



**SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON HARRY MORGAN: TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT  
BY ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

**Dr. VIBHA MANOJ SHARMA**

Assistant Professor, Dept of English, Swami Shradhanand College, University of Delhi, Alipur, Delhi,  
India.

Email: [vibha.manoj@rediffmail.com](mailto:vibha.manoj@rediffmail.com)



Dr. VIBHA MANOJ  
SHARMA

**ABSTRACT**

To have and haven't' is the same question as 'to be or not to be', in William Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, thought again and again by the protagonist, Hamlet, and remained unanswered to become a tragedy. Harry Morgan perished in the novel in order to have an answer of 'have and have not', even by chance for the sake of his family. Socio-Economic situations, by chance or by destiny of a person with the hidden irony of situation, all the time, are to be understood in modern American society as well. These have larger impact on human life

"Do people go to bed with a social phenomenon?" asked

Helen Gordon, looking out the door.

"Don't talk rot," said Richard Gordon.

"I mean is it part of the homework of a writer?" Helen asked.

"A writer has to know about everything," Richard Gordon said.

"He cannot restrict his experience to conform to Bourgeois standards."<sup>1</sup> --Hemingway

Key-words: Hemingway, Socio-economic realism, chance existence, tragic-end, case-study—HarryMorgan.

©KY PUBLICATIONS

Harry Morgan, the protagonist of the novel, *To Have and Have Not* (1937) said, "A man", a man's socio-economic conditions of life and his simple existence in American style "Maybe with luck" (*To Have and Have Not*, p.225). In his words, his extreme experience of life simply applicable to all human beings, that "Ain't got no hasn't got any can't really isn't any way out," (p.224). He announced that because of his conditions, despite several efforts made, but he achieved nothing. Here, Ernest Hemingway, true to his existentialistic

perspective, that traces realism to the utmost fraction, in fact, is an assessment by Harry, that no one can improve his or her social and economic conditions normally and willfully at once. A man is a tool in the hands of fate and God as human being. These were the last expressions of Harry and after that, at the time of his death, he did not suffer as doctor intimated Marie Morgan:

"He didn't suffer at all, Mrs. Morgan,"... (p.256).

It is somewhat symbolic also, that he has made his efforts and reaches to that end of life where no effort left as being; his experience was complete to understand and to explain to others about the struggle of life. Moreover, he accepted his fate: "One man alone ain't got so bloody fucking chance." (p.225) This stark realism of Hemingway that man meets destruction in his struggle to exist, in American context, too, is more sharper than William Faulkner's treatment of realism in *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936). There Thomas Sutpen fails to prove his identity as the owner of empire and losses of his existence even as a being. Here point is, both the novels belong to same time period to highlight the point of being of any person.

In the Twentieth century, many novelists traced realism but Hemingway's treatment of realism is as unparalleled as P. S. Buck's treatment of naturalism in *The Earth* (19) is unmatched. It is the type of realism that leads us to the questions of existence of man in American contest also, and we cannot deny the possibility of existential problems as being in America too. The problem is as acute as anywhere else; we cannot ignore such problems arise because of socio-economic conditions of the parts of the continent or of the lower class people as monetary conditions are better in America than the rest of the world; prosperity is definitely therein the country, but the expenses and crisis are likewise, and in exceptions even that cannot alone or should not be the deciding factor of the fate of the individuals. Hemingway is pointing, here, to the unchanged conditions of Conchs, a particular class, fishermen; it is not that the similar conditions are restricted to that region or class or to these professionals of Key West only. In fact, human can be sufferer anywhere because of these social and economic conditions; he can have a similar lot of Harry: "reduced to a pulp" (p.225). When we see the social status of man we find that the man is social but sadistic, too, to peer at the prosperity of others, procure self-centered psyche instead of becoming social being, become a lonely creature. His peevish nature is unpredictable as social being and as an individual also; he develops himself as a quite peculiar greedy fellow. Despite having money man feels unsatisfactory and insecure; he becomes

dangerous even in his self centered state and also in the state of un-sufficiency. In fact, it is not only the question of Harry's survival but the question of the behavior of the terrorists, too, that why do they behave in rapsallion fashion! The questions of behavior of individual in social and economic conditions lead us to the question of existence. These are interrelated problems; we cannot deny that America is out of economic conditions so it cannot have existential problems based on monetary prepositions of human being.

