

Tribhuvan University

“Epic Struggle of Common Man in Ernest Hemingway’s Short Stories”

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of
English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

by

Nagendra Neupane

Roll No: 400310

T.U. Regd. No.: 6-2-205-56-2008

July 2018

Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled,
“Epic Struggle in Ernest Hemingway’s Short Stories”, is my original work carried out
as a Master’s student at the Department of English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus
except to the extent that assistance from others in the thesis’s design
and conception or in presentation style, and linguistic
expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no
material which led to a substantial extent has been accepted for
the award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other
educational institution, except where due acknowledgement
is made in the thesis.

Nagendra Neupane

July 2018

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Letter of Approval

This Thesis Entitled “Epic Struggle in Ernest Hemingway’s Short Stories”,
Submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, by Nagendra
Neupane has Been Approved by the Undersigned Members of the Research
Committee.

.....

Prof. Dr. Anand Sharma
Supervisor

.....

External Examiner

.....

Mr. Pradipraj Sharma

Head

Department of English

Date:

Acknowledgements

I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Anand Sharma, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, for being generous in offering corrections, criticisms, and helpful suggestions in bringing this work to completion. I would not have been able to complete this work without his scholarly guidance and encouragement. I thank Mr. Pradipraj Sharma, head, the Department of English, for providing me constructive suggestion in the process of writing thesis.

I am grateful to professors and lecturers of the Department of English for providing me their suggestions and the source materials as long as I need for the successful completion of this work. I have been encouraged by their continuing assistance and inspiration till the finalization of this work. I want to heartily thank my supervisor and external examiner who helped me to complete my thesis. Moreover, my family and all the friends have also been helpful in providing me their assistance and companion all the time and in every way.

July 2018

Nagendra Neupane

Abstract

The thesis is about the epic struggle of the characters in Hemingway's two stories: "The Undefeated" and "Now I Lay Me." Epic struggle is not only found in epic but also in every piece of literature including short stories. Epic features are available in common people. However, unlike epic heroes who were super powerful and undefeatable, modern heroes are attempting to find the meanings in their life by struggling and individualizing. Mahabharata, Ramayana, Homer's Epics are examples of epics in which the heroes are super powerful; they are able to fight against unimaginable demons. The heroes in epic experience many struggles for giving justice to the people or sometimes themselves.

Ernest Hemingway's short stories "The Undefeated" and "Now I Lay Me" are about the issue of epic struggle of a common person in the pursuit of living. The characters in the stories face many challenges and attempt to live meaningful life. "The Undefeated" deals with the struggle of Manuel who fights rigorously despite his old age to prove himself how capable he is despite so many adversities. Similarly, in "Now I Lay Me" Signor Tenente plays crucial role by searching his meaning evoking his individual capacity. He fights with internal or external circumstances and realizes that internal wars of a person are more important than external ones. As he lies in the bed, he remembers that difficult situation gives lesson to live in the present. So this research explores how in the selected text the struggle of common man is no less than the epic struggle is manifested.

Table of Contents

Declaration	ii
Letter of Approval	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Introduction: “Epic Struggle of Common Man in Ernest Hemingway’s Short Stories”	1
Struggle of Manuel Garcia in “The Undefeated”	7
Nick Tenente’s Struggle and sufferings in “Now I Lay Me”	16
Conclusion: Epic Struggle in “The Undefeated” and “Now I Lay Me”	24
Works Cited	27

Introduction: “Epic Struggle of Common Man in Ernest Hemingway’s Short Stories”

The research deals with the epic struggle of the characters Ernest Hemingway two stories “The Undefeated” and “Now I Lay Me”. The researcher attempts to prove the idea that epic features are also available in common people in the contemporary societies all over the world. In ancient time, the heroes of epic were very powerful and undefeatable by any common persons or creatures though they underwent many struggles. In modern age, such superheroes are not found but their features are still similar to them such as they do not lose hope despite the adversity.

Before talking about the features of epic struggle, the researcher likes to define epic. *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines epic as a narrative poem showing heroic accomplishment showing historical, national, and religious or legendary significance. There are two types of epic: primary and secondary. Primary epic draws the characters from known stories while the secondary epic draws the characters from the poet’s invention. *Encyclopedia Britannica* writes:

Long, narrative poem in an elevated style that celebrates heroic achievement and treats themes of historical, national, religious, or legendary significance. Primary (or traditional) epics are shaped from the legends and traditions of a heroic age and are part of oral tradition; secondary (or literary) epics are written down from the beginning, and their poets adapt aspects of traditional epics. The poems of Homer are usually regarded as the first important epics and the main source of epic conventions in Western Europe. (625)

Therefore, according to the definition it can be interpreted that Homer’s poems are known as epics, which have profound influence in Western Europe. They are basis for

epic style. In modern age, however, these features have evolved because common characters might have similar actions in deep structure though they might differ in surface structure.

