

Common hero-the heroic outlook in the old man and the sea

People



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Being distinguished from many greatest American writers, Hemingway is noted for his writing style.

Among all his works, *The Old Man and the Sea* is a typical one to his unique writing style and technique. The language is simple and natural on the surface, but actually deliberate and artificial. The simplicity is highly suggestive, and often reflects the strong undercurrent of emotion. Because the wrong opinions that all the heroes should be unbeatable, perfect and unsurpassable, so many people can not understand the truth of the hero. Not only the fight between the old man and the nature, but also the spirit and the purpose of the old man we can get from the technique of expression, just like the iron-willed and unyielding under the pressure. This is the hero. Whether you are a common person or you can protect the world, you also can be a hero when you tried your best and had a clear conscience.

Common hero is the deeply occultism expressed in *The Old Man and the Sea*. The thesis falls into 6 parts. The first part makes a short description about the heroic outlook in *The Old Man and the Sea*. The second part makes an introduction of the background of *The Old Man and the Sea*. The third part makes a detailed analysis on the heroic outlook. The forth part makes a reflection of the common hero in the work. The fifth part analyses the reasons of the heroic outlook's formation in the work.

Finally, it comes to a conclusion, we can also be a hero if we believe that man is not made for defeat and a man can be destroyed but not defeated.

Key Words: heroic outlook; common hero; tough man;

determination ? ? ????????????? ,?? ,??

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bettering his ability to fish. He struggles and suffers in order to stay undefeated.

He beats all odds and fights all battles with the thought that he can and will win. And so he does. He goes far out and acts on what he thinks is right. He does not fear his actions nor does he regret them. He fights every battle as if it is his last and therefore comes out on top. Finally, he accepts defeat. This is the most honorable characteristic.

No matter how hard he has fought, once it is over, he does not look back wishing he could have acted differently. He accepts his mistakes and recognizes that, he has overstepped the boundary of man's finite and limited nature. He went out too far and this is what he gets. In these ways he is much like Hemingway, a noble hero. His actions and the consequences of them are easily notable and should not be looked down upon. In the long run, Santiago answered his calling, fought his battles, and when he was finally defeated by his own pride, he recognized it and accepted it. This makes Santiago a noble hero.

So if we can do our best , we can also be a hero. II. Introducing the Background of The Old Man and the Sea 2. 1 Introducing The Old Man and the Sea 2. 1. 1 Introducing the work The Old Man and the Sea, is a story of friendship between a young boy and an aging fisherman tormented by hunger and weeks of ill luck. Santiago, a once strong, proud man is coming to terms with his failing abilities and age.

After many weeks of returning home to his small village, day after day with nothing in his boat, Santiago is forced to accept the other villager's small charities. He resolves to sail far out to sea in search of a catch that will redeem his self-confidence. Early the next morning, he descends to his fishing skiff, and rows out, into the dark sea, saying good-bye to his friend, the small boy, and the safety of the beach, perhaps for the last time. Later that day his luck turns and he hooks the giant marlin. The battle begins, not just with the fish, but with himself as well; the battle for his life, his regained youth and the return of his peer's respect. For two days and two nights his adversary pulls him further out to sea. Memories of his youth fill his vision, memories of battles fought and of scars healed.

For hours at a time the physical game, he convinces himself, is only winnable if he can triumph mentally. Unable to loosen or even adjust his grip, for fear that his foe would sense his failing strength, Santiago is forced into a motionless prison, escape from which, is in the hands of his greatest adversary ever. 2. 1. 2 Introducing the Iceberg One eighth of the iceberg is above the water; all of the rest is underneath the water. This was in fact what Hemingway tried to achieve in writing. His economical style of writing is striking; sentence is short, uncomplicated, but active; words simple but filled with emotion; few modifiers and great control of pause with action of the story continuing during the silence.

There are times when the most powerful effect comes from restraint and understatement for he believed the strongest effect comes with an economy of means. Hemingway inherited and developed Mark Twain's colloquial style.