To trace role of destiny and Hemingway's existentialistic perspective, we take up Harry's struggles and developments of his thought towards lure, we find that he is a normal human being who can think in situations and able to judge, them individually. Moreover, he is a good, nice and considerate fellow towards his family; a conscious and a responsible American national. He is a man of positive thinking but his profession is a risky proposition. He is a fisherman who once been "on the police force in Miami" (p.16) but now he charts his boat to the travelers. Abruptly situations come, and he makes dangerous trips, too. He is a perfect manager of these trips. Though, once he kills Mr. Sing and freed the Cubans from him, and other time, he lost his one arm while confronting the customs yet he is having a strange type of confidence within himself for these sorts of risky trips. But, how he got indulged in those trips that was another question? How had he been so different a man to rear up his family that way, even his wife preferred his making trips? She not even allowed him, but appreciated him for his courage:

"I am lucky, she was thinking. Those girls. They don't know what they'll get. I know what I've got and what I've had. I've been a lucky woman. Him saying like a loggerhead. I am glad it was a arm and not a leg. I wouldn't like him to have lost a leg. Why'd he have to lose that arm? It's funny though, I don't mind. I've been a lucky woman. There ain't no other men like that. People ain't never tried them don't know. I've had plenty of them. I've been lucky to have him. Do you suppose those turtles feel like we

do? Do you suppose all that time they feel like that? ...." (p.114).

And she considered herself as been a lucky woman to have a man like him.

Marie is having a sense of superiority in possessing him as a nice, caring husband. She feels a sort of pride to see his different personality and his ability to think individually. The factors were materialistically affecting their life:

"She watched him go out of the house, tall, wide-shouldered, flat-backed, his hips narrow, moving, still, she thought, like some kind of animal, easy and swift and not old yet, he moves so light and smooth-like, she thought...." (p.128).

She appreciated this type of physic because of his strength and the unique kind of jaywalk else she fears to think of his face:

"Every time I see his goddamn face it makes me want to cry" and "his face with the broad Mongol cheek bones, and the narrow eyes, the nose broken at the bridge, the wide mouth and round jaw, and getting in car he grinned at her and began to cry." (p.128).

On the contrary, Marie is "a big woman, long legged, big handed, big hipped, still handsome" (p.116). At the age of forty-five, Harry is two years younger than her that is why he most of the times addresses her "old woman." (p. 112). Still, there is love, liking, and caring for each other. Harry is quite concerned about his earning for his family and Marie is quite cheerfully running it. She rather preferred his taking risks. There is good co-operation and family tie among them.

Now the issue that has been raised by Wesley "why don't people be honest and decent and make a decent honest living?" (p.70). As they being adroit want to avoid socio-economic constrains to have a happy family; it has been made very much clear that there were financial constrains or economic pressures on Harry. He used to go through tense situations and in those situations he used to manage himself by making easy money. It is the desire of Harry to make his family 'a happy home':

"At noon I went uptown and ate at a Chink place where you get a good meal for forty cents, and then I bought some things to take home to my wife and our three girls. You know, perfume, a couple of fans and three of those high combs. ...When I came on board I had just forty cents left." (p.26).

And, When Mr. Johnson who hired Harry's boat, went on plane no, without giving any due payment to him, Harry was totally broken and damned:

"I'd lost five hundred and thirty dollars of a charter, and tackle I couldn't replace for three hundred and fifty more..... But I was damned if I was going home broke and starve a summer in that town. Besides I've got a family. .... Hell, I didn't even have enough money to put in gas.... "I've got to carry something, Frankie,".... "I've got to make some money." (pp.27-28).

This was the financial condition of Harry made by parties that forced him on wrong track to make money in pressures and that, too, easy money. He wants to take risks to cover up lapses: "He does a little of everything," (p.78).