Julian Woods distinguishes between eastern and western epic and argues that eastern epic give commands in an effective way to the people but in the western epic does not do so. Woods states:

However, perhaps the most significant difference with respect to Western epics is the continuing allegiance the poem commands to this day as the most popular and influential of the canons of modern Hinduism. *The Mahabharata* itself claims to be one of the samhitas (collections) associated with the four Vedas, in effect a ‘fifth Veda’ (1.1.19). Its spiritual function is suggested in a colorful analogy by Abhinava Gupta, writing around 1000 A.D. Scripture, he says, ‘teaches after the fashion of a master, by giving direct commands.’

(11)

The main function of the scripture in eastern epic is to teach people by giving direct commands: do this, do that and then. This shows the demarcation line between eastern and western epic. It sometimes has a set of moral codes that the characters incorporate that guides the society accordingly.

Likewise, John Miles Foley says that epic is the main genre of the ancient writing. At that time, people writers did not think beyond epic. The writers covered historical, political, cultural, didactic and many more. In epic, group identity was more important than individual one. In other words, individual identity did not play significant role in such part of writing or literature. Foley writes: “Epic is the master-genre of the ancient world. Wherever and whenever one looks, epics had major roles

to play in ancient societies, functions that ranged from historical and political to cultural and didactic and beyond. As charters for group identity, ancient epics seem always to have been at the center of things” (17).

Foley postulates that in the twentieth century epic style has been changes to other features. He points out how there is change between ancient epic and modern epic.

The second half of the twentieth century and particularly its last few decades, have seen major shifts in the ways that we conceive of and explain ancient epic. Modern topics such as the role of women, the history of reception, Indo-European backgrounds, comparative archaeological contexts, epic and myth, epic and history, the media employed to preserve and transmit epic texts, bardic performance, and living analogues from oral epic traditions have come prominently to the fore. (17)

According to Foley, modern epics focus on the role of women, comparison of various contexts, Indo-European backgrounds, epic and history and so on. They are related to day-to-day life rather than supernatural features. If epics are written or characters are drawn from the distant past, they are used to give lesson to the modern life. In this way, it is difficult to understand the life of modern people without understanding the ancient ones from epics.

The Encyclopedia Britannica mentions some prominent features of an epic.

They are given below:

The hero is outstanding. They might be important, and historically or legendarily significant. The setting is large. It covers many nations, or the known world. The action is made of deeds of great valor or requiring

superhuman courage. Supernatural forces—gods, angels, demons—insert them in the action. It is written in a very special style (verse as opposed to prose). The poet tries to remain objective. Epic poems are believed to be supernatural and real by the hero and the villain. (626)

Richard P. Martin while talking about epic argues that that epic is a genre written in any form: “Epic is a contingent and culture-bound category. It may be poetry, prose, or some *tertium* quid, by our reckoning. It may even look like what we would call drama or lyric” (9). Thus, it is little bit diverted from the ancient writing of epic. It can be written in any style. Even it can be written in story form. Martin gives some ideas how epics are different from other genres. He postulates that the features of epic are related to other genres as well. He says that Aristotelian mimesis or imitation of real life can be one of the features but it is less important than other prominent features. Martin distinguishes epics and other form of literatures and says the characters of epics are noble or of high quality, it is in considerable length in size, many episodes, there is a combination between narration and characters’ speeches, elevated vocabulary and unusual words, it is basically tragic drama while taking help from Aristotelian ideas. Martin asserts that Homer’s writings are the best examples of epic. Martin expresses that “It is the culturally most significant and marked form in terms of its ambitions and attitudes” (16). It means epic is written with great ambitions and attitudes.

Other features of epic include the stories might be based on myth or folktale, mostly from oral tradition. Martin says:

Myth and folktale might be considered the deeper roots of epic, yet they can just as easily be synchronic and interactive with epic. It is perhaps best to think of them along a spectrum, with audience interest

the determining factor in how unspecified, as to time and place, a story can be, and what belief it engenders. A different dynamic exists between epic and praise poetry. As described by Africanists, praise-poetry is an allusive, highly compressed, and non-narrative evocation of the genealogies and successes of chieftains. (17)

In this way, epic is significant to understand with modern stories because we can find such features in modern stories in one way or another. In deep structures, such kinds of stories are found in the locality.

There are, therefore, many features of epic. They are somewhat different from modern epic because it is not possible to bring all these aspects in modern stories.

Likewise, the epic struggle mainly comes from the ancient or supernatural stories such as Homer's stories or Mahabharata's deeds or Ramayana. According to the stories, the heroes undergo many struggles for giving justice to the people or sometimes themselves. It is generally believed that such struggles are not possible to be performed by common people like us. However, if we study in detail, such achievements are taking place in daily lives that are not less than imaginative stories.

This research will explore how the notion of epic struggle is manifested in Hemingway's short stories, "The Undefeated" and "Now I Lay Me". In this research work, the researcher attempts to give the answer to the question such as why the characters are struggling, how they are similar to epic struggles and if their struggles are undeniable. Based on the issues raised by the researcher, he likes to answer that the common people also share the epic struggle, their struggle is an integral parts of whole and their struggles are undeniable because struggles encourage people to learn the lesson and be stronger.

Ernest Hemingway's short stories "The Undefeated" and "Now I Lay Me" are

about the issue of epic struggle of a common man in pursuit of living. The characters in the stories face many challenges and swing from humdrum of life to another. Yet, they do not lose their hope. As they undergo problems, they realize that hardship, failure, challenges are parts of life. Nobody can avoid them. Rather, they give some inspiration to be more bold and stronger.

