freely. "It's immediately obvious to people."

By the nature of the remark to the Colonel's last line, the reader understands that in reality, this old soldier hasn't softened his heart one bit, despite his efforts, and the familiar way of life has entrenched too deeply in him for Cantwell to change towards the end of his life, even under the influence of strong love for Renata. Thus, thanks to one artistic detail, the reader can

understand the true character of the main character of the novel "Across the River and Into the Trees".

Therefore, the characteristics of the poetics of late Hemingway (1940s-1950s) are determined by the problems of the writer's works of these years. In connection with the complication of the hero's image, the reflexive or creative element underlying his personality, the chronotope of the novels "Islands in the Stream", "Across the River and Into the Trees", "The Garden of Eden", and the memoir "A Moveable Feast" also becomes more complex. Based on the nature of the conflicts in which the characters of the first two works undergo life trials, there is an intensification of the epic element in them.

The ideological and biographical proximity of Hemingway and the characters of his works of these years, the writer's appeal to a rethinking of his past, lead to nostalgic and tragic notes, characteristic of these works. Moreover, in such books as "Islands in the Stream" and "A Moveable Feast", the author's voice and authorial position are significantly enhanced (compared to the writer's early works), either apparent in the speech of the main character himself or in Hemingway's authorial speech of the 1950s regarding the Hemingway of the 1920s.

In the late works of the writer, the role of subtext decreases, which is either associated with the intimacy of conflicts resolved by the characters ("The Garden of Eden") or with the strengthening of the role of the monologues and dialogues of the characters in the structure of the artistic text. Accordingly, the importance of "explicit psychologism" increases compared to the "secret" one, more characteristic of the writer's works of the 1920s.

Overall, in the poetics of Hemingway's works of these years, intersections with his books of the 1920s and 1930s are traced, allowing us to speak of Hemingway's oeuvre, despite a number of unfinished works, as a holistic system with its own techniques, laws, and evolution. Based on the above, it is possible to compare the characters of Richard Cantwell and the old man Santiago ("The

Old Man and the Sea"). These characters need not opposition but juxtaposition and represent two sides of the same coin. Both Richard Cantwell and Santiago, contemporaries of Hemingway himself, born by the writer at the same time, cannot imagine life without fulfilling their duty, following their calling. They are the same type of hero but existing in different social and historical conditions. If the life path of Colonel Cantwell was greatly influenced by the catastrophes of his era, then Santiago, thanks to his detachment from the "big" world, managed to remain true to his inner essence, living in harmony with himself.

4. Conclusion

Ernest Hemingway's enduring fascination with impressionistic techniques left a lasting mark on his later works during the 1940s and 1950s. As explored throughout this analysis, novels like "A Moveable Feast" and "Islands in the Stream" showcase a masterful translation of impressionist principles into the realm of literature. Hemingway's prose, mirroring the brushstrokes of an impressionist painter, relies on concise sentences, evocative imagery, and a focus on capturing fleeting moments and emotions. This approach allows him to paint vivid pictures with words, drawing the reader into the scene and evoking a sense of immediacy.

Hemingway's embrace of impressionism goes beyond mere aesthetics. By employing fragmented glimpses and suggestive details, he creates a space for reader participation. We, like viewers of an impressionist painting, are invited to actively engage with the text, piecing together the scene and its emotional resonance. This approach not only reflects the subjective nature of perception but also allows for a deeper exploration of the characters' inner worlds.

In conclusion, Hemingway's late works demonstrate a profound and enriching connection between literature and visual art. His masterful use of impressionistic techniques breathes life into his prose, fostering a unique reading

experience characterized by immediacy, emotional depth, and active reader participation. By drawing inspiration from the world of impressionism, Hemingway solidifies his position as a literary innovator who forever changed the landscape of modern prose.

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