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1. Yugal Jyoti Borah

→ Hemingway's Santiago: An inspiration for the failure

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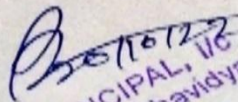
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মুহত উল্লেখ থকা মতামত আৰু
ব নিজা। এই সন্দৰ্ভত সম্পাদক,

সম্পাদনা সমিতি দায়বদ্ধ নহয়।]

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Hemingway's Santiago: An Inspiration for the failure

Yugal Jyoti Borah

*But I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures.
I told the boy I was a strange old man, 'he said, 'Now is when I must
prove it.'*

*The thousand times he had proved it meant nothing. Now
he was proving it again. Each time a new time and he never thought
about the past when he was doing it.*

'A man can be destroyed but not defeated.'

– *The Old Man the Sea*

Santiago is an epic character of Ernest Hemingways Nobel Prize winning American novel *The Old Man and the Sea*. The whole story of the novel is circling around the character of Santiago. However, the novel is a tale of courage, pride, and humility. There is a sense of purposiveness in the novel where the novelist is going to give us a positive message that the world is no longer a trap in which man is doomed to struggle, to suffer, and to die as bravely as he can. The world is now a meaningful place where a human being can show the stuff he made of and thus achieve something of supreme value and importance. By this affirmative attitude to life, this novel becomes a great human document which has an inspiring and tonic effect on us.

This very short novel, which some time insist on calling rather a long short story, concerns an old Cuban fisher-

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man named Santiago. After eighty days without a fish, Santiago ventures far out to sea alone, and hooks a giant marlin in the Gulf Stream. For two days and two nights the old man holds on while he is towed farther out to sea; finally he brings the fish alongside, harpoons it and lashes it to his skiff. Almost at once the sharks begin to attack the dead fish to eat its flesh. He fights the sharks, kills many of them, but is eventually left with his broken tiller as his only weapon. The sharks eat all the flesh of the marlin, leaving only the skeleton. Santiago returns to the shore with the skeleton and, being half-dead with fatigue, makes his way to his hut to sleep and dream of better days.

To take the broadest view, however, the novel 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 for life, a contest in which even the problem of right and wrong seems paltry before the great thing that is the struggle. Although the view of life in this novel had a long evolution from the days of total despair, it represents nonetheless an extraordinary change in its author. A reverence for life's struggle, and for mankind, seems to have descended on Hemingway like a divine gift. The knowledge that a simple man is capable of the decency, dignity, and even heroism that Santiago possesses, and that his battle can be seen in heroic terms, is itself perhaps the greatest victory that Hemingway won. And it is because that the novel gives the reader a keener awareness of the fact that Hemingway regards moral stamina as the most important value of life.

Every human must rely on his own spirit, his own inner resources, and he must endure his ordeal unaided. By the character of Santiago, Hemingway expresses his deep faith in the spiritual sufficiency of life, lived for itself and lived fully. Santiago is more or less a lonely old man who, when

the story opens has been deprived even of the boy Manolin's company on his fishing trip. On his epic voyage he is absolutely alone. The pressure and agony of life, Hemingway seems to believe, cannot be shared or passed on to others but must be endured alone. Santiago's hands are wounded and bleeding from the pull of the marlin, his face is cut, he feels that the marlin is killing him, he is in a state of utter exhaustion. But he does not surrender himself. He must fight as it is his duty. All his strength and determination come from his inside, even the thoughts of the boy and the African lions which partly sustain his strength and courage pertain to his inner, subjective life. He confronts the marlin all by himself and gradually he begins to respect and love his adversary calling it "friend" and "brother" even though he is determined to kill it. The entire experience of the Old Man may symbolically be treated as life in miniature. The Old Man is truly lived, and his experience is comprehensive enough to convey the spiritual sufficiency of what he has been through. And he has already signified his assent to plans for future expeditions.

Through the fight with the marlin and the sharks that Santiago fought, the novelist is going to give us the message of how the fighters of real life also taste the charm victory through the sufferings of defeat. In his fight with the sharks, though Santiago felt a kind of defeat, but the way of the magnificent battle that the Old Man fights, is nothing but a victory. In other words Santiago remains undefeated in spite of defeat. This is why his utterance after he has killed the first shark acquires a great significance.— "But man is not made for defeat. ... A man can be destroyed but not defeated."

Santiago was a man freed from fear and superstitions. Even he himself said that he was not religious. But in his distress, like other

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