“The Undefeated” is rigorous struggle of Manuel despite a number of adversities he has to face in his old age. The positivity of Manuel is noticed, as he does not get defeated physically and psychologically. He challenges the traditional ideas of basing the power or strength only physically. He proves that physical strength is nothing, if one is determined by great willingness. His continuous effort is compared to mythical characters of ancient stories such as by Homer, Valmiki or Veda Vyasa. This story is worth calling an example of epic struggle. Manuel must face challenges given by Zurito who tells him to cut off the pigtail Manuel is wearing. Manuel has to defeat a stout bull to prove how strong he is and he can continue with his job at Retana despite his old age. Eventually, he gets success to kill the bull and survive himself. His deed is no less than an epic character such as Achilles, Hercules, Arjun, Rama, etc. Although he is a common person, he manifests his knightly power in front of others. The story satirizes common tendency of human beings that they prefer war or seeing people being wounded. The spectators are not drawn to Manuel until he suffers. The suffering is inevitable for him to draw their attention.

Likewise, “Now I Lay Me” deals with the same theme that war is a means of platform to prove human being a power person. There are two characters in the story: Signor Tenente and John. Both of them are laying at night in a tent perhaps, a hospital tent, awake listening to the artillery fire in the distant. The story tells the pathetic condition of the characters during the First World War in which Hemingway himself

fought. Signor is identified with the author himself. As we listen to their stories, we find that they are fed up with the warlike situation. To some extent, they are suffering from traumatic condition.

Struggle of Manuel Garcia in “The Undefeated”

“The Undefeated” is a modern story of struggle, though there are many things in it that are prevalent in the ancient epic. In ancient epic, the heroes are very powerful and they struggle with full power to defeat their villains or antagonistic forces. They gain a lot of power while undergoing various types of suffering so that they could defeat their rivals. The particular story has also many epic features. Although the characters in the story are not quite as strong as the ancient heroes, their struggle and hope for life is not less important than older ones. Manuel Garcia, the protagonist of the story undergoes many experiences in his life as he is a bullfighter. When he goes to Don Miguel Retana’s house, in order to secure a bullfight he observes the posters pasted in the wall and finds a bull stuffed in the wall. He remembers that it is the bull, which killed his brother. Manuel and his brother’s epic struggle begin when Manuel observes:

Manuel looked up at the stuffed bull. He had seen it often before. He felt a certain family interest in it. It had killed his brother, the promising one, about nine years ago. Manuel remembered the day.

There was a brass plate on the oak shield the bull’s head was mounted on. Manuel could not read it, but he imagined it was in memory of his brother. Well, he had been a good kid. (8)

They are not ancient heroes like Arjuna, Krishna, Rama, Hercules, Achilles and so on but their struggle is no less important than the ancient heroes. They think that life moves ahead struggling with adversity though individually. Manuel lost his brother as

he was a bullfighter. Manuel imagines many things on behalf of his dead brother. There used to be many warriors in the ancient epic who would be killed in childhood. For example, Arjuna's son Abhimanyu was killed in war in vicious circle in the Mahabharata when he was only a child.

Edward Mendelson criticizes Hemingway's stories as the reflection of moral code. In other words, the author wants to improve the societies by showing the moral code of the characters in his stories. They prove to be of a significant character with the incorporation of the moral codes. Mendelson puts:

The young men in Hemingway's early stories live by a moral code that requires them to answer only to themselves. The moral question they ask about their actions is whether they are living up to their own heroic ideal, not what the effect of their actions might be on anyone else. They refuse the obligations imposed by their families and the commitments desired by women. In place of personal relations, they merge into an undifferentiated band of brothers who share the same ideal.

His characters are revolutionary who establish their manners in their own ways. They talk about various themes such as family relations, their personal horizons, etc.

While warriors are fighting, their value is measured how they fight bravely or not. If they fight bravely, they are praised by everyone and they are given importance by the people. If they cannot fight, then they are hated because there is no humanity in war. Similar things can be noticed in the story. As Retana comments negatively about Manuel, we can interpret that Manuel is strong and powerful as long as he fights. After he gives up fighting, he does not have any value. The conversation reveals: "Why don't you get a job and go to work?" he said.

“I don’t want to work,” Manuel said. “I am a bullfighter.”

“There aren’t any bullfighters anymore,” Retana said.

“I’m a bullfighter,” Manuel said.

“Yes, while you’re in there,” Retana said.

Manuel laughed.

Retana sat, saying nothing and looking at Manuel.

“I’ll put you in a nocturnal if you want,” Retana offered.

“When?” Manuel asked.

“Tomorrow night.” (9)

As Retana says that Manuel is strong inside the arena, his hidden feeling can be understood that Manuel does not have a good position as he is outside it. It means, like ancient warrior he does not have value if he does not fight. His identity is attached with the power of fighting not the mind he uses.

