

10

The Compilation of Loss: A Critique of Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not*

RUFUS SATHISH KUMAR & K. RAVICHANDRAN

ABSTRACT

This paper makes an endeavor to divulge a choice of losses as experienced by the protagonist in Hemingway's award winning novel *To Have and Have Not* which is slated with an undemanding and unswerving language style and technique. Loss is an unavoidable ingredient on the life of human being. One has to confront the component of loss with unwavering corporal and cerebral grounds. Numerous personalities fail to trounce this constituent of loss at their life and endure a gargantuan debacle. Loss is the instantaneous footstep of accomplishment at all phases of life. The subterfuge of loss in profuse cases crafts unrivaled luminaries and in pitiable cases engenders nastiest traits. The intrusion of loss in the life of mankind exemplifies the authentic characters of the kindred in candid without putting out of sight. One can comprehend and clutch the indisputable philosophy of life only through the admittance of lose in his life.

In the novel *To Have and Have Not*, Hemingway depicts an assortment of loss by giving preference to the foremost character, Harry Morgan. Some of the losses cited in the novel are loss of love, loss of trustiness, financial loss, physical loss, loss of justice, loss of friendship, unpredicted loss, loss of peace, loss of moral, loss of equality, loss of individuality, loss of secularism, loss of loyalty, loss of approachability, and loss of societal responsibility. These are some of the compilation of loss publicised in the novel. With the ingress of loss in the life of Harry Morgan, these bunches of defeat is found with the textual confirmation. Many researchers unearth these losses in different structure based on the attitudes of the characters in the novels of Hemingway. By

reading the works of contemporary writers, it is known that loss is a mandatory one which gives moral turnouts in the story. These turnouts are the bona fide rationale at the rear of the success of the novel.

Keywords: potential, animosity, physical, money, distrust, and injustice.

Hemingway, a man of down-to-earth encounters a feasible life of an ordinary individual and he has exploited an unsophisticated language technique in his work of art. He was born on July 21, 1899, in Oak Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. During his childhood days, he has not put up with a sensation of loss and grief because he was born in a wealthy family. His parents have not permitted this component of loss to get closer to Hemingway. However at some point in his teen and youth, he comes into contact with the root of loss and grief at various shapes and slopes. When he opts to emerge of his family acquaintance, he starts to experience the trouncing and despondency in his life. From the instigation of his adolescence, he endures an album of loss despite Hemingway has upright life partners and virtuous friendships.

Loss categorises under two sorts unanimously by the foremost psychologist, philosophers and critics. One is predictable loss and the other one is unpredictable loss. There is an incalculable discrepancy in the midst of these two losses. These two losses are not innovative to the humankind because loss is well known and unavoidable to subsist on this earth. Predictable losses are illness, death, physical pain, financial loss, incidents, and family issues. The unpredictable losses are accidents, sudden occurrences of pains in terms of physical and intellectual. To the core it is understandable that loss and grief is chained with everyone's life. Ernest Miller Hemingway in the novel *To Have and Have Not* describes the magnitude and the manifestation of loss at various forms through his characters.

Significant losses, such as the death of nearest and dearest, the breakup of a close relationship or friendship, or the loss of hopes and dreams, are some of life's most traumatic occurrences. The protagonist Harry Morgan stands out as prototype who has experienced different forms of losses in the novel. The researcher finds loss and grief at various places in the novel. Likewise the novel is peppered with humour, love, war, justice, and individuality that are exposed with the assistance of loss and grief in the novel *To Have and Have Not*. This folder of loss makes the character to act viciously and shows the factual motive of Harry's chipping in the illicit work for money. By the entry of loss in the life of Harry, a reader can umpire the ultimate temperament and the moral of the novel. The nucleus of the novel enumerates the loss and grief of the characters.

In Hemingway's novels, the impression of loss is directly proportional to the theory of Iceberg. This theory brings forth the art of loss on which Hemingway reflects his experience. In the sense of Hemingway, a reader understands that the loss falls on two dimensions. One is temporary and another one is permanent. The temporary loss is for some existence whereas the permanent loss is enduring. This theory of omission is used as a provisional loss because a reader can easily locate and able to recollect the piece of story which has gone astray in the novel. Accordingly the Iceberg theory is explained by Hemingway in *Death in the Afternoon* as:

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. (Hemingway, 1933, p.182)

