



Depiction of Human values in Hemmingway's The Old Man and The Sea

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Abstract: This paper aims to expose the human values that are depicted in Hemmingway's *The Old Man and The Sea*. Through out this novella Hemmingway brings out different symbols to determine the values that a human should possess in different situations of life. The Old man does not lose his hope even he failed to catch a fish. Each character represent certain human values such as old man stand as a representative of the person with positive mind, Manolin is depicted with hope, and so on. In order to pursue life in terms of happiness and sorrow, Hemmingway suggests some values needed for a human such as hope, belief, power, optimistic mind, and respect for others. This study explains in detail about the human values projected in *The Old Man and The Sea*.

Keywords: Sea, success, failures, human values, morality

I. INTRODUCTION

Hemmingway is famous for the representation of symbols in his works. Most of his works takes the background of his own experiences and real life incidents. As Philip Young states that: "Many of the stories...are very literal translations of some of the most important events in Hemmingway's own life" (63). In *The Old Man and The Sea*, his own experience is depicted. When analysing the novella in the autobiographical point of view, the events happened in his own life is mirrored. Moreover, he has written *The Old Man and The Sea* in solitude which can be noted in the protagonist. He often depicts women with a negative eye as he has no good relation with them. Hemmingway struggles a lot in his life that can be noted in the struggle of the protagonist as a lonely fisherman. In the words of Young: "*The Old Man and the Sea* is...an account of Hemmingway's personal struggle...to write his best.... The...metaphors...need almost no translation" (126). Hemmingway being a struggling person as a writer wants his readers to enlighten about the values that are very much needed for life. He suggests certain values that one should practice when he/she is in a difficult situation of life. *The Old Man and The Sea* have been written with simple language but have deep inner meanings.

The Old Man and The Sea is the depiction of the survival of the mankind that can be revealed through the life journey of Santiago, who is the protagonist of the novel. The thorn full paths approach all the parts of his life but he follows certain values and shows the optimistic mind towards life. He stands as a representative of a sincere fisherman through his constant hard work. He tries to bring out a true picture of a human life and teaches the humans to withstand all the problems that come across. His optimistic mind is exposed as a great jewel for the human beings. He travels alone for about eighty four days in order to get a great reward which he aims is a large fish. The successful life of every individual is the result of optimistic mind. Hemmingway projects that one should possess a positive mind in order to live a fruitful life. Santiago who is an old fisherman struggles with the positive mind and he survives alone in the sea. The outcome of his optimistic mind can be depicted through the entire life journey of Santiago. Each step that Santiago crossed in his life has been so painful for him. The optimistic mind helped him to survive in all steps. Hemmingway projects a great human value to all his readers with the life of Santiago, a definite fisherman.

Hemmingway projects different things that pass the life of a normal person. Among that struggle is the inevitable one. Santiago tried hard to survive and through him the value of struggle can be noted. When a person travels through sea in a boat is the painful event. They undergo severe attack of sun, air and the salt water surrounding them; moreover the physical pains attack them more. As such in the Journey of Santiago, he undergoes a severe pain in his left hand and he finds difficult to tie the rope tightly which also resulted in the burning of his hand due to the power of rope. Without losing the hope he manages to do his work:

He woke with the jerk of his right fist coming up against his face and the line burning out through his right hand. He had no feeling of his left hand but he broke all he could with his right and the line rushed out. Finally his left hand found the line and he leaned back against the line and now it burned his back and his left hand, and his left hand was taking all the strain and cutting badly. (29).

Santiago is an old man but he possesses the great power in his body. The will power of Santiago helped him to hold the fish. Moreover he got a lot of pain in his body in his attempt to hold the fish. He has been injured in his forehead and also experienced pain in his hands and eyes too:

"For an hour the old man had been seeing black spots before his eyes and the sweat salted his eyes and salted the cut over his eye and on his forehead. He was not afraid of the black spots. They were normal at the tension that he was pulling on the line." (31). Santiago is ready to accept all his pains. All he needed is to get success and has a mind to struggle to achieve his dream. He does not complain his pain and he agrees that the path of success will be very hard and he says: "I must hold his pain where it is, he thought. Mine does not matter. I can control mine. But his pain could drive him mad." (31).

