

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA: 'A MAN CAN BE DESTROYED, NOT DEFEATED'

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Abstract:

Michael Greenberg says,

Ernest Hemingway is one the leading characters in the story of the American literature. From the cultural point of view, he may be the main character. He had a genius for presenting Americans as they wished to be seen; at a time they were not sure how to see themselves'.

KEYWORDS:

The Old Man and the Sea , Earnest Hemingway , American literature .

INTRODUCTION:

He is one of the timeless writers in the world of American literature. He was a sportsman, soldier, boxer, hunter, lover, journalist, author and recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954. In James Salter's opinion he was an intensely masculine writer criticizing the evils of social system. A master of prose he wrote stories and novels. He wrote for forty years' included fifty – five stories, two works of non-fiction, one novella and six novels. His works are : *The Sun also Rises (1926), Men without Women (1927), A Farewell to Arms (1929), The Old Man and the Sea (1952), The Green Hills of Africa, Whom the Bell Tolls, To Have and Have Not (1937), Across the River and into the Trees (1950) , Death in the Afternoon (1932), The Garden of Eden (1986), A Moveable Feast (1964) The Dangerous Summer (1985) and In Our Time'.*

The present paper is focusing his power to inspire to the people of the next millennium. No doubt, it describes a loss, but it shows the hero's dignified life in spite of his failures.

Originally, the novel was conceived in four parts under different titles such as "the sea is being", "Dignity of Man", etc. The novel is *The Old man and the Sea* is based upon an incident of a fisherman who one day went to catch a big fish, but in the fight, he lost his own life to the animal. Instead of being rescued at sea, Santiago the protagonist, returns alone and unaided to his native harbor and his home. The locale used for story is the Spanish Main.

Santiago, the protagonist of the novel, one day, comes back from fishing. Manolina a boy is his companion cum servant. Santiago is quite old, bent, fragile, wrinkled but on the contrary strong, hale and hearty. His nature is compromising, his wants are a few and he is very resolute in his decision. Hemingway says, "Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated. He says he is always one with the Nature Sea, fish, sky and Manolina. Manolina brings the food, drinks, water etc. and brings the news about the world including the news about baseball which has a fascination for Santiago. According to Santiago, the sea is his mother and friend. He loved the sea. One the sea he finds dolphin, sardines and sharks, etc. which at times are his only food. Besides, birds are his hearty companions. Once he tries to talk to birds and consoles the tried birds as in the following:

"Take a good rest, small bird", he said, "then go in and talk your chance like any man or bird or fish". He

wants company of sea animals. One day, on finding no fish, he returns home only to be reassured of. His not finding a big fish does not make him lose his heart. It is said, "But, he thought, I keep them with precision. Only I have no luck any more. But who knows? May be today Everyday is a new day. It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact".

On the shores of Africa, he goes in dream and hunts a lion. In his childhood days, he had gone there for hunting. He says to Manolita, Lions are the great. The next day on his 85th day of fishing on the sea-shore of Havana, Santiago is again on the deep sea, firm this time in his decision to catch a big fish. Finally, he traces a marlin, supposed to be 800 pounds in weight- a good, tasty and precious marine food. His rope works but the marlin is stronger than him, bigger than his boat and nobler. But he admits that man can catch such an animal too as he is shrewder and crueler. He thanks god to have endowed man with reason. However, fishes are his brothers, they are caught for food. But the continuous jerks and dives of the marlin in spite of its suffering trouble him bringing pain to his palm. But he doesn't scar of it. It is said "And pain does not matter to a man", He blames his left hand to have been not deftly in handling the net. He tells, like the sea, the fish and the sky, his hands are his brothers. On being disturbed by the marlin, he sympathizes himself gathering courage: "You better be fearless and confident yourself, Old Man", he said, "You're holding him again but you can not get line. But soon he has to circle. He becomes exhausted because of many efforts taken. He needs human warmth. So he remembers the boy for getting his help and for teaching him bravery in the trade. Every time he gets a pain, a sad feeling, a disturbance, he consoles himself by whispering". I wish the boy was here..... I wish I had the boy..... I wish the boy were here he could rub it..... I wish I could show him what sort of man I am".

Above mentioned first four wishes show the old man's expectation of Manolita for human companionship. He thinks had the boy been there, he would have learnt the old man's professional ethics. He says no one should be alone in their old age". Nothing is more tragic to a man than his failure to secure his fellow beings' help in the hours of his difficulty. On having not the boy, the old man ultimately, prays the One who has created him. God help me endure..... I'll say hundred our fathers and a hundred Hail Mary's" test, No one comes to his help his innate strength. He tells to himself. Be calm and strong". He challenges the fish and he persists in his greater merit "But man is not made for defeat, a man can be destroyed but not defeated", But unfortunately two bigger and more dangerous sharks come there, dive beneath his skiff and they eat the marline leaving only its great spine and tail which later hang to his boat. This makes the hero repent. Now he wishes to kill the sharks: Fight them, he said "I'll fight them until I die".

The old man gets failure to bring his big prize, but he does not lose his heart. He observes, "I must not think nonsense", he thought. "Luck is a thing that comes in forms and who can recognize her".

In this way, Santiago, holds on to honor to remain individual or to live by his code like Hemingway's other hero – Nick Adams. According to Carlos Baker his wave-like courage of Santiago is a rhythmic device through which Hemingway sustains the interest of his narrative. His credo is a like a superhuman. He always adheres to his credo, "Do or die".

Hemingway remarks "everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated". Conrad Joseph says. 'Santiago goes bygone the boundaries of permitted aspiration and wins truly Canadian victory. We can compare Santiago with the ancient mariner of S.T. Coleridge, Prometheus of Shelley, and Abhimanyu in Mahabharata. He struggle for success, perfection and transcendental bliss. He remains dignified even in the face of a failure.

The present paper results with someone's struggle with the calamities of life just for survival. Being a great thinker, Hemingway's most works are translated in world languages. In fact, he is the most widely translated author. Man is not made for death. He can be destroyed not defeated. He should be like truth, may be made to brake but never to be broken. He should be dignified at the beginning and at the end also. Hemingway stresses Santiago's heroism through subtle allusions to Christ and the simplicity of action serves to underscore Santiago's nobility and greater consciousness. Although, he is handicapped by age and misfortune, he persists with dignity, thereby gaining a moral victory and demonstrating Hemingway's lifelong interest in maintaining 'grease under pressure'. The novel is the best combination of rhythms of nature and of human life. It tells us the bitter fact of human life that "Winner takes nothing". The author's style of prose is marvelous tempting everyone to read it.

It may be said that the final judgment on his work may be he failed to do was tragic, but what accomplished was heroic. It is a great respect to a great man.

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