THE MANIFESTATION OF THE CODE HERO IN THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

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ABSTRACT

The thesis aims at a brief analysis of the manifestation of the code hero in The Old Man and the Sea which is one of Ernest Hemingway's most prominent works. It will firstly research on the background information of Hemingway and find out the influence of the personal experience on his creation. The following analysis of the code hero in The Old Man and the Sea will be conducted by listing and analyzing in detail the specific features on the basis of the general knowledge of Hemingway hero. The main characteristics of the code hero in The Old Man and the Sea include the despairing courage, endurance of loneliness, pain and hardship, pride and dignity and intelligence.

KEYWORDS: *Code Hero, Santiago, the Old Man and the Sea*

INTRODUCTION

Ernest Hemingway is a distinguished American writer and journalist. He is known by the world by his four major novels—The Sun Also Rises (1926), A Farewell to Arms (1929), For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940), and The Old Man and the Sea (1952).

In Hemingway's novels, he portrays a group of people with distinct characteristics — Hemingway hero, also called code hero. The characters of the code hero in the early stage are basically aimless, pessimistic and inert while in the second stage, the code hero shows a kind of unconquerable spirit that enables a man to behave like a man, to assert his dignity in face of adversity. The Old Man and the Sea that won the award of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1953 and the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954 belongs to the works in the second stage and reaches the summit of the code hero. It is the last major fiction produced by Hemingway in his lifetime. The main reason that brings about its success is the unforgettable portrait of the immortal artistic figure—the old man—Santiago who reaches the apex of the code hero.

Many researches on the code hero have been conducted. Some scholar discusses about Santiago's character. For example, Messent says "Santiago is an obviously heroic figure and one who is integrated with his world." (Messent, 1992: 78)

Some critic describes the exhibition of grace under pressure.

Santiago continuously struggles to find hope in several seemingly hopeless situations and even chooses to battle untill the end. The old man epitomizes Hemingway's ideal of exhibiting "grace under pressure", as he refuses to submit himself to the overwhelming hindrances presented by the sea. Santiago often recalls the memories of his youth, the recovery

of Joe DiMaggio from injury and the thoughts of the boy, Manolin. In these memories, he finds the strength to physically and emotionally carry on throughout the story. This is the attitude of Santiago that he will not cease struggling until he ends it triumphal and this is really applicable in life as everyone faces his or her own struggles. (Mohammad Shaukat Ansari,2012:7)

Mohammad Shaukat Ansari also analyzes Santiago's notions for the ocean.

The main character, Santiago, considers the ocean to be feminine and loves her as if she was his own wife. The ocean then takes on a distinct personality in his eyes, for he begins to assign different characteristics to her: he calls her kind and very beautiful and he says that if she ever did something wicked or acted cruelly, it was because she simply couldn't help it. This shows true love: forgiveness despite shortcomings or mistakes. This is genuine, perfect, and unconditional love. Perhaps Hemingway wished to portray a perfect relationship, one with complete acceptance and everlasting love, for this is something that even humans find hard to attain in their relationships with other humans. (Mohammad Shaukat Ansari,2012:8)

Inspired by the forgoing criticism, this thesis will analyze the representation of the code hero in this novella in different aspects. At the same time, some length of the thesis will be devoted to the introduction of the social environment in which Hemingway lives to find their influence on Hemingway's creation.

Firstly, the thesis will introduce the concept of the code hero. A detailed description will be given about the overall characteristics of the code hero. Only by grasping the main general features of the code hero can we analyze its specific manifestation in this novella.

Secondly, this thesis will introduce background information, including the social background and Hemingway's personal experience. Every writer's creation is based on the social environment in which he lives. Through the research on the background can we learn the reason why Hemingway succeeds in depicting the code hero.

Thirdly, the thesis will focus on the analysis of the code hero manifestation in this novella in four aspects: despairing courage, endurance, pride and dignity, and intelligence.

Through the analysis, we may get an overview of the code hero and its specific manifestation in this novella.

HEMINGWAY CODE HERO

The concept, "code hero" is put forward by scholar Philip Young in his Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration. He has named these heroes code hero due to certain characteristics such as the sense of nothingness, grace under pressure, courage and dignity that recur through all these code heroes. (Goughari, 2010: 1) In Hemingway's works, the code hero is the one of action but few words, fighting a solitary struggle against a force he does not even understand in a chaotic and meaningless world. He has the awareness that it must end in defeat, no matter how hard he strives against it, but at the same time possesses the despairing courage. He follows the ideals of honor, courage, and endurance in a world that is sometimes chaotic, meaningless, stressful, and painful.

