

**NATURE OF EXISTENTIAL STRUGGLE IN *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA*.**

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The code hero is the hero of life not merely by achieving something in life or by scaling the heights of social or economic ladders. Earnest Hemingway's hero lives the life to its fullest extent. Struggle, pain, failure, unexpected fight, resilience are frequent visitors in his life. He never turns his face off from the dread of insurmountable challenges in life. Earnest Hemingway the modernist, the existential humorist unfurled the life in its variegated struggle for existence if not for struggle for achieving the fame or fortune.

My paper is intended to compare the life and goal of Captain Ahab whose purpose in life is to fight, his readiness to face near fatal circumstances make us feel the unending and lacerating agony of human struggle for standing well above in Darwinian evolution. Captain Ahab and Santiago both are the unnerving epitomes of human personality. Captain Ahab in Piquod ventures into the deep blue sea in his pursuit of Moby Dick. Santiago, the octogenarian, steers himself into the deep waters off the Cuban Coast in the pursuit of giant fish. Ahab has to leave everything behind and rely on his aides. Santiago's fight is lonesome fight, he emerges as a ever fighting man for the sake of fighting spirit, he had none to sacrifice but he had his own self to suffer and to be lost. Marlin the fish yields to Santiago after fierce battle for emancipation. We need to strive into the annals of lives of those two protagonists to establish the life's vagaries and the consequences which led to their fall or rise.

Keywords: *Struggle, Emancipation, Vengeance, Perseverance, The Code.*

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INTRODUCTION

The two writers Herman Melville and Earnest Hemingway explored the life in its fullest extent. Earnest Hemingway is a noted writer who defied and rejected the use of figuratives in his narration. Metaphor is deliberately avoided, adjectives are frowned upon. Hemingway's style is the real; the reality won't take any grab of figuratives in its discourse.

Major themes enunciated in the creation of code heroes like Santiago in *The Old Man and The Sea*, Henry in *Farewell to Arms* are the exemplified personalities of existentialist modern man.

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

The Old Man and The Sea is a work fulfilled in many aspects of life. It represents man's unintermittent combat with nature around him. It is not only the fight but the nobility of waging war unpolluted by any selfish motifs. Santiago a *Karma Yogi* performs his action for the sake of performance. He is not disturbed by the end result nor pampered by the applauding crowd.

Santiago – is he indifferent to life's unexpected visitors of debacle and destruction?

The question shall be fathomed by the dint of the story *The Old Man and The Sea* itself. When the chord which is tied to the harpoon is piercing the fingers by the agitating creature Marlin, Old man expresses the pain which is the culminating into the bleeding palm and fingers. Yet he calls Marlin *My Brother*, no scourge, no retribution, no yielding to pain but old man and Marlin and fight....they co-habit the environment.

"Man can be destroyed, but can't be defeated" pervades the existential struggle.

"Existence precedes essence" is the modern established belief not the pro-establishment slogan of essence precedes the existence. Santiago's life, his relationship with Marlin, the boy and his unpopular unsuccessful ventures into the sea all are the replications of his principles of existence. We can call it as 'doer and the doing becoming one'. Santiago identifies himself with his work. No ambition in life, no one to look after, no prime responsibilities except to maintain his own body and self, yet what made Santiago ready to face extremely trying conditions in his life? The question is worth asking from the

perspective of purpose-profit ridden human condition. Santiago, had he been the business entrepreneur his attempts and his combat would have been trivialized as non-sense thing. But Santiago jumps in to the fray adding no purpose to it. Albert Camus in his *Myth of Sisyphus* expounds a crucial question that is 'can we imagine Sisyphus happy?' Sisyphus is rolling up the stone on to the mountain peak and leaving it there to be rolled down into the bottom of the mountain ... no purpose; no aim; no goal; and NO ESCAPE.

THE THEME OF REVENGE

Revenge destroys Ahab, but the only survivor of the ship Piquod nurses no grudge against the Whale. Ahab is totally driven by revenge, he failed to see his men and material in the throes of destruction.

In chapter 37, Ahab's soliloquy:

"The path to my fixed purpose is laid with rails, where on my soul is grooved to run"

The above Soliloquy reveals the adamant nature of Ahab's aim. He is still rudimentary in his feelings. He tried to destroy the balance and serenity present in nature by attacking the roots of its very existence, yet he is not ready to receive the consequences of his actions.

"The Old man and the Sea" – The fight is not out of mere mundane revenge.

It is the spirit of fighting and struggling itself. Old man Santiago seeks God's help not only for him but also for Marlin. He is alone unaided by any big machinery. After 84 days of unsuccessful venture Santiago now with his kill captures a grand creature. Spending two days and nights on vast ocean without a companion but pain and exhaustion surrounded by hostile environment, Santiago nurses no grudge or enmity but good will.

Santiago says "I am not religious" and prays "Blessed virgin, pray for the death of the fish, wonderful though he is"

He prays God and addresses Marlin not something to be conquered in ill will, but it is a fight that is to be won.

Santiago finds himself one with the fish. He says "Fish, I love you and respect you very much but I will kill you dead before this day end". The respect sprouts out of recognizing the dignity of his



opponent. It is not fist a blind kill out of disgust or for unjustified supremacy.

Santiago sees the battle from the capacity of mind, free from blind personal identity. It's not just emotion but reason and perseverance.

He says "He is a great fish and I must convince him" But, thank God, they are not as intelligent as we who kill them, although they are more able and more noble.

Battles are won on the plain of minds first then on battle ground. Santiago embraces victory in his thoughts, he endured to live; he endured to kill.

PROFIT OF SANTIAGO'S FIGHT

On his return journey with his trophy, sharks one after one as a band of enemy soldiers attack Marlin's body. Santiago loses his harpoon. He is left with nothing to do but to move towards the shore as fast as he can. The skeleton remains, every bit of flesh is gone. He feels sorry for the way the sharks attack Marlin. Santiago attained victory but defeated immediately after. The defeat is not for his endurance and endeavor but just for material gain. Victory and defeat are seen as passing image of life, nothing quiet permanent.

The novel *The Old man and the Sea* depicts the life and its meaning and on the other hand Moby-Dick the futility of the revenge which accompanies death and destruction.

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