This class of loss is found in all his writings. The documentary loss and the loss of important elements of the theories and characters possibly find the way to explore Hemingway's perfectibility of exploiting the unique technique in

the novel. In this novel Hemingway declares the love between Harry Morgan and his wife Marie who is 45 years old. It is said in the novel that Harry was more trustworthy to his wife Marie than any other characters in the story. He always shares his thoughts, worries and important secrets with his wife though he engaged in illegal work of smuggling. Marie feels that she is very lucky to have a husband like Harry as his husband and helps him for his boat trip and in other pertinent works of his profession. She never questioned about his husband's unlawful work and money making. Throughout the novel, a reader is exposed with a good sagacious love between these couples. Hemingway's love is true though his wife is too old:

'You're funny. Harry, I wish you didn't have to go. I wish you didn't ever have to go. Who's the best you ever did it with?'

'You'

'You lie. You always lie to me. There. There. There.'

'No. You're the best.'

'I'm old.'

'You'll never be old.'

'I've had that thing.'

'That don't make no difference when a woman's any good.'

(Hemingway, 2004, p.80)

This love episode of Hemingway changes its track to incredulity. The researcher has slated this conversion by the attitude of the characters and the distrusting words of Marie who is basically a prostitute before getting wedded to Harry Morgan. A loss of love and suspect is open to the reader by the work of Marie. In the novel *To Have and Have Not*, Harry's wife Marie utters her worries about her physical appearance when Harry comes back to home in bewilderment. Her unconditioned labour towards her husband makes an untrusting love affair between them. In fact she is neither traumatised nor gets worried

by the entry of her husband with a big injury to the bed. The behavior of Marie is quiet anomalous in this issue. Though he is injured and without an arm, Marie prepared for his boat trip which creates a bizarre situation in the novel. Their life together up to this point in the novel mentioned seems to have been composed primarily of travel and aimless self-gratification. She does not seem to have the strength to resist his demands, but she is aware of her past life. This peculiar behavior of Marie in the novel shows the loss in love between Marie and Harry:

‘What have the girls got to say about what you do?’ Harry said.

‘They got no business to bother you.’

‘You know how they are. You know young girls are that way.

Listen, if you make a good trip, we will go to New Orleans, should we?’ (Hemingway, 2004, p.82)

Again she continues to show her meagerness in her love towards Harry. She replicates the word “Lucky” often in her one-to-one with Harry to show her allegiance. She needs to tell him that her love is everlasting and her destiny is to love him: “I know what I’ve got and what I’ve had. I’ve been a lucky woman.” (Hemingway, 2004, p.81) These lines of Hemingway express the loss of real love between the lovers in the novel.

“Loss” is not an acceptable element by Hemingway at a particular stage in his novels. He cursed loss because it is intolerable to humankind especially to the poor hard workers in the society. He shows his inconvenience powerfully through his inscription. In *The Old Man and the Sea*, Hemingway through his character Santiago proves the unfeigned twinge of loss and also his opposite stand against loss. He makes public that it is not easy to get tolerated with the loss. To the maximum he states that it is better to die instead of getting destroyed.

According to Hemingway, it is quiet convoluted for an individual to face the domineering society with loss. In *The Old Man and the Sea* the protagonist suffers utmost because of loss in

his profession and he fails to make money. He is unable to prove the society that he is not an unlucky person at the aperture of the novel. This made the character Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea* to utter the statement: "But man is not made for defeat," he said. "A man can be destroyed but not defeated" (Hemingway, 2009, p.51). The sentences by Hemingway show us that he is against loss in the case of people who endeavor to get a financial equality. But this is not happens in all the stages of the novels of Hemingway.

Physical loss is a talk able concept in this novel. Loss is an important precipitant factor for depression. Loss can happen through all means to human life but physical lose is the crucial one. Physical loss makes a person to depend fully on another individual for their domestic, foreign and essential needs. This loss makes a person contingent and arrests him in a particular stage. In this novel, the protagonist is a man who ventures to sea for his business and he is partly a fisher man. Moreover a fisher man or a man who engages in the seas has to maintain a perfect physical fitness. The inability of his physical body fetches him a great loss and it can make the life of an individual messy. In fact the protagonist Harry Morgan is ashamed and feels shy of his physical loss in the novel. He is not set to face the people with his immense loss of his arm. He tries to prove the society about his super-human skill without his arms. He entered the home and crawls into the bed. He is not ready to reveal the truth to his beloved wife whom she loves to the best. He tries to hide his injured arms by wearing a hook in the place of his missing arm. A sensible reader could understand the real stigma of loss: "When he came in the house he did not turn on the light but took off his shoes in the hall and went up the bare stairs in his stocking feet. He undressed and got into bed wearing only his undershirt, before his wife woke". (Hemingway, 2004, p.79)