Hope is the another human value projected by Hemmingway through the life of Santiago. The fisherman Santiago goes in to the deep sea in search of big fish. He has the hope in his mind that he will come back with the fish that he aims. With the value hope he approaches to the depth of sea. Eventhough he travelled for about eighty four days he failed to get a fish. But after these long days he has not loosed his hope. He travels with the same excitement and expectation for a big fish. When the boat travelled through the centre of the sea, to his surprise a fish caught in the hook and he found difficult to raise the fish to the boat. Before entering in to the sea, he aimed for a great fish and he knows that he is alone and it may be a difficult task to raise the fish to the surface. But he approached the sea with lot of hope and will power. While lifting the fish to the surface he is aware of the fact that he is in need of more power and energy and says: "I wish I could see him. I wish I could see him only once to know what I have against me." (15). He is also aware that he is far beyond the shore and he thinks that the marlin fish will move towards the shore: "He's headed north," the old man said. The current will have set us far to the eastward, he thought. I wish he would turn with the current." (18). He had a lot of hope and he is in a path to get a good reward:

Luck is a thing that comes in many forms and who can recognize it? I would take some though in any form and pay what they asked. I wish I could see the glow from the lights, he thought. I wish too many things. But that is the thing I wish for now. He tried to settle more comfortably to steer and from his pain he knew he was not dead. He saw the reflected glare of the lights of the city at what must have been around ten o'clock at night. (42)

Hemmingway projects the value of having optimistic thinking through the course of the novel. Optimistic mind is another means of hope which takes its way to achieve success. If a person shows his mind towards hope, it is concluded that the person is with positive thinker. When a person thinks in a positive way he becomes an optimist. Santiago is an optimist. He has all the qualities of a positive thinker. The extreme positive mind of Santiago can be revealed when he is put on to a condition that he should take the fish alive to the shore. He knows nothing to take the path but he manages to have a positive thought and he firmly believes that he can do it and everything will move in a great way: "What I will do if he decides to go down, I don't know. What I'll do if he sounds and dies I don't know. But I'll do something. There are plenty of things I can do. I have no cramps and I feel strong. It is he that has the hook in his mouth." (15). The hope and courageous mind of the fisherman helps him to think in a positive way: "You better be fearless and confident yourself, old man," he said. (30). Santiago is sure that a positive mind will help a person to reach their goals. In order to achieve the hardest thing he withstands with the will power: Pull, hands, he thought. Hold up, legs. Last for me, head. Last for me. You never went. This time I'll pull him over. You must keep your head clear. Keep your head clear and know how to suffer like a man. Or a fish, he thought. "Clear up, head," he said in a voice he could hardly hear. "Clear up." (32). The survival of the fisherman counts the importance of human values. The positive thinking accompanied with hope makes him to survive which is a great lesson for all the readers. Even though the journey in the boat seems to be a difficult one, he manages to continue his journey with a mind of optimism. He urged to bring the marlin fish alive where on the way it has been attacked by several sharks and he struggled a lot to save his marlin. He even loosed his weapon that he kept to catch the fish. The human values are depicted by Hemmingway through the ways Santiago struggles to survive. The only value that helped him to survive is the hope and positive thinking. In the words of Peale related with Keller "By supplying attitudes of faith to the mind, it can increase energy thus the strength that is beneficial to achieve one's hopes and dreams to occur" (Peale, 2014:9). And in the words of Seligman regarding optimistic mind is "non-negative thinking, it is someone's ability in changing the destructive things he says to himself when he experiences the setbacks that life deals all of him (Martine Seligman, 2006: 15).

In the present world, the young generation fails to tackle the hurdles that approach their life. Hemmingway through the depiction of the character Santiago gives a good lesson to all the human beings. The values exposed in *The Old Man and The Sea* is explored in the previous lines. In order to express the values the author uses certain symbols. The usage of symbols is the trend applied by Hemmingway in his writings and he is known for that. The symbols may represent the ideas, image of things, thoughts or feelings. Burger in Satoto says that symbol is the key to open the door which closes our unconscious feeling and trust through the deep research and symbols become a message of unconsciousness (Keller, 162-163). Hemmingway attempts to provide his readers with a book which is interesting, and easily understandable. The symbols that he uses is thought provoking that suits the values of human beings. The usage of such symbols gives larger meanings. He has used sea, big fish, animals, birds, sun, Joe etc where all the symbols represent the life.

