

Analysis of soldiers home with setting, symbols, characters and gender issue essa...

[Art & Culture](#), [Symbolism](#)



Analysis of Soldiers home with setting, symbols, characters and gender issue.

In Ernest Hemmingway's story *Soldiers Home* we are going to analyze it for 1. Setting, 2. Symbolism and 3. Character. We are also going to talk about gender discrimination. Hemmingway's story is about war. A man who has been away at the war comes back to his life in The United States of America. Here he is in the world that is so different from the world of the war. The setting is back in the United States of America. The setting of the past that is inside the soldier is inside his head. It is because he is in a different setting that things are so strange and weird for him.

The story takes place after the first world War, which makes sense since the writer of it wrote about the war for newspapers. The story starts with an immediate transition from war to state of Kansas. It says " Krebs went to the war from a Methodist college in Kansas." (Hemmingway, 1) He leaves the United States of America in 1917 and does not return until 1919. When he is returned to the United States he sees many things that are different and one of the things that he talks about is his girls. This is one of the symbols of the story. Two kinds of girls from the past, and one type of girl from the present. The ones from the past are the girls the way they used to be back in the United States before the war. The other girls that used to be in the countries he was fighting. And the third symbol of girls is the girls the way they are now in the United States. He talks of girls from Germany and France. He compares them to the girls now in his home. But the girls, he says, have changed. Their hair is different. He says, " He liked the girls that were walking along the other side of the street. He liked the look of them much

better than the French girls or the German girls.”

So the girls is symbol of change that happen. The whole story is about change. He want a girl, but he does not work to get the girl. This is like his work to. His mom tell him to work. But he cannot because the trauma of war is with him. His mother come into his bedroom and say, ““ I had a talk with your father last night, Harold," (Hemmingway, 4) They are going to let him drive the family car. This is symbol for freedom. But what traps the soldier is not what is out in the world. It is what is inside of his head and this prevents him from being able to help himself. He is smart.

Even his mother wants him to get a girl. Maybe she think that if he has someone in his life to love then he will have a reason to live instead of just doing nothing and thinking about the war which is now long gone past. She say. “ If you want to take some of the nice girls out, riding with you, we are only too pleased.” (Hemmingway, 4) This is strange because usually mother not please for son to be riding around with girls.

What is strange is that he already has a girl, or so he say, he does not really mean it with his sister. She say he be his girl and he say okay now you are my girl. She wants him to watch baseball. Baseball, like apple pie and bald eagles is a symbol of the American dream. So his sister is a symbol of someone who has not been hurt inside the head by the war. She wants her brother to be happy and maybe this is why she says this.

The soldiers parents want him to hurry. Hurry, hurry to get to work. They say any kind of work is honorable. Work also is a symbol of the American and the Chinese dream. Because work is something all must do in order to have enough for self and for everyone. So he avoid the things that make America

great even though he was away fighting for the country. The character of the soldier is a changed one. Critic Karen Bernardo says that "Harold's experience in Europe have changed him irrevocably" (Bernardo, 2003).

This is another part of the setting. The people there no more want to talk about the war. And the best way to deal with war is to talk about it. But the soldier get back at time greater than when other normal soldiers got back from the war. This cause more stress for the soldier. "His town had heard too many atrocity stories to be thrilled by actualities."

The setting changes because his mother has bothered his peace by telling him that he can be free and use the car and should get a job. Michale Meyers the critic agrees and say that "Somehow however, he is still a soldier, unable to come to terms with his own experience." (Meyers, 2005) You see, this mother thinks will free him, but instead it traps him even more. Because now he says, that "He wanted his life to go smoothly." Then is says that it had just gotten that way. Then it say, "Well, that was all over now, anyway." So things were now smooth and comfortable in his house and now he will have to go. He decided at the end of the story to go to the schoolyard to watch his sister play baseball.

This is a symbol of something that might mean two things. He is escaping his house, yes, because he cannot stand to be there with the shame of his parents. But now, he is gos out to watch the American dream sport of baseball. This is a symbol that he will again have to face the challenges of life.

This is part of the setting because it is theme of what was happening in the surroundings of the soldier. But it is also part of symbol. It means that people

have moved on from the war. They want to have a life without the war, but since the soldier was coming home so late, he has not moved on inside himself.

Where gender comes in is that it is not the girls acting for them. In this time it was the men who had to go and get the girl. Maybe the soldier would have got girl if the girl were able to go out and seek a man. Because of this he stay outside of circles of his own age. He say, But they lived in such a complicated world of already defined alliances and shifting feuds that Krebs did not feel the energy or the courage to break into it." So he cannot break inside and they can not break outside and let him in.

He just want a simple life. A life he say, " without consequence." But he keeps himself busy with things. He plays the clarinet. He reads books from the library. He plays pool. This is a symbol for a life of not much consequence. This is in agreement with critic Michael Meyer who says that " One of the important symbolic elements in the story is the book about war that Krebs is reading." (Meyer, 2005)

Nothing very bad happen, but nothing very good. He will never be married unless he follows his parents wishes and gos for having a job and driving the car to meet girls.

The soldiers father is also distant. The man does not talk to him once in the whole story. And the boy never goes to talk to the father. Maybe the father is symbol for the war. It is right there with him, yet it is far away. Even further away, it is past.

There is a clue and a symbol at the beginning of the story that this was not the way the soldier was. The soldiers name is Krebs. And the second

paragraph of the story is that “ There is a picture which shows him on the Rhone with two German girls and another corporal.” (Hemmingway, 1) It says that there are German girls with him in the photo. And they were not pretty. Not like the girls back home. But the fact is that he gets these girls. He says because they are easy.

The setting within the setting inside the story is the setting of the house where the soldier lives. This is said at the end that it was good and comfortable for the soldier to live in. But the end of the story changes this all. Also, this is the part where the soldier says to his mother that he can't pray. This means that inside the soldiers head there is still a battle happening from the war.

In this essay we looked at three things. We looked at setting, which is the house, also the war inside the head, and the town in the United States of America where the soldier now lives. We also look at how the setting feel and seem. It seems that the setting is different to soldier in more than on ways. We also look at symbols, which everything is a symbol. The baseball is a symbol of the American dream that even though the soldier go to fight for, he loses when he return. We also see as symbol the car, which is a freedom to do the things that he is unable to do like drive around with girls. But for the soldier it is not a symbol of freedom it is a symbol of now it is time that he face down his fears that the war make him scared to. Then we look for small time at gender issues because the soldier is the only one who can go and get the girls and the girls are not allowed because of the time to go get the soldier.

As a final, we see the soldier doing something at the end that he said he

would not do at all, because his maybe meant no to his sister. And maybe at the baseball game something will happen since it is a symbol of America and because of that plus his mother's talk he will begin to know. Hemmingway, the writer does not tell what happens, but he wants you to guess at it. Here every reader is to decide for themselves how the story ends and whether or not the soldier was able to get himself something to live for.

Work Cited

Ernest Hemmingway Story " Soldiers Home"

Meyer, Michael. The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature. New York: Bedford, 2005

Bernardo, Karen. " Ernest Hemingway's 'Soldier's Home'." 11 Aug. 2003. [http://www. storybites. com/hemingwaysoldier. htm](http://www.storybites.com/hemingwaysoldier.htm)