Hemingway's style of writing was probably more imitated than any other writers in human memory. 2. 2 Introducing the Author Ernest Miller Hemingway (July 21, 1899 - July 2, 1961) was an American writer and journalist. He was part of the 1920s expatriate community in Paris, and one of the veterans of World War I later known as " the Lost Generation. " He received the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 for *The Old Man and the Sea*, and the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954.

Hemingway's distinctive writing style is characterized by economy and understatement, and had a significant influence on the development of twentieth-century fiction writing. His protagonists are typically stoical men who exhibit an ideal described as " grace under pressure. Many of his works are now considered classics of American literature. III. Analyzing the Heroic Outlook 3. 1 The Traditional Heroic Outlook I just take the Greek heroes for example. They must be brave , strong and know how to kill more enemies.

The essence of the heroic outlook is the pursuit of honor through action. The great man is he who, being endowed with superior qualities of body and mind, uses them to the utmost and wins the applause of his fellows because he spares no effort and shirks no risk in his desire to make the most of his gifts and to surpass other men in his exercise of them. His honor is the centre of his being, and any affront to it calls for immediate amends. He courts danger gladly because it gives him the best opportunity of showing of what stuff he is made. Such a conviction and its system of behavior are built on a man's conception of himself and of what he owes to it, and if it has any further sanctions, they are to be found in what other men like himself think

of him. By prowess and renown he gains an enlarged sense of personality and well-being; through them he has a second existence on the lips of men, which assures him that he has not failed in what matters most. Fame is the reward of honor, and the hero seeks it before everything else.

This outlook runs through Greek history from Homer's Achilles to the historical Alexander. It is countered and modified and altered, but it persists and even extends its field from an individual to a national outlook. It is a creed suited to men of action, and through it the Greeks justified their passionate desire to vary the pattern of their lives by resourceful and unflagging enterprise. Though in its early stages, as we see it in Homer, it has much in common with similar ideals in other heroic societies, it is more resilient in Greece than elsewhere and endures with unexpected vitality when the city-state is established with all its demands and obligations on its members, and when the new conception of the citizen might seem to exclude an ideal which sets so high a value on the single man and his notion of what is due to him.

3. 2 The Modern Heroic Outlook

We all know the Superman, Batman and Spiderman, they are the new heroes in the world. They are powerful and can save the earth by their hands.

The timeless hero shines in their struggle for " Truth, Justice and the American Way. " Set in present-day Metropolis against the backdrop of a bright, urban landscape, the ageless superhero combats sinister villains and rescues innocent victims in exciting new stories based on universal themes encompassing the time-honored traditions of the classic Superman legend.

3. 3 The Heroic Outlook in the Work

The Old Man and the Sea is a short novel

about Santiago, an old Cuban fisherman who has gone for 84 days without catch. Therefore the boy, Manolin, who used to sail with him, is forced to leave him and catch in another ship. The old man insists on fishing alone and at last, he hooks an eighteen-foot, giant marlin, the largest he has ever known. But the fish is very powerful and disobedient.

It tows the old man and his boat out to sea for 48 hours, with the old man bearing the whole weight of the fish through the line on his back. The old man, with little food and sleep, has to endure much pain and fights against his treacherous hand cramp. To his great excitement, on his third day at sea, he succeeds in drawing the weakened marlin to the surface and harpoons it. On his way home, he lashes marlin alongside his boat because it is too big to be pulled into the boat. But, unfortunately, the sharks in different numbers come across for four times. The old man fights to kill the sharks with as much might and many weapons as he can summon, but only to find a giant skeleton of his marlin left after his desperate defense. At last, Santiago, having lost what he fought for, reaches the shore and struggles to his shack.

He falls into sound sleep, dreaming of Africa and the lions again. His struggle wins him much respect. IV. Reflection of The Common Hero in The Work 4. 1 Reflecting in Character Santiago is a new type of hero, and is distinguished from any hero formerly created by Hemingway. He has greater emotion depth and is an accomplished mediator. He is not without sympathy and warmth.