To depict the role of destiny under socio-economic pressures, Hemingway has traced Harry's working, realistically, through different seasons—summer, fall and winter. These seasons are symbolic of different types of time arriving in the life of Harry. It happens with every man and that, too, frequently; it is great responsibility on him, too, to run his family under uncontrolled pressures. And while performing the responsibility, maintaining proper balance of the head and heart, as necessitates, Harry loses it, gets corrupt in maintaining his social status and to cover up his family's economic needs. He has shown as "bootlegger" and a "lawbreaker", though an energetic fellow yet the working of his head and heart is gone at par of his control. It is reality of the man that he has a great attachment with his family, pertaining the fact his actions are governed by his individuality and rapidness.

First section of the novel shows Harry's character, as he is watching the killing of Pancho and having a bad experience of criminal actions, but fearlessness is the trait of the man; though expert in

fishing yet fishing business was not so profitable one, because people for business come from different places with different temperaments, they ditch fishermen; next he agreed to Mr. Sing to board the Chinamen for the sake of smuggling; and he killed Mr. Sing after taking the amount that he promised, for Sing was playing politics (tricks) by giving him a threat through a photograph, "to keep from killing twelve other chinks,".... (p.55); he freed chinks at Cuba. Besides, has been a skillful and helpful kind of fisherman, but in need of amount can kill others to save situations, without hesitation can violate law and order. Wide sea was there to hide his criminal actions. In the first season, he was happy for a successful day as he covered lapses done by Mr. Johnson.

In second section, Harry has lost his one arm in the smuggling of liquor for that his wife said: "I am glad it was an arm and not a leg"; and Wesley commented on human predicament:

"You treat a man no better than a dog,"

"You ain't hardly human."

"Ain't a man's life worth more than a load of liquor?"

"I don't mind jail, the nigger said. But I never wanted to get shot." (p.69).

And also he puts query:

"Why they run liquor now?" he said.

"Prohibition's over. Why they keep up a traffic like that? Why'n't they bring liquor in on ferry?"

"Why don't people be honest and decent and make a decent honest living?" (p.70).

This was commented by Wesley, a nigger, when he was crying with the pain of shot, otherwise, he was with Harry in his bootlegging. And, Harry admitted "I lost my judgment." (p.86). The section shows there is fall in his socio-economic conditions; because of that he takes the contract of a new trip in winter, in the next section, knowing full well that he has only one arm, and not any helping hand, no son even; and that the trip is unlawful and risky like his other trips; and that it can also be his last trip—the best or the worst one. He was very much aware of the nature of the trip that it can be the last trip of his life but being a fearless and responsible person to family he showed his full strength. On one side, it

was shown in varied thoughts of Harry that one armed man is also a complete man: "a man's still a man with one arm ...." (p.97).

And in pell-mell but not dither:

"my family is going to eat as long as anybody eats. What they're trying to do is starve you Conchs out of here so they can burn down the shacks and put up apartments and make this a tourist town. That is what I hear...." (p. 96).

And also, "The hell with my arm. You lose an arm you lose an arm. There's worst things than lose an arm." And on the other side, he ponders and realizes his worse state at his home in the section:

"What chance have I to enjoy my home? Why I am back to worse than where I started? It'll all be gone too if I don't play this right. The hell it will. I haven't got sixty bucks left outside of the house. But I'll get a stake out of this. Those damn girls. That's all that old woman and I could get with what we've got. Do you suppose the boys in her went before I knew her?" (pp.126-27).

And being an uneducated and one armed man, Harry wanted to reveal his worries to Freddy:

"I got it in Cuba on a trip the time when I peddled those others. Nobody knows I've got it. I could stay here now and I'd be out of it. But what the hell would they eat on? Where the money coming from to keep Marie and girls? I've got no boat, no cash, I got no education. What can a one -armed man work at? All I've got is my cojones to peddle. I could stay right here and have say five more drinks and it would all be over. It would be too late then. I could just let it all slide and do nothing." (p.147).

These were his worries for the family so he thought of the trip despite his lost arm:

"One bunch of Cuban government bastards cost me my arm shooting at me with a load when they had no need to and another bunch of U. S. ones took my boat. Now I can give up my home and get thanks. No

thanks. The hell with it, he thought. I got no choice in it." (p.148).

