

Postwar Trauma and Recovery: A Case Study of A Clean, Well-Lighted Place

Shijia Chen

Department of Business English, Fujian Normal University, Fuzhou, CO 350007, China

Abstract: Ernest Hemingway experiences two World Wars. His unique life experience shapes his personality and his works. *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*, one of his famous short stories, has always been analyzed from the theme and his iceberg principle. However, few authors pay attention to his war experience and concentrate on the post-war western spiritual world lurking in the story Hemingway pictured. Therefore, this paper explored and analyzed the inner world that the short story reflects. The conclusion sheds light on the relatively better ways to recover from the spiritual trauma. On the other hand, it is hoped that readers can find a new way to interpret the short story, better understand the author's creative ideas and dig deeper into the connotation of the work through the understanding of the theme and the fate of the characters in *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*.

Keywords: Ernest Hemingway, *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*, Postwar, Trauma theory, Nothing, Dignity.

1. Introduction

1.1. Ernest Hemingway

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), one of the representatives of “the Lost Generation”, is commonly regarded as a prominent American writer. Ernest Hemingway was a legend in his own life-time, in a sense, a legend of his own making. He worked hard at being a composite of all the manly attributes he gave to his fictional heroes: a hard drinker, big-game hunter, fearless soldier, amateur boxer, and bullfight aficionado. In his works, his unique life experience was interwoven from gun-playing in his childhood and news-reporting during the war to the war-observing when he was injured.

Ernest Hemingway was born in 1899. His father, a doctor, loved hunting and fishing and quickly taught these loves to young Hemingway. He gave Hemingway his first gun when he was just ten. Hemingway began to touch the wildness beauty of nature, from which he gained the insistent and unyielding spirit. When Hemingway finished high school, World War I was raging across Europe, and he wanted to enlist in the army. However, his father forbade him from enlisting, so Hemingway became a reporter for the *Kansas City Star*, where he began to hone his writing skills. Eventually, he grew restless and became an ambulance driver for the Red Cross in Italy. After being injured, he recovered at a Milan hospital and in the years that followed, he moved around a great deal, only to discover the firsthand effects of the war and the economic and spiritual disasters it brought. Later he wrote *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* to document implicitly what he saw. Five years later, he went back to Europe to report the frontline information of Spain Civil War, and not long after that, he contributed to the war in World War II. In his old age, he could not bear the pains left in the early wars any more. To some extent, he himself was the sacrifice of the war, from which he suffered a lot of traumas.

Many of his works are considered as classics of American literature. Many people in the 20th century could see themselves in Hemingway's works, for his works distinctively mirror the status quo at that time. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954 “for his mastery of the art

of narrative” and “for the influence that he has exerted on contemporary style.” (“for his mastery of the art of narrative”, “for the influence that he has exerted on contemporary style”: these two sentences come from the citation of Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954.)

However, despite his great literary successes, Hemingway struggled with depression, alcoholism, and related health problems throughout his life. In 1960, Hemingway and his fourth wife, Mary Welsh, moved to Idaho, and he began to receive treatments for his depressions. He died from self-inflicted gunshot wounds in 1961 at age sixty-one. After a long journey in the spiritual trauma rooted from the war, he ripped in peace forever.

1.2. The Plot of *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*

A Clean, Well-Lighted Place is one of the Hemingway's short stories that was first published in 1933. Its plot is simple, but the themes are complex.

This story happens in midnight. In a Spanish cafe, a deaf old man drinks alone. Nearby, a young waiter and an old one talk about his suicide. The young waiter is eager to go home and refuses to service the old, while the old waiter shows more empathy for the old's plight. After the old leaves, the waiters resume their discussion. The younger waiter wants to hurry home to his wife, while the older muses the younger. Later, the old waiter points out the difference between he himself and the young waiter: he himself is one of those who likes to stay late in the cafe, knowing clearly the importance of a clean, well-lighted place. In a while, the younger leaves, the older goes to a bar and finally returns home but sleep eludes him.

Both the rich man and the elder waiter know the life is nothing more than “nada” – that is emptiness. Hemingway is such a master that he precisely catches the nature of life, and pours his discovery into the paper. Indeed, the approximately collapsed western spiritual building is written into this penetrating short story by Hemingway who observed the world around him with his incisive vision. In this literary work, Hemingway's economical language sharply pointed out how awful the spiritual wasteland was.

Hemingway depicts a type of existential nihilism, a philosophy dwelling on themes of death, nothingness and

dignity, recreates the psychological sights and sounds of the postwar world, and raises something provoke-thinking.

