

The influence of ‘morality’ in the novel ‘the old man and the sea’ by Ernest Hemingway

Ramesh Kumar Shukla

Assistant professor & Head, Department of English, M. L. K. P. G. College, Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

Ernest Hemingway (July 21, 1899 -July2, 1961) was an eminent scholar and proficient literary giant. He had an excellent academic credential. He was not only an American novelist, journalist, short – story writer but also a sportsman. He had an invincible courage in himself. His firm faith in honesty, loyalty, universal brotherhood, spirituality, morality, love, truth, action can be seen in his novel ‘The Old Man and the Sea’. In fact Santiago is his protagonist. He has firm faith in action rather than fruits of actions. His novel ‘The Old Man and the Sea’ is considered the classical epic in American literature. He won Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1953. He was also awarded Noble Prize in literature in 1954. Like Mark Twain, Stephen and Sinclair Lewis, Hemingway was also a journalist before becoming a novelist.

Keywords: proficient, literary giant, sportsman, invincible, courage, faith, honesty, loyalty, universal brotherhood, spirituality, truth, action, protagonist

Introduction

Ernest Hemingway’s novel ‘The Old Man And The Sea’ emphasizes certain human and moral values like confidence, courage, endurance, love, respect compassion, humility and So on. The novel deals in symbolic terms with “the theme of undefeated.” In fact Santiago represents the human mind which defies all difficulties.

Santiago Says

“A man can be destroyed but not defeated.”

Santiago may have been defeated by the sharks. But he has essentially won a moral victory. So the novel brings out the essential invincibility of the human spirit. From this point of view the moral significance of the novel is highly commendable. Moreover, Santiago’s love for the various creatures of the sea shows his deep sympathy with them. He is sorry for the birds because they have a harder life than human beings.

Santiago says

“Why did they made birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel”?

He also loves green turtles and hawksbills with their elegance, their speed and their great value.

Santiago as a mentor

If we observe minutely, we can see that Santiago is mentor, old man or spiritual father. And Manolin is pupil, boy or youth. But fishing is the way of life for both of them. Santiago accepts that inevitability of the natural order, in which every creatures are either predator or prey.

Santiago Says

“I do not care who kills who”.

So, Santiago admits that he did not kill the fish only to keep alive. He killed it for pride and because he is a fisherman. He loved it when it was alive and he loved it after.

Santiago as a skilled fisherman

Santiago is a skilled fisherman. But at the same time he is kind and virtuous. He loves to each and every sea-creatures also. His dedication to his craft separates him from the pragmatic fishermen. He is different from other fisherman and a village fishing culture. His motto of life is to live with great fervor and nobility. He believes that it is sufficient for human being to use his skills and nature’s gift to the best of his ability. Santiago is an expert who knows the tricks of his fisherman’s craft. His eyes remain cheerful and undefeated. He has everlasting hope, faith dream, resolution and even hardship.

Santiago Says

“No one should be alone in their old age...But it is unavoidable.”

Further he says

“Fish, I’ll stay with you until I am dead”

This shows that he was honest by heart, liver and brain towards his profession of life.

Heroism of Santiago- Having gone eighty four days without a catch, Santiago has become dependent upon the young boy namely Manolin. He was also thinking about other friends in the village. It was the boy Manolin who helps up his confidence and hope. Manolin brings him cloths and such necessities as water and soap. Moreover, Martin, the restaurant owner, also used to send food for him. As the sharks tear more flesh from the great Marlin, and the boat gets closer to the sea shore, the old man’s sense of his relationship to the boy deepens. He is thinking that only the boy will worry about him.

Santiago says- “How pleasant it was to have someone to talk to instead of speaking only to himself and to the sea.”

Manolin always admires the importance of Santiago in his own life. He has unshaken faith in Santiago.

Heroism of Santiago

Santiago rows for beyond the customary fishing area. He catches a great fish after eighty four days. The fish, Marlin is so great that it pulls his boat even farther out. So he cannot get back in time to prevent the Marlin being consumed by the sharks. In fact Nature proves boundless opportunities for the great experience if a human being has the pluck to accept the challenge. Santiago did the same. So the unusual reverential feeling of the boy Manolin for Santiago is further reinforced. Everyone has been uplifted by the experience. The world has not only contained the possibility of heroic adventure, the world essentially has continuity. Therefore, Santiago has been training Mnohin to pick up after him. The world is thus an endless series of possibilities and affirmation. Santiago is heroic even in his bad luck also. Only a heroic fisherman would be allowed to go for eighty four days without catching a single fish.

