

01/20/2002  
LIT 2000  
Soldier's Home  
by Ernest Hemingway  
Betty Gilson  
<http://www.artisttrue.com>

“Soldier’s Home” and “The Old Man and the Sea” are two representative works for studying and understanding Hemingway’s style. It is Hemingway who proved through his writing that simple style can be sophisticated when used in the right context and with the right characters.

In the “Soldier’s Home,” short, simple sentences inform the readers about Krebs’s mental health: not crazy but hurt inside and exhausted. The sentences seem choppy, and by using parallelism and repetition, Hemingway conveys the messages of something being broken: the soul of the Soldier. His home is not what it used to be; now is just a place where he hopes to hide his hidden wounds. There are moments when Krebs seems to return to normal, only for a few seconds—that is, when he is around his younger sisters, whose souls are untouched by the horrors of war. They remind him of happier times when his home wasn’t just a soldier’s home.

The story’s style shifts to dialog and more complex sentences when Krebs’s mother addresses him. After one of these dialogs, Krebs confesses that he didn’t mean to hurt his mother: “I was just angry at something” (352). Indeed, how can someone explain the horrors of war? One can only imagine by thinking back on the images from the movie “Apocalypse Now.”

Hemingway does a great job in conveying his message through an amazingly simple style, intertwined with abstract descriptions. Also the title is a key element to understanding Krebs's painful adjustment to a life that no longer seems to make any sense. The connotation of the word home—which is used next by the word soldier, "Soldier's Home"—allows the readers to sense that Krebs's home is now a hostile environment, where he is alone, misunderstood and even ridiculed.

There's a similarity between "The Old Man and the Sea" and "The Soldier's Home." The readers feel the same hidden sorrow and loneliness of the main character, who encounters so many difficulties in the real world. Both styles are simple, with one syllable words and simple sentences, easy to read—although the plot of "The Old Man and the Sea" is more complex and full of symbolism, recurring dreams, and challenges. If Krebs has to fight with his demons, the old man has to fight poverty and real challenges—one of them is represented by a very large fish. If "Soldier's Home" describes the horror of the post war period, the "Old Man and the Sea" can also be a parabola about life and its never-ending challenges.

The movie enhances the book through appropriate music, breathtaking views, and heartbreaking images of the old man's suffering. It also follows the book very closely, allowing the readers to compare the descriptions in the book with their corresponding images in the movie, as well as with the ones imagined.

Overall, Hemingway's style succeeds—through its simplicity—to describe the essence of human feelings, tragedies and destiny. Hemingway's style touches the readers in unprecedented ways and it's no wonder that he is one of the most loved and appreciated American writers, not only in United States but all over the world.

**Works Cited**

Hemingway, Ernest . “Soldier’s Home.” *Literature: An Introduction to Writing*. Roberts, Edgar V. and Jacobs, Henry E. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001. 348-352.