This paper is to analyze the spiritual trauma that *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* reflects, and then to discover the methods to recover from the trauma in the light of the former relative studies and Hemingway's life. Therefore, according to the introduction of Hemingway and his work *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*, it is clear to know what kind of person Hemingway is, why he wrote this short story, and what it wants to show to people. Now it is more easier to study this artwork.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Definition of Trauma Theory

The term "trauma" originally means physical damage to the human body due to external forces. It may cause short or prolonged damage to the body, but the damage can be repaired and self-healed with timely and correct treatment. In the late 19th century, French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot proposed the use of hypnosis for hysteria, providing theoretical support for the pioneer Sigmund Freud, who put forward the concept "psychological trauma". As early as 1917, in *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, which lays the foundation of the contemporary trauma theory, Freud described "trauma" as "any excitations from the outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield and there is no longer any possibility of preventing the mental apparatus from being flooded with large amounts of stimulus which have broken in and binding of them" (2012: 241). Later on, in 1926, in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, Freud added that the essence of traumatic situation is the "experience of helplessness" (1926: 162) on the part of the ego which is overwhelmed.

Patients suffering from trauma are full of negative emotions which include tension, restlessness, helplessness and loss. Deprived of all skills and feelings, they defend themselves against the further hurt. In *Shattered Assumptions (Towards a New Psychology of Trauma)*, Ronnie Janoff-Bulman describes the influence of spiritual trauma. In this book, she said, "When people experience a series of spiritual traumas, they will lose the initial beautiful imagination of the world" (2002: 2). According to her theory, at first, people will have the following three basic assumptions:

The world is beautiful.

Everything in this world is meaningful.

The self is valuable. (The content of the three assumptions is translated into English by the author herself.) (Janoff-Bulman, 2002: 2)

However, having underwent the trauma, people will be suspicious of these three fancies. Many people will surprisingly discover that they hold wrong perceptible views towards the world. The world is disgusting, everything is meaninglessness. When something bad happens, you will suspect whether you did something wrong.

At present, it is believed that there are three most effective ways to heal trauma. These are, guiding the patients to recall the scene of trauma, listening to their narration and communicating with them. Nowadays, trauma has become a popular paradigm of contemporary western public political discourse, humanistic criticism and historical and cultural cognition across all fields of contemporary humanities and social sciences.

2.2. Studies on Trauma Theory Abroad

2.2.1. The Development of Trauma Theory

Generally speaking, trauma theory has experienced three periods. The first stage is in the nineteenth century in France. In this stage, Sigmund Freud created his psychological theory which provides a solid foundation for trauma theory. In the next period, scholars discovered that spiritual trauma was mainly rooted in the shell shock or combat neurosis because of two world wars and other social problems. What's more, they continued to conclude the major symptoms of spiritual trauma, such as numbness, aphonia and hysteria. The last process started in America in 1990s. Scholars represented by Cathy Caruth gave a much more well-accepted definition of trauma and dug out the social background spiritual trauma formed, such as child abuses, domestic violence, gender and so on.

The main characteristic of the initial period is to analyze the Hysteria and the pathological study (He, 2014: 133). After the two world wars, and other wars, especially the Vietnam War, the second period arrived with the proposal of PTSD. In 1987, Besel van de Kolk published *Psychological Trauma* to emphasize the dissociation.

In the last period, a flood of scholarship arose to examine the concept of trauma and its role in literature and society most prominently by Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Geoffrey Hartman, Judith Herman, Dori Laub, Kali Tal, Dominick La Capra, Michael Rothberg and Janet Freyd. At that time, the number of the literary works increased, and their subjects differentiated. Judith Herman, from the perspective of the results, published *Trauma and Recovery* in 1992, to analyze the harm of wars and the ways of recovery. Janet Freyd, focusing on the abused children, published *Betrayal Trauma: The Logic of Forgetting Childhood Abuse* in 1996. Dori Laub and Geoffrey Hartman paid much attention to the Holocaust, and wrote *Testimony* in 1992 to record the results of their researches.

2.2.2. Trauma Theory as A Method in Literary Work

Although trauma theory started from the late nineteenth century, the golden age of the literature on trauma theory belongs to the third period.

Michelle Balaev (1996: 67) holds the view that the study of trauma in literary criticism began in the 1990s. In 1996, Kali Tal's *World of Hurt, Reading the Literatures of Trauma* and Cathy Caruth's *The Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* can be regarded as the beginning of trauma literature research (He, 2014: 133). Kaili Tal (1996: 56) mainly focuses on mental trauma, analyzing the influence on individuals, explaining the role of trauma in work patterns from the perspective of culture and politics. By contrast, Cathy Caruth constructed her literary trauma theory by analyzing the relationship between trauma and division. She believed that trauma could only be reproduced through repeated flashbacks, for intelligence itself could not feel trauma.