The physical loss of Harry brings about great attitudinal changes in his behavior domestically. He starts to show his

uneasiness through his conversation. He first exposes his tenseness and edginess towards his wife whom he loves in deep. This behavioural change of Harry in the novel edifies the soreness of physical loss: “..... She leaned over the table and kissed him on the mouth. ‘Leave me alone,’ Harry said. ‘I got to think.’” (Hemingway, 2004, p.89)

In this novel *To Have and Have Not*, Harry who is in true love with Marie has not used any impolite words in the novel. But he starts to do this only because of his physical loss. The politeness of the character is thrown away to the dust by this loss. Loss makes a person to drop his liability in his domestic and social lives. The life filled with a plethora of incidents makes an individual to suffer in the whirlpool of etiology of depression. It is assumed that exposure to uncontrollable stressors induces a feeling of loss of control which may result in a depressive behavioral state. This physical loss is ample evidence to portrait the reason for psychological changes on an individual life.

Loss has the ability to touch, disturb and destroy the confidence of a person easily. The loss may be physical or mental but the result it makes is very ominous. Confidence is a key for an individual to lead and to be a triumphant in a normal in the society. Confidence can be described as a belief in one’s ability to succeed. Confidence is extremely imperative almost in every aspect of one’s lives, yet so many people struggle to find it. Sadly, this can be a vicious circle: people who lack confidence can find it difficult to become successful one. Hemingway’s character Wesley in this novel suffers on account of the lack of confidence in his profession. Wesley is a new and third-person narrator enters in the part two of the novel. He acts as the victim of loss in the novel. He is unable to endure the pain and the sufferings of the loss. Hence he utters:

‘I got confidence,’ the nigger said. ‘But the way this trip gone I ain’t got confidence no more.’

‘How’s your leg?’

‘It hurts me all the time.’ (Hemingway, 2004, p.49)

One of the most difficult tasks in risk management is to set the appropriate level of understanding to cover and manage unexpected losses in human life. Unpredicted loss and grief in human life turns the whole story in different direction against the expectations of a person. The unpredicted loss makes a person to retort at once without a hiatus. But in some situations loss makes a person to be stationary. Both reactions depend upon the strength of the loss and person's ability. Hemingway through this novel pictures the unpredicted loss and strange attitude of the character. Harry is not ready to linger and to get the deal of Chinese because he is bothered with the appalling note and the photo shown to him by a small boy. He loses his thinking stuff and counters instantaneously without a break and not thinking about the dependability of the message and the photo. Hence this kind of unexpected loss makes a person in anarchy. It never allows a person to think and react. This loss puts a break between mind and physic. Finally it makes an individual to go barmy in his physical and intellectual behavior. Harry who involves at the illegitimate profession of smuggling on the waters for the sake of money is ready to leave the deal and tries to come out from the hands of unexpected loss. As Harry does:

All right. It was a close-up picture of the head and the chest of a dead nigger with his throat cut clear across from ear to ear and then stitched up neat and a card on his chest saying in Spanish: 'This is what we do to Lenguas largas.'
'Who gave it to you?' I asked Frankie.

(Hemingway, 2004, p.27)

The above expression of Harry shows the resultant of unexpected loss in his profession. Anything can be the victims of this loss. Time is not allotted to handle these loss and to guess the cause for the loss. Death is an unexpected loss in the case of teen and youth but the death is an expected one in the average life of a person. Hence, humankind life is a mixture of both losses.

Financial loss is a debatable element in this novel. This financial loss makes the protagonist Harry to move out of his idea. Harry is very keen on his protocol of doing his profession. At first Harry snubs to smuggle anything on his charter boat "that talks." This shows his loyalty towards humankind though he does an illegal profession: "Listen,' I said. 'I told you I didn't carry anything that can talk. Sacked liquor can't talk. Demijohns can't talk. There's other things that can't talk. Men can talk.'" (Hemingway, 2004, p.4) This financial loss makes the characters in the novel to juxtapose to justice. Anti-social works are encouraged and practiced in the novel for the sake of money. When Harry was cheated by Johnson, he is unable to tolerate the financial loss and starts his smuggling with the men on the seas:

'You carry anything?' Frankie asked.

'Sure,' I said. 'I can't choose now.'

'Anything?'

'Sure.'

'I'll see,' Frankie said. 'Where will you be?'