Santiago as a code hero

It is Santiago who illustrates the value of life. In the life of human being some essential talents are required as courage, dedication, dignity, endurance and conscientiousness. The man may be wholly down on his luck. But he can make his life successful by applying the technique, the craft and the skill. In human experience there are many forms of both Marlin and sharks. Much is to be endured and perhaps relatively little is to be enjoyed. But the fact of having endured is itself a source of much satisfaction despite the defeat. Life may prove to be tragedy without consciousness of heroism. In this context Santiago attains the moral stature of Hamlet, king Lear, Tess and other tragic heroes and heroines in English literature. Although on the literal level Santiago's experience is much more limited in range and scope than theirs.

Santiago's struggle and success

Santiago is a humble and dutiful fisherman. He believes in his work, trick, discipline and hardship of life. He demonstrates the reality of heroism in his every day work. He has to rely on his own capacity and resources. He ventures beyond the moral foundry of safe life. So he fights the biggest fish Marlin.

Santiago Says-

"I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends."

It is his wish to prove his worth against a worthy adversary.

Further he say

"I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures." But, in spite of all through the struggle Santiago is never without love and compassion for the Marlin or for the lesser creature of the sea.

Santiago's martyrdom

Santiago's experience is a form of martyrdom. The old man consists in do to the best of his ability what he was born to do. He does nothing wrong from the moral point of view. But his honest and proficient deed does not save him from his martyrdom. His ordeal by endurance is never less than crucification. Santiago as a literary immortal-

Although Santiago is only a simple fisherman. But he made himself immortal because of his high-mindedness and self-devotion in his work. He is like William wordsworth's Leech- gtherer. Santiago acquires a high dignity. He has a

human soul in himself. His action is innovative and praiseworthy. He is embodiment of evincible or unsaken faith in himself.

The religion of man

In the novel 'The old Man And The Sea' Hemingway's world -view adds up to something more than a philosophy or an ethic. He had always been religious but his religion was not of the orthodox, organized kind. It is the book which elevates the philosophy to a religion by the use of allegory. There is no evidence of intentional blasphemy in any of Hemingway's works. We can see that the deeply religious are frequently exalted, not in terms of Christianity but in Hemigway's own terms. And he has deep faith in action, honesty, self-confidence and truthfulness. Hemingway reveals the misfortune of war through the use of symbolism and themes. We can sea that the mountains, sea water, rain, cold and rough weather all are symbols of war. Humility of

Santiago

Santiago has full faith in his decision and action both. He has pride in his deeds.

Santiago says

"Humility was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride."

Santiago is thoroughly conscious about himself and his profession as a proficient fisher-man. He knows his strength and his inner feelings. It is Santiago's pride which encourages him to travel so far out into the sea beyond the all people in the world. He wants only to catch Marlin. But he has a soft corner, love and respect for sea creatures at the same time.

Resemblance with classical tragedies

'The old Man and the Sea' is a an unique tale of humility pride, endurance, courage and determination. It is classical not only technically in its design and fatal flaw. But it also classical in spirit. It is much in the spirit of the Greek tragedies in which men fight against great odds and win moral victories. It is full of unforgettable gimps of what stature a man may achieve.

Santiago as a superb craft man

Thought the novel Santiago has unconquerable will or desire. The boy, Manolin calls him the best fisherman.

Manolin says-

"There are many good fishermen and some great ones. But there is only you."

This is why Santiago is not only an ordinary fisherman but he is also such type of superb craft man who knows his business thoroughly. He always practices it with great care and skill. He keeps his fishing lines straight where others allow them to drift with the stream of water. He never underestimates luck. But he at all times believes in exactness.

Conclusion

Thus, we can say that Santiago is doubtlessly immortal figure in the literary world of Hemingway. There is an abundance of meaning in this story. Santiago has a massage for all of us. The massage is that while a man may grow old

and be wholly down on the luck. But he has dare and stick to the rules. The novel 'The Old Man and the Sea' is a representation of life as a struggle against unconquerable natural forces in which a kind of victory is possible. It is an epic metaphor of life. Doubtlessly, Santiago has full faith in the preaching of Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta.

''Karmanye vadhikaraste ma phalesheu kada chana.''

-Shrimad Bhagwat Geeta

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