

Hemingway's Symbolism and an analysis of its representation in the masterpiece "The Old Man and the Sea"

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ABSTRACT

Ernest Miller Hemingway has embodied the world of external realities in his novels and short stories he has been so much eager in the portrayal of wars, fishing, hunting, bullfights, brutality, violence and slaughter that he has been treated as a naturalist. He has been a hyperactive man who recorded what all happened around him and that too in its original form. The idea has gained strength by his own professed faith in rendering what exactly happened in his times. He has outlined his credo in 'death in the afternoon' that a writer should depict the actual thing; he should delineate "what really happened in action; what the actual things were, which produced the emotion that you experienced.

Key Words: Symbolism, fishing, violence, originality.

The Old Man and the Sea is one of the most symbolic novel that came from the pen of Ernest Hemingway. He has been governed by reason and had an appetite for facts, he has also attempted to explicate deeper meaning of life with the help of suggestions and symbols. There is a blend of realism and symbolism in most of his novels, like, A Farewell To Arms, For Whom The Bell Tolls and The Old Man and the Sea in particular. The Old Man the Sea is not a mere work of allegory. The fisherman is a person of the actual world, he has been drawn after the image of a person who actually has fished and caught a huge marlin and the story of the novel therefore blends the naturalism and symbolism. Santiago's fight with the marlin therefore has a base of a real incident which is well knit with the use of symbols.

Santiago, the Old Man is a real fisherman, Hemingway himself knew such a man who had caught a huge marlin, Old Man's struggle with the fish represents a common man's struggle

with life and universe, in the battle with the environment, it is not the victory or the end, which matters but the struggle that one makes to achieve a goal and that's what defines Hemingway's,

"A man can be destroyed but not defeated". The Old Man's marlin has been eaten away by the sharks, which have been clubbed and harpooned, by the Old Man he is exhausted and fatigued

and left only with the skeleton, but what is important in his case is that he has bravely faced the difficulties and struggled with the circumstances to realize his object. In the battle with it, it is the conscientious and unshaken efforts put in by the Old Man for the realization of the aim, which counts. Moreover, the Old Man has attained certain virtues, the valor, courage dignity and humility which defines Hemingway's code. He is conscious of the fact that man has not been made for defeat, in his voyage on the high seas, he has cultivated many more virtues. In his adversity, he has developed a fellow feeling for the fishes and the birds of the Gulf Stream. He has learned moral lessons and has imbibed fortitude, endurance and humility of a true Christian..

Hemingway has used the symbols of manliness of man, Christian symbolism, the symbol of lions and DiMaggio, symbol of fish etc. Alfred Kazin has rightly commented that "No writer in American literature after Thoreau has had Hemingway 's sensitiveness to colour, to climate, to the knowledge of physical energy under heat or cold. The knowledge of the body thinking and moving through a landscape that Edmund Wilson in another connection has called Hemingway's barometric accuracy that accuracy was the joy of the huntsman and the artist; beyond that and its corresponding gratifications, Hemingway seemed to attach no value to anything else.

In Hemingway there is a blend of realism with symbolism. The truth is that Hemingway's works not only have the description of facts but have the deep meanings acquired through symbolic significance. His reputation as an artist depends on his art of blending realism with symbolism. Carlos baker says: Hemingway's art is permanent and based on the firmer foundations of his mixture of the truth and symbolism. He had borrowed his symbols from the material universe. The vulture and hyena are the symbols of death in the snows of Kilimanjaro; the fish is the symbol of a work of art, the ocean the

symbol of a woman and the external nature in the Old Man and the Sea. Hemingway has expressed his philosophy of life with the help of these symbols in a successful manner.

CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM

As Christian symbolism in the novel, Santiago can be seen in image of Jesus Christ. The Old Man cherishes the Christ-like virtues humility, service, pride and pity. He has taught the boy fishing and cultivated in him these qualities. In the novel, there are many allusions to the Old Man's similarities with Christ. According to Joseph Waldmeir, during the trials with the great fish, with the sharks, his hands pain him terribly, and his chest constricts blood. He hooks the fish at noon, and at noon of the third day he kills it with his harpoon. As he sees the second and the third shark attacking on the Old Man calls aloud 'Ay',

Waldmeir has traced many allusions to the Christian practices. Even in the numerology, a plan has been traced and significance discovered:

"Three, seven and forty are key numbers in the old and new testaments. The Old Man as the story opens has fished alone for forty-four days and with the boy for forty more. The Old Man trial With the great fish lasts exactly three days: the fish is landed on the seventh attempt; seven sharks are killed: and although Christ fell only three times under the cross, the Old Man had to rest from the weight of the mast seven times, so there is consistency and the equal importance of the numbers themselves.

SYMBOLISM OF MANLINESS OF MAN

The above numerals used may have religious significance and the Old Man may also resemble Christ in his sufferings, yet Hemingway is not adumbrating any Christian doctrines. He has no faith in the orthodox religion. The Old Man is not an orthodox follower of religion. He offers prayers and utters, "Hail Mary is easier to say than our fathers". But he says he is not religious. In the novel, Hemingway has brought in prayer and the problem of God, but it is his interest in man who has absorbed his attention in most of his novels and short stories, It is the manliness of man, the power of determination, endurance, and courage, which have caught his imagination. The Hemingway heroes are brave, courageous valiant, endowed with strength and firmness. If a person depends on prayers and god too much for the realization of his aim, it is negation of manliness.

THE SYMBOL OF LIONS AND DIMAGGIO

The Old Man and the Sea is a symbolic novel, one of the important symbols in the novel is the symbol of lions and DiMaggio, he often dreamt of lions on the African beaches. The repeated visions of the young lions seen on the African beaches stand for purity and primitivism as a contrast with the busy life of man. This recurrent dream instills vitality and strength in him.

The Old Man's thought goes to the baseball and the outstanding player DiMaggio in the movement of his struggle. DiMaggio bone spur transformed him into a hero, and he becomes the symbol of one, who has emerged as hero through his suffering.

Santiago's Search for the unknown has deeper meaning. The Old Man Santiago stands for the temporal, the earthy order and he has encountered difficulties and suffered in his quest; but his labour is rewarded with success. The region where the Old Man catches the fish, is beyond human access. It is the fish which drew the Old Man to that region. He is not to be blamed, but he had to pay the penalty. The sharks are the Nemesis. Hemingway probes deep symbolic meaning of Santiago's voyage.

CONCLUSION

The Old Man thus is a symbol of the sequential order, which is never immune from death. The sharks, the passions, and Nemesis symbolize time. The Old Man has been troubled, and his marlin attacked by the sharks. He has been fatigued and drained in his fight, but he is unafraid and has achieved a spiritual victory and therefore his failure is not a failure at all. The novel is full of deep meanings- Santiago, the ocean, the Marlin, the sharks, the lions and the voyage into the far-outgulf stream all are symbolic. It has the Christian, literary, and the secular symbols. The work is the product and portrayal from an established mind. Thus, The Old Man and the Sea is fully symbolic masterpiece and Ernest Hemingway has dealt beautifully with all the symbols in the novel.

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