Likewise, Manuel struggles so much to prove his power. He wants to participate in bullfighting and prove how strong he is. He talks to Retana and Zurito in different occasions. Manuel requests him to pick him though Zurito is unwilling. His struggle is praiseworthy because he does not lose his hope even at the cost of much suffering and pain. Tragedy or suffering is another element of epic struggle. If someone suffers or is killed or beaten or done something bad, the person catches the attention of the readers or audience. Ancient epic is based on the suffering and misunderstanding among people leading to a violent conflict. “The Undefeated” is not far from the smell of violence as bullfighting takes place in the arena. The lines prove: “The critic of El Heraldo lit a cigarette and tossed the match at the bull, then wrote in his notebook, ‘large and with enough horns to satisfy the cash customers, Campagnero showed a tendency to cut into the terrain of the bull-fighters’” (23).

Here, horns symbolize the power to torture the victims. This is hidden desire of people to see violent action, which is a feature of epic struggle.

Earl Rovit and Gerry Brenner comment that Manuel in “The Undefeated” is able to show the undefeatable power. Through Manuel, Hemingway shows the greatest danger a human must face to make his life meaningful. In fact, it is common for human beings to fight with the adversity. Rovit and Brenner express:

Thought and action (or reaction) are simultaneous for Manuel; he is “just a man who backs his play,” and hence his responses will be inevitably adequate to the challenge he is trained to accept. The tyro, as we see often in Hemingway’s works, must try to stop himself from thinking. There is an inevitable hiatus between challenge and response, action and reaction; it is here, in Hemingway’s diagnosis, that man’s greatest danger takes place. (91)

Rovit and Brenner analyze the author’s work as the gap between challenge and response. They comment that Manuel teaches a great lesson to the people that challenge is inevitable feature of humans.

On the other hand, peacefulness, laziness, slow pace, no injury do not draw attention from the audience. That happens to Manuel when he gets tired, he is slow and starts drinking, he is commented negatively without taking attention from the watchers. The narrator explains:

The critic of El Heraldo reached for the bottle of warm champagne that stood between his feet, took a drink, and finished his paragraph. “—the aged Manolo rated no applause for a vulgar series of lances with the cape and we entered the third of the palings.” Alone in the center of the ring the bull stood, still fixed. Fuentes, tall, flat-backed, walking

toward him arrogantly, his arms spread out, the two slim, red sticks, one in each hand, held by the fingers, points straight forward. Fuentes walked forward. Back of him and to one side was a peon with a cape.

The bull looked at him and was no longer fixed. (28)

Manuel's struggle is not small but very grand. It is like a super hero's action. He is similar to Arjuna or Achilles or Hercules or Rama or someone from ancient epic.

This is the example of epic struggle we find in the characters.

Epic heroes are guided by the power of victory. They do not think they will lose something; they focus on winning and saving some important things. In the story, Manuel fights for saving his reputation. He does not think what will happen to physical body but fights means fights for him. Moreover, epic heroes are determined to their goal and they want to win their internal weaknesses. Fight does not only take place externally but also internally. The narrator explains: "Manuel stepped out on the hard sand as the bull banged into the fence. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Zurito sitting the white horse close to the barrera, about a quarter of the way around the ring left" (23). Manuel is fully determined and convinced himself to win his internal fight.

Hemingway presents the real life situation of the characters. They fight courageously and bravely. The story is more real than imaginative as the events are actions are repeated frequently. The main theme comes from the repetition of events in the story. Same types of actions are revised though they are boring or tedious. Imaginative stories are written to influence or impress the readers while real stories focus on the actions no matter it is boring or interesting. The author, thus, focuses on the power of patience of the characters like Manuel. The narrator says:

Manuel walked across the sand toward the barrera, while Zurito rode out of the ring. The trumpet had blown to change the act to the planting

of the banderillas while Manuel had been working with the bull. He had not consciously noticed it. The monos were spreading canvas over the two dead horses and sprinkling sawdust around them. (27)

There is fight between Manuel and Zurito. Apparently, it is fight between two persons physically, but in reality, the truth is opposite. They should fight mentally and psychologically.

Manuel is badly wounded when he is fighting with the bull. He is determined that he should prove his strength fighting until the end. He does not worry; he may lose his life but wants to fight bravely. The narrator explains:

He was on the offensive again. His heaviness was gone. Manuel noted the fresh blood shining down the black shoulder and dripping down the bull's leg. He drew the sword out of the muleta and held it in his right hand. The muleta held low down in his left hand, leaning toward the left, he called to the bull. The bull's legs tightened, his eyes on the muleta. . . the sword following the curve, a point of light under the arcs. (33)

Manuel is the offensive or attacking. Although his power is decreasing physically his mental strength is good. He realizes that he is wounded because of fight. His injury is the factor, which inspires him to fight more bravely. In this way, he is epic hero who is fighting for his reputation.