In the next decades, the theory develops. Anne Whitehead put forward the concept of "trauma fiction" in 2004. Dominick LaCapra "suggests points of intersection among analyses of trauma studies, particularly psychoanalytically oriented work, of the Holocaust, and of the academic professions that seek to study historical and literary writing" (2005: 507).

2.3. Studies on Trauma Theory at Home

Compared with the prosperous development in the trauma theory abroad, the domestic research based on this theory is rather few, mainly from scholars' translation and introduction of western writers' works (Zhang, 2017: 26).

Zhang Zhiyang is the pioneer to introduce trauma theory (Zhai, 2021: 15). He combines the trauma theory and Chinese traditional misery-written culture to establish modern philosophy of Chinese -- the theory on Occasional-being (Li, 2018: 1). From the perspective of literature research, Zhao Jingrong publishes many essays and papers to explain the traumatic memory. (Zhai, 2021: 15). Zhao Jingrong (2015:113) analyzed the three fundamental features of traumatic memory and points out the vital role the media play. In 2017, her viewpoint is that the important of understanding the intertextuality of trauma and literature is to reconstruct a new moral community of mankind (Zhao, 2017: 152).

In recent years, more and more scholars pay attention to the trauma theory, some scholars analyze what challenges does trauma pose to psychoanalysis and to contemporary ideas, further explains the historical conception of trauma and provides some practicable method to recover (Caruth, Tao, 2021: 67). Xu Yanfeng and Feng Wei analyzed the Jewish culture trauma represented by the Holocaust in David Mamet's writing (2021: 143). Wang Wuqian (2021:1) focused on black characters in Toni Morrison's works.

2.4. 2.4 Trauma Theory and A Clean, Well-Lighted Place

As a famous short story written by a famous writer, A Clean, Well-Lighted Place has already been the research topic for many scholars. Joseph F. Gabriel (1961: 539) researched the story's logic of confusion and inconsistency, while F. P. Kroeger (1959: 240) discussed the dialogue in this story that aroused confusion and contented about the original sequence such as "His niece looks after him." "I know. You said she cut him down". And Warren Bennett (1979: 613) concentrated on the same question as Kroeger did.

Recently, Zhang Shengnan (2018: 9) attempted to analyze the story through Hemingway's philosophy of nothingness and then tried to illustrate its theme. Mao Xiaoping (2014: 112) makes a pragmatic analysis on the dialogue of this story. Besides the two research aspects -- nothingness and language, Gao Wen (2015: 62) figured out another research area: the postwar Western ethical view under the three-dimensional image.

However, since literature is shaped by the historical background, based on the data I have collected, there is no related research on the postwar scenarios reflected by this story from the perspective of spiritual trauma theory so far. Therefore, this paper will focus on what actually a historical background was demonstrated in the story, and then further explore the spiritual trauma world after the first World War, trying to analyze the trauma symptoms, discover the reasons and provide the suggestions to recover for those who suffered trauma.

3. The Spiritual Trauma in A Clean, Well-Lighted Place

3.1. The Disillusion of the Religious Belief

3.1.1. Suicide

In A Clean, Well-Lighted Place, the barman said "Otro loco

mas (Tao, 2013: 184)" (Otro loco mas: Spanish), which implies that this short story happens in Spain.

"Spain is one of the traditional Catholic countries in Southern Europe. Catholicism has played an important role in its history". Even "today, Catholicism still remains its position as the main religion in Spain" (Feng, 2013: 141), let alone the period as early as 1930s, when Hemingway wrote this short story. Therefore, we have enough reasons to speculate that these three characters from Spanish are Catholics.

"Catholics are, first and foremost, Christians who believe that Hesus Christ is the Son of God and that Jesus is the Head of the Church". And "essential Catholic beliefs include that God's Ten Commandments provide a moral compass -- an ethical standard to live by" (Rev. John Trigilio, Jr. & Rev. Kenneth Brighenti, 2020: pars 1-2). One of the ten commandments is "not to kill", concluding "not to commit suicide", which is regarded as committing crime. Therefore, for Catholics, committing suicide is a blasphemy against God. Death by committing suicide leads one's damnation to hell.

However, in this short story, A Clean, Well-Lighted Place, people regard suicide as nothing. On the one hand, the old man used to be bent on suicide, on the other hand, the two waiters show no surprise to that. From these three people's reaction, we can find that in the postwar world, people are less loyal to the God, or to the Catholicism.

