

How I feel about being a fictitious character of Hemingway.

When an author places before the public a false picture, giving it the specific name or implication of a living person, he perpetrates as much of a crime as bearing false witness. The effects are far reaching and forever, like the ripples from a stone cast in quiet waters.

Ernest H. committed many such crimes, and the effects, perhaps, altered his own life more than those about whom he wrote. The effects on my life were not apparent, but they existed. Without the story I would have been proud to admit Ernest as my friend. The association with all the family would have been closer. I would not have felt uncomfortable about time in Michigan. The consciousness was always there, that there were people to consider the story true. Those to know me well - knew it couldn't be of me in fact. But there were always those others who couldn't know. The great mass of unknown people to read Hemingway couldn't know, and my name would forever be associated with a false picture.

Marge Bump -

Friday

Dear Don,

I find myself thinking about many ^{of the} things that you say about Ernest and his life. There is still such a wide gap between the images we see. You are still constructing him from the things he wrote and constructing the people he wrote about from what he said. Ernest's father and mother were not the people he pictured any more than I was the person he made seem a reality. It is impossible to make you or anyone believe that entirely. I continue to feel some doubt as to whether I should have talked with you or written. I should have left the real things safely behind the wall and let the picture live as Ernest wanted it.

I will never forget the time Ernest's father walked to the lake with me at Hortons Bay. He talked about Ernest and the wonderful little boy he had been. It must have hurt him deeply to read the things Ernest wrote and to have his life develop as it did. I don't remember as much about his mother, but her biggest crime must have been in being an individual in her own self, an artist in music and painting, feeling frustrated by the demands of many children. She needed Victorian qualities to stand. The emancipated people of today would run away. She had the right to spend her own money as she wished. Dr Hemingway was a successful surgeon, supposedly able to finance his family.

Ernest was truly gifted. The person I knew was a truly fine person, with fine sensibilities. But he distorted in a distressing way. The future won't know the distortions, and as more people are dead it will cease to matter, but for me, as long as I live, to think about his life or to read what he wrote, will be a hurtful thing.

Love

Marga

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