

The personality of Ernest Hemingway as revealed in his novels *The Old Man and The Sea* and *A Farewell to Arms*

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ABSTRACT:

Hemingway's acclaimed novel *The Old Man and The Sea* appeared in 1952. Russia too received it well and with enthusiasm. Vladislav Droby Shevski considered it a tragedy of a poor fisherman in the capitalist world in which he will not submit to the dollar and will not lower his head before the cannon's mouth. While in Cuba in April 1932, Hemingway had discovered the art of fishing under the guidance of Carlos Gutierrez who was later named as Santiago as the poor, unlucky, old, Cuban fisherman. After getting nothing for 84 days he, on eighty-fourth day catches a big marlin only to lose it to voracious sharks. He struggles single-handedly against the sharks but succeeds, he fights, prays, invokes the courage of his youth. Though he loses in the end he does not consider himself 'defeated'. Hemingway conveys through Santiago that "a man can be destroyed but not defeated." (Mashram 23).

A Farewell to Arms, another of his beautiful novels came out in 1929. It was considered as Romeo and Juliet of Ernest Hemingway. It is a love story set against a sharply realistic background of fighting in the war and the tension arising in northern Italy. The story centers around an American volunteer painting peculiar pathos of young love flowering in a hostile universe. The novel offers remarkable description of war on the Italian front. It is superbly fused with the private lives of the hero and the heroine

The Old Man and The Sea, shows the spiritual struggle of man to assert his right to live in the world as a man with dignity and not to compromise with life. It also shows that one should not accept defeat under any circumstance. Thus, Hemingway attached more importance to the efforts and the labor than to the ultimate result. Santiago's contribution with the giant fish Marlin and with the sharks shows that Hemingway has deep engrossment in his supreme efforts who never accepts his defeat even though finally he gets only the skeleton of the big fish.

Hemingway's changed attitude towards life comes through *Old Man and the Sea*. The novel symbolizes that there is a reason to believe in man's ability to withstand the forces of destruction and failure. He can, even under pressure, show grace, courage and fortitude. Santiago, the old man, often feels intimidated by the sea, but, ironically, the sea itself becomes a source of courage with which he fights against the giant fish. The sea, for him, is a life force operating within his frail body and with which he puts stiff resistance against the hostile waves. Santiago is in love with the sea, and since there is no female character in the novel, the sea itself assumes a female role.

The Old Man and the Sea, is Hemingway's personal experience of fishing. In 1934, Hemingway had purchased a thirty-eight foot cabin cruise and named it *Pillar* after the pet name for his wife Pauline. Living in the Key West, the author was aware of the wonderful Marlin fishing to be found around Bimini and he planned to use the *Pillar* for Fishing expedition. Hemingway had invited his friend Henry Mike to join in Key West for his long awaited fishing. He was an artist and lived in Ogunquit Maine. He used to spend winter in West Palm Beach, painting and fishing. He was an experienced fisherman and had launched the sport of tuna fishing on rod and reel in the New England Coastal waters, landing sixteen giant tuna in the summer of 1933. Starter recalled:

Hem talked me into going with him to Bimini, fishing and sharing the experiences of running *Pillar*. The deal was that I would fish one side of the boat and Hem the other. We fished for black marlin off Bimini for almost a month, and did not even get a strike. Then one day we decided to troll at a faster speed and I snagged a big one.(52)

This served as model for Hemingway's 1952 Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Old Man and the Sea*, which was also considered as outstanding by Swedish Academy when he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1954.

By the time Hemingway comes to write *The Old Man and the Sea*, the concept of his love develops further. It becomes a principle permeating the entire universe and binding the creatures of earth, the sea and the bodies in the cosmos with the same bond as exists between moon and the sea. Moon is symbolized as male and the sea as female. Moon affects the sea as man does to woman. The sea makes love under the cover of darkness. According to Hemingway man can rise above the physical pleasure of sex - appetite and he can still be a lover of joy of living. Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea* is above the pleasure of physical sex, and his life is still worth living without sex. He continues his life struggle, for one reason or another.