Here are the dialogues between the two waiters about the suicide:

"Last week he tried to commit suicide," one waiter said.

"Why?"

"He was in despair."

"What's about?"

"Nothing." (Tao, 2013: 181)

After the young waiter asked the old drunk what he wanted, he said to his colleague that the old drunk should have killed himself last week" (Tao, 2013: 182). When the young writer took the brandy bottle and another saucer to the old man, he said: "you should have killed yourself last week" (Tao, 2013: 182).

All these sentences indicate that all the three men are careless about the aftermath of suicide. For the old deaf man, his attempt to kill himself is a sign of disappointment with God. For the two waiters, their insouciant attitude shows "the indifference of human relations and the disillusionment of the whole society with religious beliefs" (Wang, 2010: 243).

3.1.2. Prayer

At the end of the article, the older waiter chooses the following prayer as his soliloquy instead of the formal one:

"Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee" (Tao, 2013: 184).

Actually, this is a modified prayer, in which all the nouns and verbs, such as "father" "heaven", "bread" and "forget", are replaced by "nada". "The prayer of holiness, reverence and cheering becomes a cathartic expression of nothingness," not only emphasizes nada which occupies the older waiter's mind, but also reveals that all the behavior and things are useless and nada. As Lin Baozhu put it, "This parody highlights the loss of religious belief, the result of which is empty and confused life state after the First World War" (2013: 62).

As far as the waiter is concerned, God is no longer the remedy for everything. When facing trouble, it is useless to ask God for help. The older waiter is in *nada*, distrusts in the original spiritual pillar.

3.1.3. The Reason

One of the reasons why Catholicism is questioned by these generations living in the postwar is that First World War destroys the religion system, particularly the system of sin.

In *Evil in Modern World*, the author mentions that God in the Catholicism is omnipotent and benevolent, and in the past, human beings trusted him unconditionally. However, after the First World War, millions of innocent people died in the political war, but God can not save his followers. Gradually, human beings raise the question of the evil in the monotheistic world. "Why would the omnipotent and benevolent God create such a world full of sin? Why was I punished, not making a mistake?" (Susan Neiman, 2004: 56). Later, in this book, she explained the reason: "it is just the randomness of guilt and punishment, along with the presence of good as well as evil, that creates philosophical problems" (Susan Neiman, 2004: 23) as well as the religious ones.

Alfonso The Wise, an ancient king in Spain, once said, "if I had been of God's counsel at the Creation, man things would have been ordered better." For people at that time, his word is an extreme profanity to their belief. However, gradually, more and more people in the postwar agree what Alfonso the Wise said. "On the basis of breaking with the western rationalism and the Christian tradition after Socrates", Nietzsche, one of the philosophic leaders in the postwar world, "confidently exclaimed that 'God is dead' (Chen, Liu, 2019: 37)".

Catholicism still exists, but for those western people who have suffered from the war, Catholicism is no longer the sole reason and meaning for their existence. Older man and the two waiters all understand that "a person looking for certainty and meaning in religion finds that there is no such faith in the real world" (Monteiro, 1974:2). It is no wonder that there is widespread disillusionment with God.

3.2. Distortion of Values

3.2.1. Immature Outlook on Money and Life

The young waiter represents the young generation of that time (Gao, 2015: 63). On the one hand, he holds an innocent view on money and life. For him, money is everything, which can save himself from sadness, disappointment and despair. On the other hand, he was young and naively confident, being busy seizing the transient pleasure, with no time to read others' ideas, care for and understand others.

The following is the dialogue between the young waiter and the old waiter discussing the reason why the old tries to commit suicide:

"Last week he tried to commit suicide," one waiter said.

"Why?"

"He was in despair."

"What's about?"

"Nothing."

"How do you know it was nothing?"

"He has plenty of money." (Tao, 2013: 181)

The young writer thinks only the poor will commit suicide, for money can spare almost all the ordeals. Actually, this conception is wrong. As the old waiter put it, "He must be eighty years old", and "He might be better with a wife", the spiritual emptiness brought about by the age, health, the loss of relatives and the feeling of loneliness, could never be compensated by money (Mao, 2000: 116).

What's more, the young waiter have a wrong understanding of how a meaningful life is. The young always judges his life by the moment, not thinking about the future, and he even said, "I wouldn't want to be that old. An old man is a nasty thing." However, he forgets the fact that everyone is destined to be old, and everyone will endure that period of life. His simple, naive, linear view on life makes him narrow and shallow.