The characters in the early works of Hemingway epitomize the basic attitudes of the 1920's and share the common behavioral features and psychological attitudes. They like drinking, indulging in casual love affairs, hunting games and bullfighting as well as other manly sports, activities that typical American men dream of but never experience. The deep-

seated disillusionment of these individuals is the disillusionment caused by the First World War. They realize the failure of Christian morality to save mankind from the disaster of war. Such disillusionment also forces Hemingway heroes to readjust their attitudes towards their surroundings and take a more active response, yet at the same time, they are basically pessimistic and inert.

Generally speaking, they have a similar living environment, personality, life experience and the great potential and courage hidden in their inner heart. Whether they are soldiers, bullfighters, hunters or fishermen, apart from loneliness, they all have to combat with adversity, violence, failure, and death. Their physical and spiritual potential is stimulated in the most dangerous confrontation. And this potential evokes great power from them. However, this power will be destroyed by the much stronger social and natural forces. The value of these tough guys lies in their unyieldingness even when they have been destroyed. This is what Hemingway called "grace under pressure".

Specifically, they share the following characteristics:

- Despairing courage. The code hero is usually clearly conscious of the inevitable difficulties that life throws to him. The most valuable spirit is the showing of courage when facing despair. Captain Henry in Farewell to Arms, Jordan in For Whom the Bell Tolls and Santiago in The Old man and the Sea are all trapped in the despairing condition, yet they do not yield to it but rise from destruction.

- Strong willpower. When faced with danger and death, heroes endure extremely pain and loneliness with the strong willpower, showing grace and dignity.

- Dignity. Nearly every Hemingway's work has a failed ending. Barns, Captain Henry, Santiago all lose everything. The real meaning of these characters is their maintaining of honor despite the doomed failure.

- Skills. In Hemingway's works, the heroes usually have exquisite skills such as fishing, bull-fighting, hunting, etc. These skills are necessary for portraying the code hero because a person who is good for nothing is likely to be presented as weak or useless.

- Endurance. They never show their emotions but keep them under control.

- Admitting the truth of Nada (Spanish, "nothing") which means that no external source outside of oneself can provide meaning or purpose. This existential awareness also involves facing death without hope of an afterlife, which the Hemingway code hero considers braver than "cowering" behind false religious hopes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hemingway's life is full of legend. There is a close relationship between his life experience and his creation. The two world wars had impacted his creation drastically. His final choice of committing suicide demonstrates his attitude toward pride and death and this attitude had already been displayed in his work vividly when he was still alive. This chapter will introduce the two world wars, his committing suicide, their reflection in his works and the background of The Old Man and the Sea.

World War I

Before World War I, like many other young people at that time, Hemingwaywas a vigorous youth full of hope for future. However, the war drastically changed the situation.

When World War I broke out, numerous young people stepped into the European battlefield with the dream of democracy but only to witness the unprecedented massacre, experiencing extraordinary agony. The cruel reality made them aware that modern warfare was not as glorious as they thought. They were just the cannon fodder in the battlefield and the politician's tools of pursuing political benefits. Their death and devotion brought nothing to the process of human society. The noble slogan of "democracy", "glory" and "sacrifice" were nothing but lies.

Hemingway was among this group. He worked as an ambulance driver in Red Cross in the battlefield of Italy. Besides three medals, what the so-called glorious war brought Hemingway was nothing but scars caused by 230 pieces of shrapnel and bullet and the nightmare of war.

It was the agonizing experience and the chaotic society that made Hemingway start to rethink the "glory" publicized at that time and what is the real meaning of life and world. As a young writer and spokesman of the "the Lost Generation", Hemingway instilled his question on the so-called glory widely published at that time, his puzzlement about the chaotic world, his deep thought on the real meaning of human life and his struggle to main the human dignity when facing the great pressure into his works.

A Farewell to Arms and The Sun Also Rises is presented against the background of the World War I. The heroes in these two novels are all young people who were physically and mentally hurt by the war. Although war deprived them of everything, they tried to maintain human dignity in face of the chaotic society and the personaltragedy.

World War Two

In this anti-fascist war, many of the "lost generation" who were deeply hurt by World War I joined the war again. This time, they were no longer the governors' political tool but the warriors of the human esteem and justice. Hemingway started to rediscover the meaning of human life.

