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Exploring The Concept of Inevitable and Optimistic Struggle In The Light Of Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea

Aqib Khan*

Research Scholar (English Literature) @IELL, University of Sindh, Jamshoro
Teaching Assistant for English Literature at UoS Campus Naushahro Feroze.

balochak146@gmail.com

Basit Ali Mastoi

Research Scholar (English Linguistics) at CELL MUET

basitmastoi2@gmail.com

Asma Jalbani

Municipal Officer & Research Scholar

bellabatool1996@gmail.com

Subhanallah

Research Scholar (English Linguistics) at IELL, University of Sindh, Jamshoro

subhanbrihmani@gmail.com

Ghulam Murtaza

MPhil Scholar (Linguistics)

ghulammurtazaleghari639@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The novel Old Man and The Sea is one among the ending fictional works of Ernest Miller Hemingway and it was published in September 1952. Soon after two years of publication, it won the Noble Prize in 1954. It became Hemingway's bestselling novel in no time. Moreover, it deals with the life and struggle of an old angler Santiago who failed to catch the fish for eighty-four days but remained hopeful. On the eighty-fifth day, he went deep into the ocean in search of fish where he hooked the Marlin but later faced troubles to bring it to the shore because of the attack of Mako sharks. Present research deals with Exploring the Concept of Inevitable and Optimistic Struggle in the light of Ernest Hemingway's The Old Man and The Sea. The study shows that The Old Man and The Sea by Hemingway is fountain of optimism because it reflects the optimistic life of Santiago in particular contemporary society in general. Further, it shows how the human strength, willpower, determination and optimism can lead a man to achieve what he aspires in life. The novella provides a commentary of an epic battle between two sides, the old angler and the huge fish particular and in general and failure and success, hope and the despair in general. The researcher employed descriptive qualitative method and collected the data through the secondary sources like review papers and research articles. The researcher has carefully analyzed data to reach the conclusion of the study.

Keywords: *Optimism, Inevitable Struggle, Determination, Willpower, Motivation, Inspiration.*

INTRODUCTION

Ernest Miller Hemingway was probably one among the great writers of 20th century. He was an American novelist, short story writer and journalist. In childhood, his parents sent him for catching and fishing trips that made him aware about the virtues and vices of courage, bravery and endurance found in his later fictional works (Wajdi & Darlina, 2024).

The current study presents the concept of inevitable and optimistic struggle in the light of Hemingway's novel old man and the Sea. Optimism is an attitude to have belief in self and to have the hope for the positive outcome of things. Moreover, the philosophy of optimism perceives the difficulties, hurdles and agonies as temporary things even in the most miserable days optimist people believe that "tomorrow will be better than today". Further, the philosophy it expects the good things to happen unlike the pessimist people who take negativities, the optimist people filter things in order to extract positives from the things.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the optimism in Hemingway's the old man and the sea.
- To explore inevitable struggle and determination in the novella the old man and the sea.

RATIONALE

The rationale of this study is to explore the concept of inevitable and optimistic struggle of old man Santiago throughout his journey of 84 days. The additional goals are to determine the courage, bravery, endurance and optimism present in the character of the old man Santiago. People most commonly believe that the struggle of main character is a great failure whereas the present research aims to highlight that how illustrate Santiago's optimistic ideals.

SIGNIFICANCE

This study is significant in the sense that it motivates people to remain optimistic and hopeful in any situation. Further, it teaches the virtues of optimism, modesty and bravery henceforth it will aspire the younger generation. Particularly it will help the people who feel depressed after being tormented by any difficulty. It will help them to cope with any situation by upholding the optimistic values in their pursuit.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to (Shankar, 2015) Earnest Miller Hemingway was an American author who faced manifold problems and difficulties in his life even than he did not lose his imagination and optimism. This is addressed as the major factor behind his hero's being optimist and courageous in the worst scenarios. Moreover, it is a natural fact that humans during their old age become less optimistic however, we find old man Santiago an emblem of optimism and imagination in his old age. Further, (Shankar, 2015) states that most of people are of the opinion that when people grow old they become useless. It affects the psychology of old people and for that reason most of the old people believe that it is true and they think they have no value and are useless. However, (Bandiwaddar, 2022) believes that Hemingway presents old man's struggle, his courage and determination to remain optimistic and hopeful all the long way silently delivering the message of courage, optimism, endurance and patience.

According to (Aherkar, 2019) the readers can take Santiago's story as a real and the factual story of an old angler of Cuba who serves as an inspiration to the people. Moreover, the character has strong self believe and he does not give up even up even after so many failures. He has a strong willingness to achieve his goal one day and prove his capability to the people of Cuba. When he

gets the big fish, he fights the sharks on the way home to save Marlin. He fights with the forces of nature and proves his ability and power to the people who mock him and call him Salao. In short, the novel is a fountain of inspiration to the readers. Additionally, (Alguzo, 2018) is of the opinion that values are important in life because they provide a moral framework for spending life. When the human beings spend their lives in accordance with the moral values of courage and modesty, they spend a meaningful and purposeful as in the case of Santiago. To conclude, humans can experience life in fullest perspective when they are honest courageous and sincere.