There is difference between the fighters and the spectators. The fighters are happy if they are not wounded or less wounded while the audiences are happy if they are wounded. The fighters face multiple problems what the watchers cannot understand. Therefore, the fighters are victims of bullfighting. The text reads:

The gypsy came running along the barrera toward Manuel, taking the

applause of the crowd. His vest was ripped where he had not quite cleared the point of the horn. He was happy about it, showing it to the spectators. He made the tour of the ring. Zurito saw him go by, smiling, pointing at his vest. He smiled. Somebody else was planting the last pair of banderillas. Nobody was paying any attention. (31)

The gypsy is badly wounded by the attack of the bull and he is able to draw the attention of the audience. His vest is severely torn and his point of horn is not felt by him. He, however, feels happy when the spectators are elated by the worse condition. In this way, it is necessary to be wounded badly by the bull to get paid. Is he less important or more important than epic hero? Of course, he is like an epic hero who undergoes a lot of suffering to make the readers read continuously.

Likewise, Drew Smith argues that bullfighting is a brutal sport and the hero is not a young man but an old man. It is the example Hemingway wishes to give to the people that life is full of struggle until the last breath. Smith comments:

Bullfighting is a brutal sport and the young man isn't exactly a hero, but neither of those observations get at the point of this story. This is a great example of Hemingway's brutal and direct tone expressed through a story about struggle for all parties involved. It's harsh and sad, but it says something about life. It's the ugliness of it all that makes it so beautiful and compelling.

Thus, although it seems ugly and harsh, it presents the real picture of human hardship. It represents the difficult situation of people's life who have to incur challenges much often during their life.

The story represents the modern world and has the mimetic features of Aristotle. Aristotle postulates that literature is reflection of real society. The

spectators, organizers, bulls, horses, bullfighters and so on are the representative characters of modern world. They are also found in the ancient stories as well in one way or another. Although they are fighting with each other and there are many people, they are fighting their own battles. If they are hurt, they themselves suffer others cannot share their problems. Therefore, in every aspect, the story signifies the epic struggle. The narrator describes:

Manuel walked toward him, watching his feet. This was all right. He could do this. He must work to get the bull's head down, so he could go in past the horns and kill him. He did not think about the sword, not about killing the bull. He thought about one thing at a time. The coming things oppressed him, though. Walking forward, watching the bull's feet, he saw successively his eyes, his wet muzzle, and the wide, forward-pointing spread of his horns. The bull had light circles about his eyes. His eyes watched Manuel. He felt he was going to get this little one with the white face. (32)

It is individual fight of Manuel. He does not give attention to other things but how to defeat the bull or kill it. He is becoming stronger and stronger while at the same time there is a risk to lose his life. He experiences every sort of bad situation and he stands as a mythical hero of all kinds of epic found almost in all kinds of literature throughout the world.

Manuel does not avoid fighting with the bull at any cost. He is undefeated though he is attacked badly by the bull. His condition is described in such way:

Again there was the shock and he felt himself being borne back in a rush, to strike hard on the sand. There was no chance of kicking this time. The bull was on top of him. Manuel lay as though dead, his head

on his arms, and the bull bumped him. Bumped his back, bumped his face in the sand. He felt the horn go into the sand between his folded arms. The bull hit him in the small of the back. His face drove into the sand. The horn drove through one of his sleeves and the bull ripped it off. Manuel was tossed clear and the bull followed the capes. (37)

Manuel is overpowered by the bull when he thinks that the bull is very tired and it is about to die. Bull rises again and attacks Manuel in severe way. As the bull pounces up him, Manuel feels as if he is dead. His body is about to be ripped and he is unlikely to defeat the bull. However, Manuel is a real hero or super hero or like a mythical hero who regains his power and fights back.

The life in the present world is no less than the characters in the ancient world like Homer's characters or Veda Vyasa's characters. In this respect, the researcher likes to take some ideas about epic features. Kurt A. Raaflaub while talking about epic says that epic describes the events in a distant past, the men were strong and enduring, and they were able to communicate with gods.

Homer places the society he describes in his epics in a distant, 'heroic' past, in which men were stronger and more enduring and in which humans freely communicated with the gods. Precisely because the epics contain so much potentially valuable information about social and political structures, conditions, and relationships, scholars have tried repeatedly to locate this society in time and place. (61)

Thus, according to Raaflaub, epics contain social and political structures and they talk about human relationships and struggles. Although there are imaginative characters, they have connection to the modern world.

In this way, the research work deals with the struggle of humans in common.

Life is for struggle. If there is no struggle, then nobody can understand its essence. It is not only the external war but also the internal knowing oneself how strong a person is to fight with adversity. There are many similarities between epic struggle and modern stories. In the mythical stories, various characters struggled with situations and they had to risk their life. In the same way, modern people have also to fight for the problems. Although there is some difference between epic struggle and modern one, in deep structure there is similarity between them. Though he is a common person, he fights like a mythical hero. He is determined to defeat his rivals even at the cost of his life. He does not worry how he is attacked by the bull but wants to survive and proves how strong he is.

