

THE CONCEPT OF YOUTH IN: *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA*

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ABSTRACT

Life has many stages and on every stage man performs different roles. Child age, teen age, manhood and old age are the stages from which every individual has to pass during his or her life time. Every stage has its own charm and beauty but along with its positive sides it also comes with some darker sides also and especially the old age when man finds himself physically and mentally defeated and alone. Having no more and greater hope in life and spend days to wait for the death. There we find some people like Santiago who live his life as young even in his old age. Young age is valued everywhere in all civilizations and even the greatest warriors and heroes painted in mythology and literature of East and West were young. But there are very few works in literature where old man is having the personality of a young man.

KEYWORDS: Age, Grow, Old, Progress, Potentialities, Perfect

INTRODUCTION

The Old Man and the Sea is a novel written by the American author Ernest Hemingway in 1951 in Cuba, and published in 1952. It was the last major work of fiction to be produced by Hemingway and published in his lifetime. One of his most famous works, it centers upon Santiago, an aging fisherman who struggles with against marlin far out in the Gulf Stream. *The Old Man and the Sea* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1953 and was cited by the Nobel Committee as contributing to the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Literature to Hemingway in 1954, this not enough to write about this world wide famous writer. But as we all know that true identity and introduction lies in the work of the author rather than his biographies. Before we come to our main area of focus let us see some works of Ernest Hemingway. "Indian Camp" (1926) *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber"(1935), *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), *The Old Man and the Sea* (1951), *A Moveable Feast* (1964, posthumous), *True at First Light* (1999).

So much is written on the old man and the sea in past five to six decade on the different aspects of this short novel and its character and their relationship with each other. Santiago, the old man is the protagonist in this short novel he is presented all alone and struggling for catching fishes from the sea and one day he came with a big fish called mandolin. This is not all what is there in the novel but the author has very successfully presented the everlasting spirit of youth through the character of Santiago. Let us examine the concept of youth in the short novel *Old Man and the Sea*. The great Indian philosopher the mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram tells this about youth in one of her article on education.

“Youth does not depend on the small number of years one has lived, but on the capacity to grow and progress. To grow is to increase one's potentialities, one's capacities; to progress is to make constantly more perfect the capacities that one already possesses. Old age does not come from a great number of years but from the incapacity or the refusal to continue to grow and progress. I have known old people of twenty and young people of seventy. As soon as one wants to settle

down in life and reap the benefits of one's past efforts, as soon as one thinks that one has done what one had to do and accomplished what one had to accomplish, in short, as soon as one ceases to progress, to advance along the road of perfection, one is sure to fall back and become old." [1]

-The Mother

"Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated." This is the first line of the novel, Santiago introduced to the reader. He was an old man lived good number of years on earth but something was there in him which still supports him to be and remain young. Writer talks that everything about him was old but his eyes have same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated. Cheerful and undefeated is the spirit of the youth and it has no relation with the number of the years which man lives or passes. To remain happy and cheerful is the nature of young and the spirit of fight against the unfavorable condition of the life build the character as undefeated. Youth is he who never accepts the irreparable; he always tries to find the way out never feel defeated and sad. Badly our Santiago is old but by spirit he is young as his eyes are cheerful and undefeated.

"To grow is to increase one's potentialities, one's capacities; to progress is to make constantly more perfect the capacities that one already possesses." Santiago, an aged Cuban fisherman, has set out to sea and returned empty-handed. On the eighty-fifth day of his unlucky streak, Santiago does as promised, sailing his skiff far beyond the island's shallow coastal waters and venturing into the Gulf Stream. He prepares his lines and drops them. At noon, a big fish, which he knows is a marlin, takes the bait that Santiago has placed one hundred fathoms deep in the waters. The old man expertly hooks the fish, but he cannot pull it in. Instead, the fish begins to pull the boat.

Unable to tie the line fast to the boat for fear the fish would snap a taut line, the old man bears the strain of the line with his shoulders, back, and hands, ready to give slack should the marlin make a run. The fish pulls the boat all through the day, through the night, through another day, and through another night. It swims steadily northwest until at last it tires and swims east with the current. The entire time, Santiago endures constant pain from the fishing line. Whenever the fish lunges, leaps, or makes a dash for freedom, the cord cuts Santiago badly. Although wounded and weary, the old man feels a deep empathy and admiration for the marlin, his brother in suffering, strength, and resolve.

On the third day the fish tires, and Santiago, sleep-deprived, aching, and nearly delirious, manages to pull the marlin in close enough to kill it with a harpoon thrust. Dead beside the skiff, the marlin is the largest Santiago has ever seen. He lashes it to his boat, raises the small mast, and sets sail for home. While Santiago is excited by the price that the marlin will bring at market, he is more concerned that the people who will eat the fish are unworthy of its greatness. Santiago has failed for eighty four days and return from the sea empty handed. But this defeat did not stop his spirit of being young; he tries to augment his capacity as a fisherman and sailed far beyond in the sea. What made his successful? After a long period of time that he has developed his own capacity and potentiality that he possesses. The character of Santiago is very spiritual in its nature. He has not accepted the defeat of eighty four days as he was not at all ready accepting the irreparable.

The piece of interior monologue shows right thinking. Santiago has learnt the proper attitude to life through a refined sports code. The otherwise uneducated fisherman lives out Heraclitus: "Every day is a new day." Each day is the promise for progress. It brings in each time a new hope, which is a divine virtue. Yesterday's sundown did not make

Santiago sad, because he knew that the next day's sun would be more glorious. Besides, any moment may be the moment of a new dawn. Let us listen to the Mother:

To know how to be reborn into a new life at every moment is the secret of eternal youth.

To be young is to live in the future. To be young is to be always ready to give up what we are in order to become what we must be. To be young is never accept the irreparable.

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Progress: to be ready, at every minute, to give up all one is and all one has in order to advance on the way.

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For happy and effective life, the essentials are sincerity, humility, perseverance and an instable thirst for progress. Above all, one must be convinced of a limitless possibility of progress. Progress is youth; at a hundred years of age one can be young.

It is very easy to see how Santiago lives up to many of these principals. His eyes are cheerful and undefeated. He is humble, sincere, and progressive and always dream about the lion which symbolizes force and youth. He believes that the best is yet to come and he is prepared to go deeper and deeper 'beyond all people'. He knows how to reborn into a new life at every moment. He believes in generating a new life into old ideas by fresh realization.

Such is the consciousness of Santiago, the strange warrior who cannot think of defeat. Learning is a major theme in the old man and the sea and this passion for learning is directly related to Hemingway's concept of youth in this living text. Santiago is not a character; he is a consciousness. And it is very real. There is secret motive behind his struggle, which may be clarified by Sri Aurobindo's words from *The Life Divine*:

'The struggle for life is not only a struggle to survive, it is also a struggle for possession and perfection, since only by taking hold of environment whether more or less, whether by self-adaption to it or by adapting it to oneself, either by accepting and conciliating it or by conquering and changing it, can survival be secured, and equally is it true that only a greater and greater perfection can assure a continuous permanence, a lasting survival.'

CONCLUSIONS

The consciousness approach throws a clarifying light on Santiago's struggle, his half conscious effort at reaching the acme of perfection. Somehow, he too knows like the Mother and Sri Aurobindo that to be young is to live in future or tomorrow. The end of the road is too far away. Let the lions keep Santiago alive, for he knows very well that he has no time for rest. He does not "belong to the pat dawns, but to the noons of the future"

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