The young waiter's happiness is based on money and youth, which are such transient and uncontrollable things that human beings will lose them easily. This young man epitomizes the young generation at that time, and through him, we seem to see a collapsing nation because these future pillars are crumbling down.

3.2.2. Resistance to the Traditional Values

In the story, when the old man was drinking, a girl and a soldier went by in the street. The street light shone on the brass number on his collar and the girl wore no head covering and hurried beside him. Seeing these two people, the waiters began to communicate.

"The guard will pick him up," one waiter said.

"What's does it matter if he gets what he's after." (Tao, 2013: 182)

Through this description, we can know that the soldier violates the military rules out of physiological desire, and the girl is a whore. Soldiers, in the traditional meaning, are expected to be brave and upright; however, the soldier here regards his desire as a priority. It is evident that he breaks the traditional expectation, shows his resistance to the traditional values, and holds the belief that physiological demand outweighs the grandeur psychological rules. He denies the authorities for private reason and lives just for himself.

Meanwhile, we can find the *nada* in the soldier's behavior. He has no other way to dissolve the emptiness (Xue, 2012: 11). He is full of *nada*, for the traditional regulation cannot save him out of trouble. That may serve to explain why he has to resist the traditional values and seek for a new way.

3.3. Degradation of the Social Ethics

The young waiter, the old man and the old waiter fail to communicate with others effectively and successfully. In addition, their communication lacks respect and understanding for each other, which implicates the degradation of the social ethics.

The young waiter is selfish, indifferent and naive. To the old drunk, he lacks sympathy and is cold. As one member of the young generation, he loses necessary courtesy for elders. And as a waiter, he ruins his mission to serve his customer well. He treats the old rudely, "poured on into the glass so that the brandy slopped over and ran down the stem into the top saucer of the pile" (Tao, 2013: 182), only to drive him away so as to get home earlier. He is numb, actually hoping the old man to commit suicide successfully. Just as what Huang Houwen said in *The Aesthetic Connotation of "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place"*, "...he [the young waiter] is shallow and conceited, taking for granted that old people are slovenly. He is also naive, not understanding why the two elderly looks for clean, well-lighted place" (2011: 25).

However, the old man is also unable to keep the long and steady relationship with the young waiter. The old is desperate and lonely. He can not bear the loneliness in the life so he committed suicide. Even though he was saved, what he does next is to go to a clean and well-lighted cafe to escape the reality. When the young waiter insults him, he just said "thank

you” and keeps sitting “in the shadow of the leaves of the tree that moved slightly in the wind” (Tao, 2013: 182). He does not feel hurt after being treated badly. He does not take any measure to solve the conflict between him and the young waiter (though the conflict is blamed on the young waiter). Rather, he does refuse to communicate with the younger generations. He only uses a few words to ensure the basic communication. The young insults the old, and the old refuses to talk with the young. It is a vicious cycle which demonstrates the distorted social ethics in the postwar world.

The older waiter is compassionate and sensible, but he lacks the attitude to help and act. When the young waiter complains and curses the drunk, the old waiter says “he might be better with a wife” (Tao, 2013: 183), showing his sympathy and understanding to the old. However, in spite of that, he just talks with the young waiter, not going and asking the drunk what he can help him. After seeing how rudely his colleague treats the old man, the old waiter just continues to talk with the young and later turns off the light and continues the talk with himself. He is more like an outsider than a friend to the old.

Fortunately, compared with the young, he is also intelligent and sensible, and has a correct awareness of keeping dignity. Instead of going home hurriedly to sleep with a woman as the young does, the old waiter chooses to wander in the street. He goes to the bar, only to find that “the light is very bright and pleasant but the bar is unpolished” (Tao, 2013: 184) and then “go home to his room” (Tao, 2013: 184). Indeed, the old waiter “dislikes the bar” (Tao, 2013: 184) because the bar is noisy. Therefore, the old man decides directly to leave the place he hates. And he knows clearly what he needs and wants: he needs a clean, well-lighted cafe, or even a room of his own where he can rest his soul and submerge into the quietness and meditation. Keeping a clear mind, for him, is to keep dignity. Therefore, from this aspect, we can find the old waiter has the ability to protect himself from being knocked down or defeated by the crazy postwar world. To some extent, the old waiter represents the potential strength to restructure the social ethics for his remaining dignity.

3.4. Outlook on Life

The three main characters in the short story own different attitudes towards life, and each of the attitudes stands for a kind of outlook on life.

3.4.1. The Young Waiter Living in the Present

The young waiter does not know how to live and die. He only focuses on the present, not caring about the future.