Nick Tenente's Struggle and sufferings in "Now I Lay Me"

The narrator is the real hero who undergoes innumerable sufferings and problems during the First World War. He attempts to get the meaning and spend life happily but he cannot because of badly injured condition. Signor Tenente, the narrator, is trying to recover from wound in a hospital in Milan. One of the problems he encounters is lack of ability to sleep. He does not leave any stone unturned to sleep but cannot. His individual life is no less than an epic hero. The first paragraph of the story reveals his pathetic condition and struggle to adapt to the situation:

I myself did not want to sleep because I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body. I had been that way for a long time, ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out of me and go off and then come back. I tried never to think about it, but it had started to go since, in the nights, just at the moment of going off to sleep, and I could only stop it by a very great effort. So while now I am

fairly sure that it would not really have gone out, yet then, that summer, I was unwilling to make the experiment. (151)

It can be interpreted that he is used to opening his eyes all the time. He is so habituated with open eyes that he feels uncomfortable to shut the eyes, as he is unable to sleep for a long time. It is like an epic story or myth because the heroes in the classical epics would suffer like this. They would spend so long time to overcome the situation. For example, Arjun had to do penance for many years without sleeping in order to get the strongest weapon (Brahmastra) from Indra.

Signor Tenente does everything to sleep normally. His main goal has become to sleep and spend his life happily. However, he cannot. He is unable to take away the past memory how he used to fight in the war. This is like an epic struggle though it is not felt by people outside. He has to struggle as much as an epic hero does. He shows the national and historical significance because like him there are so many wounded soldiers who are spending their life in such crippled way. It also shows that wars are always bad and they are fought for petty selfishness of some limited people. It is said and interpreted that Trojan war, Mahabharata war and Lanka war in Ramayan were fought for a woman. So many people had to sacrifice their life for protecting the ego of limited people. Signor Tenente is also a victim of such war-mongering people.

Tenente explains his plight:

I had different ways of occupying myself while I lay awake. I would think of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy and fish its whole length very carefully in my mind; fishing very carefully under all the logs, all the turns of the bank, the deep holes and the clear shallow stretches, sometimes catching trout and sometimes losing them. (151)

Although it is a common problem of the injured person, he is fighting his individual war. He attempts to divert attention from the problems but he is unable. He tries to remember his past life when he was a boy and used to do fishing. Such problems would be felt by epic hero in the ancient stories.

James Phelan in his "Now I Lay Me: Nick's Strange Monologue, Hemingway's Powerful Lyric, and the Reader's Disconcerting Experience" mentions the difficulty Nick faces in his sleepless nights. He further mentions how his struggle gains the sympathy of reader. Phelan puts:

"Now I Lay Me" is emotionally disconcerting because it contains a significant gap between the gentle resignation of Nick's voice and the disturbed feelings that nevertheless come through that voice. Although Nick never overtly expresses strong emotions, something is eating away at him as the silkworms eat away at the mulberry leaves. Because the story invites us to sympathize with Nick, to enter into his consciousness and view many things as he does, we also find his disturbed feelings to be disturbing. The gathering force of these disturbed and disturbing feelings underneath Nick's overt gentle voice transforms "Now I Lay Me" from a zephyr to a tornado. (48-49)

Nick's story because of his struggle has gained sympathy from the audience. The character gains the sympathy of the audience only after the sufferings he gains and the struggle he undergoes the height.

Similarly, the particular hero gives reader source of inspiration to lead life successfully. As someone fights with internal or external circumstances, one has to go through various steps of internal wars such as Signor Tenente. He remembers that

difficult situation gives lesson to live in the present. As he wanted to catch trout as a young man, he did everything for searching the bait and succeeded. This past experience has taught him to struggle in the present. The narrator describes:

But some nights I could not fish, and on those nights I was cold-awake and said my prayers over and over and tried to pray for all the people I had ever known. That took up a great amount of time, for if you try to remember all the people you have ever known, going back to the earliest thing you remember—which was, with me, the attic of the house where I was born and my mother and father's wedding-cake in a tin box hanging from one of the rafters, and, in the attic, jars of snakes and other specimens that my father had collected as a boy and preserved in alcohol. (153)

In surface structures, types of struggles can be different but in the deep structure struggle is same as we find in the story. He did not give in when he could not catch fish but waited patiently. He had to fight with other insects like snakes because they would bite him. The epic hero is similar to him because he has to protect himself from the swamp of enemies around him.

Tenente remembers how his mother carried out her work. She was doing her work with full dedication. Though it was small thing, she did bravely and courageously. It seems minor but it plays great role in life. In other words, it may appear invisible but that plays great role to lead life successfully in such a way that Tenente gets inspiration from her:

About the new house I remember how my mother was always cleaning things out and making a good clearance. One time when my father was away on a hunting trip she made a good thorough cleaning out in the

basement and burned everything that should not have been there.

When my father came home and got down from his buggy and hitched the horse, the fire was still burning in the road beside the house. I went out to meet him. He handed me his shotgun and looked at the fire.

“What’s this?” he asked. (154)

Thus, he realizes later how great it was when she cleaned the house. It is a matter of epic struggle.

Charles M. Oliver postulates that Nick parents have the same characteristics as his. He is suffering from a kind of psychological obsession as Nick is suffering. They have limited world and they represent the modern characters who wish to be lonely and detached. Oliver writes:

Nick’s mother and father in “Now I Lay Me” certainly have the characteristics of the Nick Adams parents in other stories, though the key scene that Nick remembers about his parents in this story—the mother burning her husband’s collection of Indian artifacts—is for Nick merely one item on one more list of things he counts off at night as a way to get to sleep. (295)

In this way, the comparison of Oliver between Nick’s parents and Nick is justifiable. They try to escape from the problems but they are entrapped in it and the effect of which goes to the son Nick, which we can find in the days of his awaking.