The World War I brought Hemingway a sense of loss, while the World War Two made Hemingway rethink the world and life. The representative code hero in the second stage is the hero in For Whom the Bell Tolls, Robert Jordan. He was sent to blow up a strategic bridge. With a lot of difficulties, he successfully destroyed the bridge but wounded in the retreat and then died. Jordan is an anti-fascism warrior. He showed us his attitude when facing death: life is worth living but there are also causes that worth dying for.

The background of the Old Man and the Sea

After World War I, Hemingway immigrated to Cuba and made the acquaintance of the old fisherman Gregorio Fuentes. One day in 1936, Fuentes went far into the sea and caught a great fish. However, it took Fuentes a long time to bring

it back because of the extremely huge size of the fish. On his way home, the fish was attacked by sharks and only a skeleton was left. This story was the model of The Old Man and the Sea.

After two world wars, Hemingway came to realize that people should have dream and aspiration but are hard to escape the shackles of fate. However, even being destroyed by fate, one cannot lose the pride and dignity and cannot be defeated. These are the perceptions summarized in the endless and arduous years from World War I to World War Two, which were infused in the novella The Old Man and the Sea. The great marlin symbolizes the aspiration. The sharks symbolize the inextricable fate. The ocean symbolizes the changeable human society. The lion symbolizes the boldness. Santiago—the old man symbolizes the typical code hero fighting against the misfortune and pressure till the end.

Committing Suicide

Why Hemingway choose to commit suicide? For Hemingway, the end of his writing career is the end of the meaningful life, which is far beyond tolerance. He would rather maintain his last esteem than just survive without dignity.

The significance of dignity for Hemingway and his attitude towards pride and death is vividly reflected in his creation. Why does Santiago choose to go far into the sea and insist on bringing the marlin back at the risk of his life? It is not only for survival but also for the maintenance of his pride and dignity. He intends to inform others that he cannot be defeated.

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE CODE HERO IN THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

After the discussion above, the general image of Hemingway hero and the background information of Hemingway's creation have been made clear. This chapter will focus on the analysis of its specific manifestation in The Old Man and the Sea.

Despairing Courage

An important manifestation of the code hero in The Old Man and the Sea is Santiago's amazing courage in the despairing condition, which is well presented in Santiago's decision to go far into the Gulf and his struggle against the sharks.

Decision to go Far Into the Sea

In Hemingway' novel, the hero usually faces the despairing situation. At the beginning of the novella, Hemingway has introduced Santiago's awful condition. Santiago is "an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish".(Hemingway, 1995: 1) His "sail was patched with flour sacks and, furled; it looked like the flag of permanent defeat."(Hemingway, 1995:1) He is labeled "salao, which is the worst form of unlucky". (Hemingway, 1995: 1) Even the boy called Manolin is forced to leave him, because he is strikingly unlucky.

When coming across the adversity, most people complain that they are unlucky; attributing everything to the fate or bad luck, but Santiago goes to the opposite site. Although nearly "everything about Santiago is old," (Hemingway, 1995:2), his eyes remain "the same color as the sea and are cheerful and undefeated." (Hemingway, 1995:2).His eagerness to obtain success never fades away. His interest in the baseball, the recollection of the champion and the constant dream of lion make a clear contrast with the current predicament. Instead of throwing in the towel when facing the despairing condition of old age, poverty, hunger, unluckiness and villagers' ignorance, he takes the step that common people dare not do: He sails farther out into the Gulf than he has ever gone before. It can be seen that despair is insufficient to defeat this strong old man, instead, it makes him increasingly stronger.

Adversity makes one upset, depressed even lose confidence. The weaker one will lose himself in the adversity while the stronger one will turn the pressure into motivation.

From Santiago's firm determination, it can be seen that nothing in the world can be obtained without pay. It is inevitable for one to meet with various adversities even desperation on the way of struggle. It is impossible to attain success and escape awkward condition simply by waiting for good things to happen, nor can one submit to the hindrances at the sight of setback. The future is not determined by fate but by one's attitude. Opportunity and hope should have strived with one's own hands, and there is no shortcut through which opportunity can be got. What really terrible is not the despairing situation but one's a despairing heart.