Here is a dialogue between him and the older waiter:

“And you? You have no fear of going home before your usual hour?”

“Are you trying to insult me?”

“No, hombre, only to make a joke.”

“No,” the waiter who was in a hurry said, rising from pulling down the metal shutters. “I have confidence. I am all confidence.” (Tao, 2013: 183)

The young waiter pays attention to whether his wife betrays him, becomes testily after his colleague makes fun of him. His quick, sensitive reactions speak loudly for the uneasiness that his “confidence” is not based on a thorough understanding of himself and his inner world, but on the most transient situations--youth, work, and self-righteous loyalty from his wife (Mao, 2000: 114).

The young waiter also does not show enough respect to life, and he is careless to death. He detests being old and said, “I

wouldn't want to be that old. An old man is a nasty thing” (Tao, 2013: 183). And he told the old drunk that the old drunk should have killed himself last week which reflects the young man is indifferent to life.

3.4.2. The Old Waiter -- Facing the Real-Life Hardships

The older waiter shows his sympathy to the old's suicide. He knows the reason why the old man wants to kill himself. But he is also confused about the life. He suffers insomnia and nada. What he can do is only to find and stay in a clean, well-lighted cafe, which will finally lock down when one day ends.

Faced with the ubiquitous nothingness, the elderly waiter did not commit suicide in despair like the old man, nor did he hide in the shadows to dissolve his sorrows with alcohol. He just accepted this illusory feeling as a common insomnia in life. He is sober and brave when he competes with the nothingness.

3.4.3. The Old Man -- Escaping from Nothingness

The old man knows how to die and live.

He used to commit suicide, for many reasons, such as loneliness, poor personal relationship, a sense of empty, etc. But eventually he was saved by his niece. Encouragingly, once he is survived, he began to live bravely.

“To die needs courage, and to live the same” (Qian, 2011: 36). Now, although the old man still has to rely on brandy to survive, he tries his best to maintain dignity, to fight against the disorder and darkness of the society.

All these three men don't have a clear and correct understanding of life, but the old waiter and the old man is the best example, in the current society, to live. Just find a physical place to put their soul in place temporarily even though their mind is full of hopeless nada and nothing.

3.5. The Relationship Between Male and Female

Hemingway portrays two man-and-woman relationships, that is, the young waiter and his wife, the soldier and the girl, while both the old man and the old waiter have no wife.

By analyzing their attitudes towards sexual relations, conclusions can be drawn that the traditional gender patterns have collapsed.

3.5.1. The Old Drunk -- The Vanished Old Life Pattern

The old drunk “had a wife once”, but now he lost her forever. He is too old to live a sexual life, but “might be better with a wife”. He can have Platonic love, talking with his wife his sorrow, problems and spiritual trauma, involving in the family life to distinguish his personal values from nothing.

Such love is based on accompanying, understanding and consideration. Such love is traditional, which is simple, sincere, and selfless. However, as the old generation dead, the traditional relationship between man and woman is gone.

3.5.2. The Young Waiter and His Wife -- The Morally Wrong New Pattern

They are the only couple in this short novel. Generally speaking, they should love each other, and keep loyalty. However, through the conversation between the old and young waiter, it is surprisingly to find that the wife may have affairs with others, and the young just wants to have sex with her. For both of them, marriage is simply a legal way to deal with their biological needs.

“I have a wife waiting in bed for me.” The young man complains to the old waiter that he can't help leaving the cafe. He is hurried to go home to stay with his wife who are staying in bed. “A wife would be no good to him now.” The young

man replies so after the older waiter says that the old drunk had a wife once. For him, a man at such an old age doesn't need a wife for he has become impotent. In his eyes, wife is no longer the warm harbor who will provide wise suggestions when he struggles, the soul mate who will resonate in spirit with him, the true friend who can share funny, tinny but meaningful secrets with.

Not only the young man, but the wife may have the wrong understanding of the marriage. "You have no fear of going home before your usual hour?" the older waiter asks. "I have confidence. I am all confidence." the young man answered, bit of anger, bit of anxiety. However, his repeated "confidence" reveals his nonconfidence. He practically fears to uncover the fact that he is betrayed. To some extent, in his deep heart, he probably thinks of this question but dares not to answer it.

3.5.3. The Soldier and The Girl -- The Fast-Paced New Life Pattern

It is late. A man and a girl go by in the street. The brass number on the man's collar reflects his identity -- a soldier. The girl wears no head covering, and hurries beside him.

Lonely man and woman wants to spend a night together, they might have a quick love affair. But it will not last long, for love can not survive and revive without mutual basic understanding. Fast-paced love replaces the true love.