Harry thinks as it is some honest money so in his conversation with Bee-Lips, a lawyer and the organizer of the trip, for the arrangement of boat, he says: "That's the last chance I had to make any honest money. That's the last chance I got to go in a boat where there's any money". (p.121). Hence it is obvious that he was in need of money. The exact picture of life in general, Richard Gordon, in his conversation with Helen Gordon in the novel, portrays:

"A writer has to know about everything",... "He can't restrict his experience to conform to Bourgeois standards." (p.185).

In the novel, Richard Gordon is a tourist and writer who writes a novel on the strike in sugar or cement factory. He traces the repulsive look of Mrs. Morgan. He writes about love, sex and family in rich and poor people. And, as far as his own concern, he could only appreciate his wife's beauty that he sees above table. But he is a writer who is there to cover Key West story of socio-economic problems. He is to see the conditions of poor people and of some the professions, those are miserable. And, it is the right of every human to display problems, and every writer to know, explain, and remove troubles of people of every class. So, Hemingway took this responsibility by adding the writer Helen Gordon to assess social condition of the place, objectively. Hemingway adds further example of the young lawyer, Bee-lip, who also thinks of easy money and organizes the trip for revolutionary Cubans. Bee-lip addresses Harry "big murdering slob" (p.121), while he himself is meaner than Harry. He knew Spanish; and all the planning of robbing the bank by the Cubans, on the place where he himself was born, was made by bee-lip; he kept his self-interest above all. As Harry is shock to see him:

"Bee-lips is doing some work for his money all right. Wonder how much he thinks he is going to get? I wonder how he ever hooked up with those guys. Theirs is a smart kid who had a good chance once. He's a good lawyer, too. But it made me cold to hear him say it himself. He put his mouth on his own self all right. It's funny how a man can

mouth something...it scared me." (p.111).

Meanness of both the educated and uneducated person is compared here in economic pursuit. Money is the main need and cause of every bad action.

To have full overview in objective blend, one of the revolutionists made to tell about their revolutionary actions to Harry during his last trip:

"We are the true revolutionary party," ...We want to do away with all the old politicians, with all American imperialism that strangles us, with the tyranny of the army. We want to start clean and give every man a chance. We want to end slavery of the guajiros, you know the peasants, and divide the big sugar estates among the people that work them. But we are not communists...." (pp.166-167).

And he well informs Harry:

"...There is an absolutely murderous tyranny that extends over every little village in the country." (p.168).

The part of imperialism—control and dependency, were not of Harry's concern as the behavior of terrorist was not good to the common public; they already killed his two friends and it was also made clear by the terrorists that Harry will also be killed. Details didn't dissuade Harry; he took a distinct decision despite listening about the tender conditions of the poor countrymen during his explicit bitter beginning of experience of the trip:

"What the hell do I care about his revolution. F—his revolution. To help the working man he robs a bank and kills a fellow works with him and then kills that poor damned Albert that never did any harm. That's a working man he kills. He never thinks of that. With a family. It's the Cubans run Cuba. They all double cross each other. They sell each other out. They get what they deserve. The hell with their revolutions...ll..I got to do is mistake a living for my family and I can't do that." (p.168).

Harry realizes his mistake that he should not think individually for his family only, so he attacks alone

on those terrorists to finish social evil and gets hurt severely; during his injurious state he thinks to and fro:

"I wonder what the Marie will do? Maybe they'll get along. I should not have tried it. I had it all right up to the end. Nobody will know how it happened. I wish I could do something about Marie. Plenty of money on this boat. I don't even know how much. Anybody be O.K. with the money. I wonder if the coast guard will pinch it....I guess. I wish I could let the old woman know what happened. I wonder what she'll do? .... There's no honest money going in boats any more. If the bitch wouldn't only roll... I can feel all that slopping back and forth inside. Me. Mr. Bee lips and Albert .... I'll just have to take it easy. I got to take it as easy as I can." (pp.174-75).