The Struggle Against the Sharks

On the returning voyage, the old man encounters greater challenge: the marlin's blood draws the sharks group. "The shark was not an accident." (Hemingway, 1995:38). Sharks greedily tear the skin and flesh of the great marlin—Santiago's trophy. But Santiago now has nothing but some simple tools such as a skiff, a harpoon, some coiled lines, etc. and the fatigue and hunger along with him all the trip. Compared with the sharks which constantly shuttle back and forth in the ocean, the old man is undoubtedly the weaker one. The battle between a lonely and helpless old man and the strong and cruel sharks offers little hope of success for the old man. However, under this despairing circumstance, Santiago shows an unflagging determination to fight against the enemies and bring his trophy back to shore. It is the firm determination to act, to fight, to never yield that encourages Santiago to persist. Although Santiago only brings the skeleton back, his stunning courage is admired by everyone. In the struggle against the sharks, except the objective threats such as hunger, hurt, fatigue, Santiago has to face up with the most deadly enemy—the fear in the depth of one's heart. The strongest enemy defeated by Santiago is not the sharks but the weakness of human nature.

Under the seemingly peaceful surface of the ocean exists both the potential fortunes and the potentialenemies. The farther Santiago goes, the more likely he is to come across with the cruel enemies like sharks, but at the same time the unexpected gains. Therefore the challenge is inevitable if Santiago wants to obtain more. Santiago's courageous performance demonstrates that a man should continue to do whatever he must do with might and main no matter how despairing the afflictions befall him. Even if the challenges and frustrations can strip a man of all outward signs of success, his spirit can remain undefeated just as Hemingway puts it: "a man is not made for defeat" (Hemingway, 1995:39); "A man can be

destroyed but not defeated." (Hemingway, 1995:39)

Endurance

The second feature of the Code Hero in The Old Man and the Sea is endurance, including the endurance of loneliness and the endurance of pain and hardship. The endurance of pain and hardship is manifested noticeably in the combats with the great marlin.

Enduring Loneliness

Santiago is a lonely old man. His wife has passed away, and he takes his wife's tinted photograph down because it "made him too lonely to see it" (Hemingway, 1995: 5). His only companion is Manolin who learns fishing skills from Santiago. Santiago suffers from old age, poorness, and hunger, but he never complains to others including the boy. Every time when Manolin asks Santiago what to eat, Santiago always answers: "A pot of yellow rice with fish." (Hemingway, 1995: 5) Actually, there is neither yellow rice nor fish at all, but the old man repeats this lie everyday.

Unfortunately, Manolin, Santiago's only friend who loves him and has faith in him has to leave him. "But after forty days without a fish, the boy's parents had told him that the old man was now definitely and finally salao, which is the worst form of unlucky and the boy had gone at their orders in another boat which caught three good fish the first week". (Hemingway, 1995: 1) This makes the lonely old man lonelier.

During the process of fighting with the marlin and sharks, no one accompanies Santiago in the boundless sea. The old man has to deal with all the danger and difficulties by himself. He misses the boy badly: "I wish I had the boy."(Hemingway, 1995: 17) "I wish the boy was here". (Hemingway, 1995: 19) He even learns to talk to himself or "looked around for the bird now because he would have liked him for the company." (Hemingway, 1995: 21) But he is clearly conscious that "you have only yourself" (Hemingway, 1995: 19), showing "what a man can do and what a man endures" (Hemingway, 1995: 25).

Enduring Pain and Hardship

In the struggle with the marlin and the sharks, Santiago's endurance of pain and hardship is reflected. The great marlin he hooks is two feet longer than the skiff and wings the skiff for two days. The old man is braced solidly with the line across his back. "He was comfortable but suffering, although he did not admit the suffering at all."(Hemingway, 1995: 25)

The battle is to test who can endure longer. "It was difficult in the dark and once the fish made a struggle that pulled him down on his face and made a cut below his eye. The blood ran down his cheek a little way. But is coagulated and dried before it reached his chin and he worked his way back to the bow and rested against the wood". (Hemingway, 1995: 19). During the combat with the marlin, if Santiago cuts the line and lets the fish go, he can get free from the danger and exhaustion; however, if he really chooses to do so, it means that he is definitely a coward and a loser. Santiago doesn't make this option; instead, he tries to think nothing but to endure. He endures the thirst by drinking a little water; he endures the

tiredness by resting against the bow and sitting on the unstepped mast and sail; when his hand is cut deeply and cramps "as tight as the gripped claws of an eagle" (Hemingway, 1995: 24), he washes the cut in the salt water and lets it dry and warm in the sun.

Pride and Dignity

Pride is also a vital manifestation of the code hero in this novella. All Santiago's devotion is for the pride and dignity that only belongs to the human being. In Santiago's heart, a man can lose anything but the honor. "You did not kill the fish only to keep alive and sell for food, he thought. You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman." (Hemingway, 1995: 40) However despairing and dangerous the situation is, the pride in his heart never fades away.