The sea is one of the major symbols used by the author. It is a universal symbol that the author uses. It stands for the world. The world comprises all the living organisms from the base level to higher level in the same way the sea is a reservoir for lot of living organisms from the smaller level to larger level. Human beings can attain all the things found in the nature easily and some with difficulties. In the words of the author "He was very fond of flying fish as they were his principal friends on the ocean. He was sorry for the birds, especially for the small delicate dark terns that were always flying and looking and almost never finding, and he thought, "The birds have a harder life than we do except for the robber birds and the heavy strong ones. Why did they make birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel? She is kind and very beautiful. But she can be so cruel and it comes so suddenly and such birds that fly, dipping and hunting, with their small sad voices are made too delicately for the sea." (20). Hemmingway depicts sun for the joyful movement. The appearance of the sun provides Santiago with happiness as it tells him that the weather will be good and he can continue his job easily and safely. The fulfilment and happiness of the protagonist is described through the following words: "The strange light the sun made in the water, now that the sun was higher, meant good weather and so did the shape of the clouds over the land" (24). Night is always portrayed with darker part of life. In *The Old Man and The Sea* too Hemmingway gives night for the depiction of agony. The old man is not so active during the night time. He cant do great things. In the words of the Old man "I can do nothing with him and he can do nothing with me, he thought. Not as long as he keeps this up. Once he stood up and urinated over the side of the skiff and looked at the stars and checked his course". (33) As Lion stands for courage, power in all aspects, the author provides the symbol of Lion towards the end of the pages of the novel. He returns to shore with a fish and he lays down to take rest but he never stops there and he further make dreams to pursue his journey. He had all the healthy foods in order to retain his lost physical strength. "Up the road, in his shack, the old man was sleeping again. He was still sleeping on his face and the boys were sitting by him watching him. The old man was dreaming about the lions". (92)

Hemmingway projects the image of the old man to express the person with a positive mind. He is a ocean for all the good values that a man should possess to achieve a successful life. He has hope to go in to the deep sea, has a belief to stand erect to the hurdles, he cares to love all the creatures irrespective of human or non human. Above all he had an optimistic mind. The hope towards his life can be depicted through the following words: "only I have no luck any more. but who knows? maybe today. every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky. but I would rather be exact. then when luck comes you are ready". (22) "But man is not made for defeat," he said. "A man can be destroyed but not defeated. 'I am sorry that I killed the fish thought, he thought. Now the bad time is coming and I do not even have the harpoon. The dentuso is cruel and able and strong and intelligent. But I was more intelligent than he was." (p.71). In the views of the oldman, the difficulties in life has a solution and they can be solved easily. The boy named Manolin represents the hope and he is considered to be the strength of the oldman's upcoming life. In his words "I wish I had the boy, 'the old man said aloud.. 'I'm being towed by a fish and I'm the towing bitt.. I could make the line fast." (31). Hemmingway brings the image of birds to represent the helpers. One cannot live without the assistance of others. In several ways the birds helped the oldman. He keenly observed the direction where the birds fly. He can catch the big fish with the help of the birds that show the direction. In the words of the oldman: "If they don't travel too fast I will get into them, the old man thought, and he watched the school working the water white and the bird now dropping and dipping into the bait fish that were forced to the surface in their panic.. 'The bird is a great help,' the old man said". (26). In the sea journey of the old man the shark is considered to be the trouble and problem. Through out the life of the human beings there will be lot of trouble. Here the old man handles the shark in a great way and he didn't lose hope by seeing the shark. In the words of the old man regarding the shark which showed its face as struggle: "He did not like to look at the fish any more since they had been mutilated. When the fish

had been hit it was as though he himself were hit. (74)They must have taken a quarter of him and of the best meat,' he said aloud. (90)

Thus Hemingway projects the human values through the journey of the oldman. He uses lot of symbols in a way to express the human values. He is in a way to regain the lost human values and to provide hope to the younger generation and also to the entire mankind. He uses The Old Man and The Sea as a platform that gives awareness to the readers and to the entire mankind. These values serve as the path for the successful life.

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