Not only Tenente struggles with his adversity but also his mother. He remembers how his mother underwent so many complexities at that time. He remembers that when they moved to a new house there was no other human being but things. They burned what they could not move from the old house including snakes.

Tenente reveals:

About the new house I remember how my mother was always cleaning things out and making a good clearance. One time when my father was away on a hunting trip she made a good thorough cleaning out in the basement and burned everything that should not have been there.

When my father came home and got down from his buggy and hitched the horse, the fire was still burning in the road beside the house. I went out to meet him. He handed me his shotgun and looked at the fire.

(154)

Now he realizes that many things occur in human's life that is beyond control. They make plan to run the life in one way, but the situation changes them to another humdrum of life. If we take the example of ancient epic, we can interpret that many things have occurred against their plans including gods. Krishna might not have thought that such large numbers of people would be killed in the war and Zeus, a Greek mythical god, might have thought like this when Trojan War took place between Troy and Sparta.

Carlos Baker compares two stories "Now I Lay Me" and "In Another Country" by Hemingway and says that both the narrators have the experience of trouble during war. It is their close experience while they suffer at the hospital. These characters are real and heart touching.

Baker puts:

"Now I Lay Me," one of the longer stories, shows Nick as twice-wounded Tenente Adams, troubled by insomnia and talking out the night with his Italian orderly, a fellow-Chicagoan. "In Another Country" does not name its narrator, but it could well be the same young Tenente in conversation with an Italian major, a fellow-patient

in the base hospital at Milan. (71)

Thus, the extract proves that wherever the characters are they are suffering in the same manner only the situation is different.

As the narrator is lying on the straw blanket, he experiences many bad things along with his friend. They have become supporters to each other. As they face the problems, even the worms become their enemies. The worms are not scared by the noises they make while turning their side on the straw: "There was only one other person in the room and he was awake too. I listened to him being awake, for a long time. He could not lie as quietly as I could because, perhaps he had not had as much practice being awake" (155). Remaining awake is also a kind of struggle they make in the bed.

The narrator and his friend try to escape from problems using various measures such as talking about their marriage and smoking. They try to keep them happy talking in funny way. One thing is sure that occurs between them is they understand each other more than others because they have same problems. Tenente's friend John asks the narrator. John says: "Well," he said, "it don't do you any good and I suppose you get so you don't miss it. Did you ever hear a blind man won't smoke because he can't see the smoke come out?" "I don't believe it" (157).

When the heroes fight in war for many years, it becomes their profession or habit if they survive. They do not like to return to normal life. They look for another war as soon as one war is over. The particular characters think in the same way. The narrator describes:

'What are you going to do when it's over and we go back to the States?' 'I'll get a job on a paper.' 'In Chicago?' 'Maybe.' 'Do you ever read what this fellow Brisbane writes? My wife cuts it out for me

and sends it to me.’ ‘Sure.’ ‘Did you ever meet him?’ ‘No, but I’ve seen him.’ ‘I’d like to meet that fellow. He’s a fine writer. My wife don’t read English but she takes the paper just like when I was home and she cuts out the editorials and the sport page and sends them to me.’ (157-58)

They are much more worried about their after-war than they are happier to continue their life with their family members. They are accustomed to the war and they feel uneasy to make their life without war. This thought is also like the epic story in which when they complete their action or some roles they go back to the place where from they came.

While reading the story, it can be understood which culture they are from and how they think about the society, they live. When they talk about their family, it is revealed that they are responsible for their family. They are guided by the thought that everyone should have a good culture to maintain life meaningfully. They talk:

‘How are your kids?’ ‘They’re fine. One of the girls is in the fourth grade now. You know, Signor Tenente, if I didn’t have the kids I wouldn’t be your orderly now. They’d have made me stay in the line all the time.’ ‘I’m glad you’ve got them.’ ‘So am I. They’re fine kids but I want a boy. Three girls and no boy. That’s a hell of a note.’ ‘Why don’t you try and go to sleep?’ (158)

Therefore, nobody can go beyond culture and family. All the activities of epic heroes are associated with family and culture as we find similar in these particular characters John and Tenente.

John advises Tenente to get married and settle the family. John says that nationality and language do not matter but humanity. As long as they are human they

can understand each other, John thinks. In the ancient stories, there is no any big matter about nationalism because the characters used to be from any part of the world. For instance, Helen in Trojan War was from Troy while Paris was from Sparta but they got married and they vowed to spend their life together. John explains to Tenente:

‘You ought to get married. Why don’t you pick out some nice Italian girl with plenty of money? You could get any one you want. You’re young and you got good decorations and you look nice. You been wounded a couple of times.’ ‘I can’t talk the language well enough.’ ‘You talk it fine. To hell with talking the language. You don’t have to talk to them. Marry them.’ ‘I’ll think about it.’ ‘You know some girls, don’t you?’ ‘Sure.’ (159)

Thus, these characters are like epic heroes as they perform similar to epic heroes. Their activities are like epic struggle because they have fought as bravely as they are supposed to. They have got meaning in their life even after they are badly wounded because they think that struggle is a part of human life.