At the end of the story, Santiago tells the boy that "they beat me, Manolin," (Hemingway, 1995: 47). But Manolin replies: "he didn't beat you. Not the fish." (Hemingway, 1995: 48) In fact, Santiago is no longer fighting against the marlin and sharks but the timidity of human being. Although Santiago returns to the shore without the trophy of his battle, he returns with the knowledge that he has performed proudly and manfully. What really matters, in the end, is no longer the fish but the respect and recognition from others and the confirmation that he is a real hero. Consequently, whether Santiago is successful is not judged by the fish but by his heroic performance.

Santiago stands as testimony that pride inspires men to greatness. Because the old man concedes that he kills the mighty marlin largely out of pride, and because his capture of the marlin leads in turn to his heroic transcendence of defeat, pride becomes the source of Santiago's greatest strength. Without a strong sense of pride, that battle would never have been fought or would have been deserted before the end.

Hemingway is the spokesman for the lost generation. During World War I, the notion of glory was widely publicized. Having experienced the war, Hemingway comes to be aware that the so-called nobility is nothing but falsehood. The "glory" celebrated by the politicians is to enlarge their political benefits by force—the most brutal and outrageous method. Its essence is selfishness, hypocrisy, and inhumanity, displaying most hideous aspect of human nature. However, Santiago's honor comes from courage, confidence and the spirit of never yielding, showing the most glorious aspect of humanity.

Intelligence

The fourth prominent feature of the code hero in The Old Man and the Sea is intelligence, especially when Santiago is facing the danger.

Santiago is still powerful and wise in every aspect despite his age. He hooks the great marlin and fights against the sharks with skill and dexterity.

He can judge the condition of the marlin by the slant of the line. "The slant of the line showed he was swimming at a lesser depth." (Hemingway, 1995: 20)

He keeps thinking of the potential danger. After he hooks the great marlin, he deduces that: "he could ruin me by jumping or by a wild rush." (Hemingway, 1995: 18)

When getting a cut below his eye, he doesn't flurry, instead, he calmly "adjusted the sack and carefully worked the line so that it came across a new part of his shoulders and, holding it anchored with his shoulders, he carefully felt the pull of the fish and then felt with his hand the progress of the skiff through the water."(Hemingway, 1995: 19)

In the struggle with the marlin, every step, no matter slipping a line or recovering line is dealt with by Santiago skillfully and wittily. What's more, he keeps warning himself to "keep your head clear." (Hemingway, 1995: 35) Confronting with the marlin's opposition, Santiago copes with it skillfully.

In the struggle with the sharks, Santiago is in the inferiority. One of the most disadvantageous factors is the lack of tools. The full use of simple tools is another reflection of his intelligence. When he loses his harpoon and rope, he lashes his knife to the butt of one of the oars. When the knife blade snapped, "he jammed the tiller, made the sheet fast and reached under the stern for the club. It was an oar handle from a broken oar sawed off to about two and a half feet in length." (Hemingway, 1995: 43)

Santiago is an experienced fisherman with intelligence, always upholding the courage and trying to endure the loneliness, hardship, and pain no matter how desperate the situation is, struggling endlessly regardless of the outcome. Pride and dignity are of the greatest significance. Unlike the mainstream concept of glory in that period, Santiago's glory comes from the pride and honor to fight till the end.

CONCLUSIONS

Hemingway is one of the most influencing writers in the 20th century. He has undergone two world wars—the most turbulent times in human history. Ups and downs of his life had influenced his creation to a large extent. It was the turmoil at that time that impelled Hemingway to criticize the absurdity of that era. The figures in his works all display his thinking on world and life and they are called Hemingway hero, also the code hero. This thesis stresses the code hero in The Old Man and the Sea which is Hemingway's last and the highest achievement. It has made a brief analysis of Santiago's nobility of human exertion in the face of extreme hindrance which is Santiago's despairing courage, endurance, sense of pride and intelligence.

The thesis has explored into the value of The Old Man and the Sea that can inspire those who come across with the similar predicament as Santiago to struggle valiantly for the best in life whether they fail or succeed, to believe in themselves, to have nobility to push through every hurdle they might undergo and to convince people that it is not the winning or the losing that matters; it is how one performs.

Hemingway is an outstanding writer in the 20th century, exerting a tremendous impact on the American literature. This thesis, analyzing the main features of the code hero and its specific manifestation in The Old Man and the Sea, may help to better present the significance of Hemingway and his works.

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