3.5.4. The Old Waiter -- A Sensible Bystander

The old waiter chooses not to marry. He is clear about the benefits and the drawbacks of love affairs. On the one hand, he considers the importance of a wife for the old drunk. On the other hand, he suspects the loyalty of the young waiter's marriage. Sometimes, he even witnesses the young's chagrin explanation. He is so rational that through the analysis of others love affairs he distinctly grasps the nature of human: volage, pusillanimous, and weak, and contradictory. At that time, marriage is sometimes fake, and even though it brings happiness, it will end up by desperate invincible death. Finally, he discovers nada, which he regards as the nature of the world. He chooses to be a sensible bystander, like many others in the postwar world, to keep his dignity not to be the victim of the nada.

4. Recovery from Trauma

People who have suffered or been suffering trauma will face tremendous psychological crisis and problems, which will finally lead to the identity crisis of self-loss and self-loathing if they do not receive healing. Recovery is a long process.

4.1. Characters' Ways of Recovery

In this short story, Hemingway demonstrates three ways to heal the spiritual trauma. Besides, according to the trauma theory, the fourth approach will be provided and listed in this paper as an innovative suggestion.

4.1.1. Carpe Diem Without Struggles

The young waiter, a typical character who enjoys his present and forgets the future. His philosophical principle to treat his trauma can be seen in his attitudes towards his work, wife, and the old man. The young man is brash and callous towards the old man because the young is "sleepy" and wants to go home to sleep with his wife, instead of working in the cafe. This man only focuses on his biological demands, and his pleasure is based on the superficial achievement. His "carpe diem" is the result of his obedience to the low level of existence. As such, his opinion on the soldier's behavior is

quite similar. When he sees the soldier going by with a girl, the younger waiter thinks it matters if he gets what he's after. For him, moral rules no longer work. It is the "carpe diem" that virtually counts in his boring and daunting life.

Another example is the soldier and the girl who are passing by in the street at the late night. There is no doubt what will go on between them, but it is quite awful to see such kind of thing happen.

The soldier is the representative of the justice, bravery, and regulations. For every soldier, the rules and regulations are their basic norm in their lives. Among all the rules, no leaving the army without permission is an essential one. However, in this short story, the soldier not only leaves the troops, but also dates with a girl and spends a night with her. For the soldier, the loyal, glorious standards have collapsed, and what remains to him is the dirty peripheral needs for sexual pleasure.

4.1.2. Escape from the Reality

The old drunk is, to some extent, an escapist, though he chooses not to get drunk in a wild or undignified manner.

When he faces some overwhelming desperation, the action he eventually takes is not to address it face to face, but to commit suicide. When he is saved, the next step he takes is not to find something to look forward to, but to find a cafe, sit underneath the shadow of the tree in the electric light and to drink. By drinking, he expresses his loneliness and his sorrow, but never finds an alternative way to solve his problems positively. For him, drinking, or escaping, is the best way to hide himself against the terrible, ridiculous and indifferent post-war world.

4.1.3. Triumph Over Miserable Life with Dignity

The old waiter, portrayed as a kind, dignified, intelligent person, believes that since life is meaningless, one must give priority to comfort and dignity. Understanding the importance of small pleasures, the old waiter is sympathetic towards the old man who gets used to stay up late drinking at the cafe. Recognizing that lingering at the cafe is a pleasure, the older waiter is in no hurry to get home. Being empathetic, the old waiter ponders what led the old man to suicide, and imagines what it must be like to be 80 and without a wife. He considers that "meaninglessness" was the cause for the attempted suicide. After saying goodbye to the home-sick young waiter, he continues the conversation with himself, and then recites a version of the Lord's Prayer that replaces many words with "nada," suggesting that he, too, thinks there is no reason for anything. The old waiter's own actions mirror the old man's; when he goes for a drink at the nearby bar after his shift, for example, he quickly leaves because its shabbiness fails to provide him with the atmosphere necessary to feel comfortable and dignified, which are his priorities in life.

Indeed, he old waiter cures himself by holding dignity under great pressure. From above analysis, he is such a person that he refuses to be assimilated by the dark world, tries to be a warm person who gets along with others with mutual understanding, and insists on staying in a clean, well-lighted place to ensconce his soul.

4.2. Practicable Advice for the Characters To Recover

For the characters in this short story, neither of them find an advisable way to get out of the spiritual plight. Here, we provide a way for them: speaking out.