.Like *The Old Man and the Sea*, *The Undefeated* intersects other sub-species of tragedy. Manuel suffers from a Heilmanic division of essences the confrontation between the dictates of common sense to give up fighting and of his passion to continue it produces the fateful, but ennobling and transcending choice. Also there is an element of Hegelian tragedy here, for Manuel represents a 'good' imperative to be sensible and give

it up may seem at first to have no adequate objectification. But if one looks closely he finds that Zurito, the picador, fits splendidly. Zurito helps Manolo, on the condition the Manuel will retire if he fails. At the end, the scene between the two imperatives. Zurito is trying to cut his pigtail, the mark of the matador; gravely wounded, Manuel stops him. The imperative of the passion prevails, and it will very shortly carry Manuel to his death. More powerfully than any earlier story, this one dramatizes the famous Hemingway a philosophic aphorism that means almost the same if reversed A man may be destroyed but not defeated. Hence, the title *The Undefeated*.

The sickness of the American society continues to haunt Hemingway in novels like *A Farewell to Arms*. The doom, pathos, and futility of the human life, particularly during war times is a major theme of the novel. The couple in the novel is caught in the maelstrom of war and tries to shield from haunting horror by wrapping in the illusion of violent love. Even in Switzerland, after the Caporetto retreat, the couple is shadowed by the doom of war and engulfed by it. The inevitable sinister destiny of the lovers gets caught in the shattering disillusionment of war and this is the message of this novel for the lovers. The artist in Hemingway was profoundly influenced as well as shaped by his war experiences, both as a participant and as a war correspondent. He explained this in his introduction to the 1948 edition of *A Farewell to Arms*, as a novel, which is conventionally regarded as one that is concerned with themes of love and war.

A Farewell to Arms is the novel of pessimism from another angle. It is centered around sexual exchange. Federics Henry rejects war and brothel in exchange of domestic life and romantic love but ends in tragedy. The death of Catherine is not to be constructed as the tragedy of Catherine. It is the tragedy of Federics Henry as he suffers loss and sustains shattering traumatic effect of Catherine's loss. She burdens him with responsibility and diminishes his psychic energy. As the couple advances to get more into the domestic life it gets trapped. The couple's crossing the lake arriving to cold Switzerland Catherine allowing her hair to grow longer leaving hotel and moving to the cottage etc. symbolize couple's getting into domestic life. But all that culminates is ultimately the tragic end of romantic love. Catherine finds herself trapped biologically. Frederic Henry finds himself wounded once again this time spiritually.

In *The Farewell to Arm* , to surrender to feminine does not follow from experimenting with forbidden sexual techniques but with forsaking male identity as it is defined in the earlier novels. The male should be skillful and successful in his play as well as in his work and the sexual quest is one of the games he plays winning strengthens the victor's sense of himself as forceful separate male. The feminine component of the male self is opposed to all of this.

Thus, the novel ends in gloom and sadness. Hemingway is highly successful in his attempt to associate the readers mind in war, death, pain, sadness and gloom. Love for woman to Hemingway is the one way traffic. It is one sided relationship. He does not believe in give and take relationship. Henry has no intension whatsoever of loving Catherine. But Catherine loves Henry with devotion. This makes Henry to fall in her love. Eventually, Catherine becomes pregnant and falls in the biological trap.

A Hemingway hero starts with manliness and then occurs something that shakes his nerves. The fear of death comes to him. His reaction is not to run away but to face death or involve himself in circumstances fraught with deadly possibilities. Indeed, Henry's joining the ambulance must be interpreted as his response to some frustration at home. But it is the Austrian trench mortar at Gorizia that brings him the real intimation of death. He is shaken to the core, but the Hemingway traits steps in simultaneously and he faces that consequences stoically. He insists on the operation being done immediately. He does not believe in dallying with pain. He wants to confront the worst without delay. Everything pans out favorably and in a few months, nursed and fondled by Catherine, he is literally back on his legs. Therefore the real crisis in his life comes when Catherine dies. What his subsequent history is we are not told. He cannot go back to his former superficial type of life after his intimacy with Catherine. A Hemingway hero often prefers the nothingness of death to the nothingness of life. Indeed, when Hemingway felt that he was becoming impotent he shot himself dead. Perhaps Henry also followed his creator's philosophy.

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