Conclusion: Epic Struggle in “The Undefeated” and “Now I Lay Me”

“The Undefeated” covers wide range of stories and multiple characters. Although the story is not written in epic form and its structure is not like an epic, it has many features that can be found in epic heroes. In the surface structures, there are many variations in the story from the ancient tale. However, in the deep structure, the characters’ struggles are similar to the ancient characters. The characters may not have universal significance about the war, but their effort and experience individually is like epic struggle. Manuel Garcia, for instance, is a bullfighter. He has to struggle internally and externally in order to prove how strong he is in bullfighting. Moreover,

he must be satisfied with low pay in comparison of others.

Manuel realizes that there is no human value in war, the importance of the warriors is measured as long as they can fight. When they are wounded or disabled nobody remembers about them. Retana says that Manuel is strong inside the arena; his hidden feeling can be understood that Manuel does not have a good position as he is outside it. Manuel is a real hero because he does not lose his hope at any cost. He wants to fight with any adversity that comes in front of him. Ancient epic is based on the suffering and misunderstanding among people leading to a violent conflict.

Like ancient epic, the story talks about the suffering of the characters during bullfighting. The spectators are attracted to the fighters if they are badly injured. In contrast, if nobody is wounded then the audience does not like to see. They do not clap their hands. There are judges who criticize every moment the characters perform in the arena. In epic in the ancient time, the heroes would fight very fiercely and kill many people at the same time. As a result, so many spectators would go to the theatre. Therefore, "The Undefeated" is similar to epic struggle or mythical heroes. Their problems are worth studying and they do not leave any stone unturned to achieve their goal.

Similarly, "Now I Lay Me" is also an example of epic struggle as the two wounded soldiers talk about their problems in off war time especially they cannot sleep during night. In the story, the narrator is the hero who experiences many unwanted situations in the war. The narrator, Signor Tenente, attempts to get the meaning and spend life happily but he cannot because of badly injured condition. Even though it is his individual problem, he represents whole soldiers in the world how they suffer while coming out of the bad experience.

Signor Tenente has to struggle as much as an epic hero does. He shows the

national and historical significance because like him there are so many wounded soldiers who are spending their life in such crippled way. Tenente encourages everyone that life is like an epic in which everyone has to face many challenges to continue life. Moreover, he goes back to the past to divert his unwanted situation in the present. He remembers that he wanted to catch trout as a young man; he did everything for searching the bait and succeeded. The past experience has taught him to struggle in the present. Tenente struggles with his adversity along with his mother. He remembers how his mother underwent so many complexities at that time. He realizes that many things occur in human's lives that are beyond control. The narrator realizes that as one has to face the complexity, then he/she understands the importance of others. This is one of the features of epic. This is the feeling that combines many and makes one. Epic heroes did not focus on marriage and children but war. The narrator and his friend John do not stress on the marriage. To say truly, they do not want to get married because they think that they cannot focus on their goal if they are married.

The narrator and John fight in war for a long time. They have made it as a part of life. They want to dedicate their life to the war. The same things happen in the epic stories. The heroes are dedicated to the war. Any hero is known for the history how he fought or fights not how diplomatic the hero is. The stories present the epic struggle in different ways. They are similar to epic struggle because their fluctuation in their life is no less important than epic struggle.

Works Cited

- Baker, Carlos. "The First-Forty Five Stories." *Critical Insights: Ernest Hemingway*. Ed. Eugene Goodheart. California: Salem Press, 2010. 71-98. Print.
- Foley, John Miles. Ed. *A Companion to Ancient Epic*. Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. Print.
- Hemingway, Ernest. *Men without Women*. New Delhi: Three Ass Publications, 2013. Print.
- Martin, Richard P. "Epic as Genre." *A Companion to Ancient Epic*. Ed. John Miles Foley. Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 9-18. Print.
- Mendelson, Edward. "Who Was Ernest Hemingway?" *The New York Review of Books*. 14 Aug. 2014. Web. 8 Apr. 2018.
<<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/08/14/who-was-ernest-hemingway/>>
- Oliver, Charles M. *Critical Companion to Ernest Hemingway*. New York: Facts on File, 2007. Print.
- Phelan, James. "Now I Lay Me: Nick's Strange Monologue, Hemingway's Powerful Lyric, and the Reader's Disconcerting Experience". *New Essays on Hemingway's Short Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 48-49. Print.
- Raaflaub, Kurt A. "Epic and History." *A Companion to Ancient Epic*. Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. Print
- Rovit, Earl and Gerry Brenner. "Of Tyros and Tutors." *Critical Views on Ernest Hemingway*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2005. 85-107. Print.
- Smith, Drew. "Reviews on The Undefeated." *Goodreads*. 25 Dec. 2017. Web. 8 Apr. 2018. <<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/8008214-the-undefeated>>.

Wolff, Anita. "Epic." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2006. 625-26. Print.

Woods, Julian. *Destiny and Human Initiative in the Mahabharata*. New York: Routledge, 2012. 11. Print.