METHODOLOGY

The current study employed the descriptive qualitative research method according to the objectives of the study. The purpose of this research was to identify the inevitable and optimistic struggle of the lead character and the hurdles that he faced throughout his journey therefore; it explored the optimism and inevitable struggle along with courage and determination as moral values.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Ernest Hemingway faced hardships and troubles throughout his life but did not lose any hope that is why his heroes are charged with high intensity, courage, optimism and determination. It is a truth, globally accepted, that human beings turn into a less optimistic or entirely pessimistic person at the later part of their life. Contradictory to that, Santiago remains highly spirited, well-hearted and very optimistic upholding courage and determination in the later part of his life. He always positive to his profession because his fight with the fish was not just a battle of endurance and strength, but also the battle of determination and willpower. He makes up for his old age with incredible endurance and immense patience. He is willingly progressive to withstand hunger, physical pain, and isolation from the rest of the world while combating the marlin. Santiago remains positive in every step of journey. He never underestimates his rival and never gives concession to it as we find in the lines: *"But, thank God, [the fish] are not as intelligent as we who kill them; although they are nobler and more able"* (Hemingway, 1952).

Hemingway's concept of optimism and inevitable struggle is reflected through the character of Santiago who underwent a series of miseries, agonies and the harsh circumstances despite that he remained positive and his struggle, spirit and willingness remained undefeated. Santiago's optimistic spirit is with immense and undefeatable courage. Despite ending up every day without a fish, he began every new day with the same hope and willingness. This continued for the 84 days and repeatedly he came out without a fish and started the next day with the ray of hope as stated: *"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"* (Hemingway, *The Old Man and The Sea*, 1952). In the first 40 days, the boy Manolin accompanied him but later on, his parents ordered him to join another boat, which made the old man alone in the sea. However, he kept on motivating himself by saying *"No one is ever alone in the sea"*(p. 22). He had the sadness of the detachment from the boy but he had to keep himself motivated in order to prove his worth to the people of Cuba so the only way was to keep himself courageous. For that he said *"A man is never lost at the sea and it is a long Island"*(p.33).

People considered Santiago unlucky person but this did not decrease his confidence and courage. He showed his level of optimism to the people by saying anyone can have luck of course, but not everyone can have willpower, skill and diligence. Santiago knows this and therefore believes in his ability rather than chance. He cursed luck by saying *"I'll bring the luck with me"*(Hemingway,

2003, p. 91). Santiago's true struggle began on the 85th day when he went deep into the ocean in search of fish with the ray of hope and he hooked the 18 feet long Marlin which was 2 feet longer than his whole skiff. Marlin made the old man struggle for the 3 days and nights and exhausted the old man but he remains undefeated. He felt comfortable in pain whether it was an emotional pain of not having the boy with him or the physical pain of the cramp given by the fish. He enjoyed the cramp and felt joy in pain as the lines show: *"What kind of a hand is that," he said. "Cramp then if you want. Make yourself into a claw. It will do you no good"*. Despite enduring the pain, he remained positive and focused on his goal. He was determined to kill the fish at any cost as the lines show *"I'll stay with you until I am dead"* (p-19).

He kept his nerves and remained a fountain of optimism and inspiration. When he hooked the Marlin, he did not think that he is done with the job and he had won the battle but he believed his challenge now were the sharks that attacked him on the way home. They were hateful sharks, [107] bad smelling, scavengers as well as killers, and when they were hungry they would bite at an oar or the rudder of a boat. It was these sharks that would cut the turtles' legs and flippers off when the turtles were asleep on the surface, and they would hit a man in the water, if they were hungry, even if the man had no smell of fish blood nor of fish slime on him. The sharks appeared to be very deadly and violent which put him the challenge but this did nothing to his optimism to bring the fish back home. When the sharks one after another ate the Marlin, he did not become worried or he did not even think of being Salao rather he kept on believing his luck and said: *"And keep awake and steer. You may have much luck yet"*. He believed in his luck and remained optimistic his optimism was on a level that the sharks ate almost the whole fish they could not defeat the courage, optimism and unconquerable will of Santiago. In this sense, he believed that: *"I will fight them until I am dead" further, he stated "but man is not made for the defeat; A man can be destroyed but not defeated"* (p-103). This positive attitude provided him with the immense courage and strength to deal with the sharks. He fought them until the end and brought the bare skeleton to the shore, which proved his worth to the people of Havana. To conclude, the novel is undoubtedly the fountain of inspiration and Santiago is the man of immense courage, optimism and spirit; he has the optimistic attitude and unconquerable willpower. For Santiago, it was almost a sin to become negative not keep the hope as he himself said, *"It is silly not to hope, he thought. Besides I believe [104] it is a sin"*.

CONCLUSION

The qualitative study focused on "Exploring the Concept of Inevitable and Optimistic Struggle in the light of Hemingway's The Old Man and The Sea". The major aim of this study was to find optimism in The Old Man and The Sea. After analyzing the data, the researcher reached the conclusion that the novel reflected the optimistic life of contemporary society. The researcher further analyzed concept of optimistic struggle through the help of the character Santiago, the old angler of Cuba, who was never ready to accept the defeat even in miserable conditions. He remained optimistic and his struggle remained inevitable even when he was depressed and under the harsh circumstances where he did not have a way to find the solution. To him, the destruction was much better than defeat as stated, *"a man can be destroyed but not defeated"*. (Page 93) This is the living example of his optimistic and untiring struggle (Setyaningsih, 2015). All these findings show vividly how optimistic Hemingway and his character Santiago had been throughout the novel. He was on such a level of optimism that the fearful sharks could not

decrease his confidence rather they motivated him to remain energetic and encouraged. To conclude, he proved himself a fountain of inspiration.

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