In the late twentieth century, with the increasing emergence

of war trauma neurosis in Vietnam veterans, a large number of scholars (e.g. Lawrence Langer, Alvin Rosenfeld, Geoffrey Hartman, Judith Herman, Dori Laub, Cathy Caruth, Kominick Lacapra) from different fields began to focus on trauma research and made continuous progress on how to heal and recover these patients. Among the research results on trauma, researchers found that speaking out is an essential aspect. For example, Judith Herman's book *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (2001) argues that individual traumas can be healed by telling themselves to others, which greatly changed the way to recover (2001: 5). E. Ann. Kaplan believes that the core of the Freud's trauma theory was a motivated unconscious. Under such circumstances, traumatic events may trigger the early experience, which have been mixed with illusion to shape the previous experience (2005: 32). In this way, trauma connects past and present, expressing itself in unconscious ways, trauma in adulthood can be found in earlier experiences, or in the "unconstructed" nature of earlier experiences. In order to recover from the sufferings, it is necessary to speak out (writing or speaking) to achieve catharsis and calm, or through the way of hypnosis to reproduce the trauma, so as to alleviate the trauma crisis.

Therefore, we suggest these characters, or people like these characters who has suffered a lot spiritual trauma, to speak out. Actually, speaking out, as a mutual way to say and receive, is not a monologue but "the dialogue between the speaker and the listener" (Tao, 2021: 89). In the process of treatment, the patient is required to express all, which include his or her feelings and experiences, to the listener, and the latter needs to be involved in this communication. For the narrator, he or she should have the courage and a clear mind to tell their own stories. For listeners, they should keep quite and sometimes comment at the right time.

In this short story, the three main characters fail to seize opportunities to communicate with others, and therefore, they lose the precious chance to heal their spiritual wounds. Take the old man as an example. He never communicates with the waiters, though he frequently goes to the cafe where they work. It is a regret for him to understate the importance and necessity to speak out. Moreover, the young and old waiter do not play their potential role as good listeners. If they encourage the old man to tell his story, and shows their willingness to help, the old drunk may be more willing to spit it out. At least, when these three people presents their determination, the old drunk may not attempt to indulge in alcohol and commit suicide.

4.3. The Writer's Way of Recovery

Writing is a good way to express oneself. Ernest Hemingway knows this well. From his works, it is apparently easy to find that he is a master to add his life, his thinking, his war experience to his works.

Hemingway participated in the world war twice, and each left something profound and thoughtful to him. During the war, he witnessed the coldness of human beings, the ruthless of death, and the relentlessness of the war machine. Everything was so scary and awful that he wrote anti-war novels to express both his worry, sadness and hope.

A Farewell to Arms, published in 1929, is inspired from his experience in the hospital in Milan after a trench mortar shell attack. While he crouched beyond the front lines with three Italian soldiers, it offers powerful descriptions of life during and immediately following World War I and brilliantly maps

the psychological complexities of its characters by using a revolutionary, pared-down prose style. Besides, another two novels, *The Sun Also Rises* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, both reflect on the war and write about his own life. The heroes in these two books are always accompanied by their own shadow.

By writing novels, or in other words, writing himself, Hemingway tries to find a way to voice his concerns, criticisms, doubts and worries, to balance himself and the world, and to reconcile with his profound spiritual trauma. And there is no doubt that he is successful.

5. Conclusion

The postwar world is crazy, meaningless and futile, full of disillusion, distortion, restructure and nada. The religious belief, values, traditional social ethics, and outlook on life are changed completely. Suffered from these huge religious, social and cultural changes, the western people experience spiritual trauma. Therefore, it is not a surprise to find the existence of exhausted and numb people in the modern society.

However, in spite of these awful facts, human beings still have to seek light and order to keep their dignity in life. They need dignity, use it as their helmets and armors, and fight for themselves against the intolerable loneliness. And this is what exactly Hemingway wants to display in this short story.

In Hemingway's eyes, dignity is the power of life, and the real tough man has the ability to keep dignity under the great pressure. However, dignity is not the patent the tough people have. It is still advisable for common people to learn from tough men as long as ordinary people are able to maintain the consciousness of struggle. For example, people should know clearly how their spiritual condition is. Once there is something problem, they should seek professional treatments, communicate with others to spit the words out, or write down their feelings and experiences they could not speak out. This is the way which can save us. This is the dignity modern people can hold. And this is the practicable method average people can rely on to overcome the crisis of the soul.

Just as Hemingway put it, the only strength to live on is "with any dignity comes from nowhere but himself" (Chang, 2008:222). There is nothing one can do but to take care of one's own life and be tough against fate and tough with grace under pressure.

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