

The Changing Perception of Hemingway's Fictional Women: The Need for Fresh Perspective

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Abstract: Hemingway's fictional women remain largely misunderstood and misjudged by many critics and scholars. A number of studies tried to focus on these characters and different interpretations have been made. Early critical interpretations came out with accepted frameworks and restrictive classifications which became prevalent in the literary circles. Later, the fifties and sixties marked a revival of interest in Hemingway criticism, but they did not inspire a new attitude towards female characters, and most of them reverted to the earlier generalizations and restrictive categories. Despite the differences in their attitudes and views, the two sides seem to stress that Hemingway's works are autobiographical, and some of them tend to think that at times the veil between reality and his fiction was so thin that his texts were examined before publication to determine if some sections must be modified to protect against court action. The following decades ushered in a new direction in critical responses to Hemingway in general, and to his female heroines in particular. Writers started to question the prevalent interpretations and presented fresh approaches. They stressed the need to consider them individually rather than collectively and to view them from a different angle and a new perspective and to move beyond categorizing them as goddesses or bitches. This paper examines Hemingway's presentation of his fictional heroines in *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* and *The Short Happy Life of Francis MaComber*. It focuses on the role of women he encountered in the portrayal of the heroines of his novels and explores what lies hidden beneath the surface of the literary water. It also surveys some modern female scholars who are calling for a wider insight into the Hemingway women and for fresh perspectives. They challenge the prevalent male-imposed stereotypes and demand a reevaluation and correction of the prevalent male-imposed stereotypes to allow women to stand as varied and plausible persons in their own right. It is hoped that an important facet of their personalities and character will be revealed and that this new facet will complement and balance the existing images of these women characters. It is further hoped that this study will contribute to the ultimate goal of fully understanding the women in Hemingway's fiction.

Keywords: *Changing perceptions, Hemingway's women, Reality, Fiction, and Classification.*