'I'll be at the Perla,' I told him. 'I have to eat.'

(Hemingway, 2004, p.19)

In fact Harry's friends get surprised to see him who is ready to smuggle men on his boat. Especially his friend Frankie thinks it may be a day dream. Money plays the primordial role on the life of everyone. The importance of money in human life is similar to the importance of food for the body. The only problem is that money does not come just like that to any person by any amount of wishing, praying or wanting. One has to toil hard and compete with fellow human beings to earn money as the supply of money is limited in this world but the demand of money is unlimited. Hence, money which is a solution to all our problems actually becomes the root of all problems for most people. Most people fail to strike a balance between earning and enjoying money. They believe that more money means more joy. Hence,

they remain working all the time and undergo all sorts of sufferings to earn more money. Hemingway compares the financial loss of a person to hell: "Hell, I didn't even have enough money to put in gas. It was a hell of a note, all right. Some Mr. Johnson." (Hemingway, 2004, p.19) The financial loss not only makes a person to work without postponement but it leads a person to slay others in a malicious manner. Many a domestic murder and terrorism are due to the financial reasons. In the novel *To Have and Have Not*, Hemingway illustrates the proper reason for the hero's smuggling and assassination of the person on the deck: "I got his arm around behind him and came up on it but I brought it too far because I felt it go." (Hemingway, 2004, p.38) Harry kills Mr. Sing anyway by choking him and breaking his neck, spooking the boy driver on the boat: "I held him quiet just a second, and then I laid him down across the stern. He lay there, face up, quiet in his good clothes, with his feet in the cockpit; and I left him." (Hemingway, 2004, p.38)

Loss of potentiality is portrayed in the lines of Hemingway through the rejoinder of the characters in the novel. When a character suffers from a problem, Hemingway applies escapism in the novel and makes the character to find remedy for the problem with the help of external sources. The character in the story does not try to find solution individually with his potential. This is the place where a reader feels the loss of potentiality in the lines of Hemingway. Though he is overflowing with potential, Hemingway does not make his characters to do so. Potentiality is ubiquitous in our everyday thought about and dealing with the world. Dispositions, abilities and skills are potentialities. All such properties have something in common: they enable a thing to behave in certain specific ways; if anyone is looking for sources of possibility in things, they are the most promising candidates. The characters in the novel are not performing as the most promising peoples, instead

they expose their inability to face and solve problems. The character named Richard Gordon consumes alcohol and cannot feel better. He continues with the same level of worries and grief:

Standing at the bar, Richard Gordon drank three ojen specials but he felt no better; the opaque, sweetish, cold, licorice-tasting drink did not make him feel any different.

‘Give me something else,’ he said to the bartender.

‘Whatsa matter? You no like a ojen special?’ the proprietior asked.

‘You no feel good?’

‘No.’ (Hemingway, 2004, p.136)

Loss is an inseparable part of life. If one has to lead an honest life without fear, he has to accept the loss which is ultimately inevitable. Loss should not make a person to live in fear, but rather it should make a person to live in the very best way. It is important for a person to not “bury his head in the sand” and instead, to make responsible preparations including financial and legal arrangements, as well as sharing of his wishes with his family and friends. By understanding the rites and rituals that accompany a loss in one’s culture, religion or spiritual group, an individual can better prepare for the dying and grieving process. Although there are some commonalities in response to loss, there is no universally predictable emotional trajectory, and the range of effects, thoughts, and behaviors experienced is quite malleable. According to the Holy Bible in Matthews 5:4, those who experience loss and mourn would be blessed: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Holy Bible, 1973, p.671)

Thus Hemingway at his best has delineated the state of loss in his novel *To Have and Have Not* which encapsulates the various layers of loss and its psychological bearings. Through this novel, Hemingway has established himself as the messiah who offers remedy to wounded souls. Further he instills the fact that loss and suffering are the part and parcel of human beings. Therefore we have to accept and anticipate such setbacks at certain points

in our life and human beings should not get annoyed by it rather they should prepare themselves to face such ordeals with bold hearts. Hemingway has skillfully exploited the theme with a social vision and mission to mitigate the unnecessary fear over such obstacles.

WORKS CITED

Hemingway, Ernest. *To Have and Have Not*. London: Arrow Publications, 2004. Print.

..... *Death in the Afternoon* (London: Penguin, 1933).

..... *The Old Man and the Sea*. Bangalore: Harrows Publications, 2009. Print.

Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV, Copyright-1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society, Colorado Springs, Co 80921 – 3696.