Then Freddy's boat reached back to the starting point with Harry. Dynamic Harry died peacefully on the operation table. It is important to notice that he said no man can have a bloody fucking chance and he died peacefully; these are important sentences from socio- economic point of view. The peace that he failed to achieve while alive he learned to have at his death. W. H. Werkmeister in his essay, "The World I Live In" explains individual's action in society:

"All human beings are born into and grow up in socio-culture environment in which specific patterns of conduct and diverse institutions (hospitals, places of learning, governmental agencies, etc.), reflect historically developed valuations commitments. To such environments individuals respond in complexly varied ways. They may readily accept some aspects of the established patterns because they find them to be congenial to their own potentialities and aspirations, and they may react critically to other aspects, adjusting to them the best they can or rejecting them outright, opposing to them their own valuations, their own vision of what human existence should be. And such responds

provide the dynamics of all socio-cultural development."<sup>2</sup>

Hemingway's protagonist, true to Hemingway's existentialistic perspective, got killed alienated without monetary gains. In the end of his life, Harry took everything easy that he should have taken before. He struggled hard to exist in the world but he perished quickly in the struggle. All social phenomena start here and end here in the world, with the life of human. In fact, novel delineates that Conch's situation is, on an average, bad to a suicidal state unless there is some side business to support them. Boating business is not self-sufficient to support Conch; economically, it is an unsuccessful profession and insecure as well. The low economic business is the cause of so many other problems, man-woman relationships, friendships, and other human relations get affected. So, the economic state has affected the Conch's social status; the facts all the more proved that "Cubans were bad luck for conchs", (p.256) in the words of Marie Morgan.

Depression of modern American unsuccessful life has broken Harry. He is quite busy in removing remorse in liquor and man. Both are finishing the feelings of sensitivity of the energetic man actually in the control of destiny. His life seemed a continuous effort to exist but it proved to be total destruction by his efforts to support his family while his ultimate, absolute action supported humanism and social cause. Suddenly, he acted for a right cause. He accepted his lot and destiny, and won his case in his soul. This kind of anarchic social state, because of economy, can be seen anywhere and amongst any class, and creed and in America too. Realism is traced in the existential struggle of man; as it has been Hemingway's approach to treat life in the Twentieth-century novels realistically.

His protagonists keep their choice to do or die; again die can be a killing or suicide, like Hemingway's life itself. In making choice he appears as if Hemingway's prototype. Explaining Harry's pride in his choice against his destiny Writ Williams says:

"Like all Hemingway protagonists, he seems fated to catastrophe at the hands of tragic necessity, but unlike earlier, he fights back,

in pride and aloneness. His pride become 'hubris; his belief that he can survive alone, and even triumph alone, is a misunderstanding that ultimately kills him and precipitates catastrophe as finality.'<sup>3</sup>

Refuting the point it is necessary to say that his choice was so sudden that Harry had no time to think further; moreover, there was no choice to him except fighting. At least, he was the winner of his action like Robert Jordan. Point is worth noticing that he had no regret for his choice of action at the time of his death. He confronted destiny bravely. It means autobiographical in Hemingway's perception that he dissimulates life to that much extend in his fiction that simple survival of man is like his own---indefinite, unpredictable, and sometimes almost impossible---as he himself committed suicide, his idea revolves round the death; hence his perspective on life must have been existentialistic in his life as well as in his fiction, too, with a blend of optimism and irony of pessimism in them.

REFERENCES:

- [1]. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (Quarto edition, 1603)
- [2]. Ernest Hemingway, *To Have and Have Not*, (New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 1938).
- [3]. William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*, (New York: Random House, 1936).
- [4]. Pearl S. Buck, *The Earth*, (U.S.: John Day, 1931)
- [5]. W. H. Werkmeister, "The World I Live In," *Mid-Twentieth Century American Philosophy: Personal Statements*, Peter A. Bertocci, (Humanities Press: New York, 1974), p.237.
- [6]. Writ Williams, *The Tragic Art of Ernest Hemingway*, pp. 107-108.

Her specialization is in American Fiction. Three Books are on her credit; 2 are on fiction & one is of poetry and short stories. Her many poems got published in magazines.

**A Brief bio of Corresponding Author: Dr. Vibha Manoj Sharma** is Assistant Professor in Swami Shraddhanand College, University of Delhi, Alipur, Delhi. She has done her M.A. (English Literature) from Govt. College Faridabad, M. D. University Rohtak, and Ph.D. also from M. D. University Rohtak. She is a writer and critic, presently engaged in Post-doctoral work. She is having teaching experience of Under Graduate and Post Graduate classes of more than 13 years in D.U. and at other Universities also.