So he is morally superior. Moreover, the ending arranged for him is active and prospective. He is able to enjoy the warmth of friendship and teaches his

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own experience to the would-be hero, Malolin. It is therefore to say that the image in this novel is optimistic and promising. Santiago is a "man" in the fullest sense of the word. Although his strength is gone, his endurance and courage permits him to conquer the marlin. Even faced with defeat, he does not quit; knowing that he has no chance against the sharks, he continues the struggle against them.

Santiago loses the fight against the sharks but he is not afraid, his value lies in the fact that he rises from his failure and regains his confidence. The success alone is meaningless without the initial setback. Santiago's life is simple but not wretched. He is humble but not low. In his action there is always dignity and self-respect. To a real hero, no matter what kind of plight he is in and no matter how high his social position is, maintaining one's dignity is the most important. Such dignity should not fluctuate with changes in wealth and turning of luck, and it is a necessary part in humanity.

Santiago maintains his dignity in his action and displays heroism as a hero with his undefeated spirit when he has lost the fight. 4. 2 Reflecting in Fighting with Nature In the novel, Santiago is a master craftsman. He is only dependent on himself. While the other fishermen use motorboats, Santiago uses his skiff. While the other men have many workers and helpers to hold several lines, Santiago has three lines all operated by his own hand. He is an expert, "...the old man goes much farther out than the other fishermen and casts bait in much deeper water".

Because he knows the waters and the movements of the fish, he has a better chance of catching the fish. Although he is taking a greater risk by going out

deeper, he has a better chance of catching the bigger fish. Another thing that makes Santiago a master craftsman is his experience. He has been a fisherman all his life. Therefore he has had much time to master this art. Though many fishermen might doubt him, he is great. He has skill and he applies it in order to succeed.

He uses his hands and he uses his instincts to master the art of being a fisherman. Santiago uses himself, his physical and mental strength to catch the fish, and by doing these things, his difficult task becomes easier. He is a master craftsman not only through his skill, but also through his determination. Santiago is united, spiritually and physically, with the sea. He thinks of nature as a brother who looks like himself and with whom he might fight some times. His relation with nature never varies. In his world, there is a sense of brotherhood with the nature; the killer and the one who is being killed are united on a higher level where they don't hate each other.

This is a universe of possibilities that surpasses moral concerns. A man can easily be friends with the fish he is trying to kill. He is determined and he struggles in order to remain undefeated. Although he has gone 84 days without catching a fish, he does not give up. He goes out on his 85th day with the mentality that this is the day when he will catch a fish. This is what keeps him going. He knows that he still has the ability and strength to be a good fisherman.

He never gives up. After catching the marlin, he states, " Fish...I'll stay with you until I am dead". This shows his determination to win the battle and the fish. He has fought these battles hundreds of times before, he suffered, but

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he won. Still this battle is different. He fights in a way he has never fought before and he suffers. He suffers in catching the fish, killing the fish, attempting to return home, and fighting off the sharks.

But through all this suffering, he still fights, "... for he alone has to endure the sufferings to fulfill his destiny". This is his mentality, he knows what he must do and so, he does it. He never lets down his guard and he fights with consistent strength. " To be a hero means to dare more than other men, to expose oneself to greater dangers, and therefore more greatly risk the possibilities of defeat and death". Santiago fits this description perfectly. He dares more than other men do, and he strives for perfection. He exposes himself to dangers by going out much farther and casting bait in deeper waters.

Because of this, he is able to catch the bigger fish. Yet still, the bigger fish is more powerful and pulls the skiff even farther out to sea. This makes it an even bigger risk. Another risk he takes is that he goes all by himself. He does this in order to fulfill his destiny using only his own resources. The problem is that he has no aid. And in the case of falling overboard or getting lost at sea, there will be no one there to help him.

4. Reflecting in Symbolic Meaning Symbolism is always an eternal and controversial topic in *The Old Man and the Sea*. Some people hold the view that it is a true story and the author heard it from an old fisherman in Kabanas. But we still cannot deny that there are also plenty of symbols existing in this novel. In literature, a symbol is a thing that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention

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or accidental resemblance, especially, a visible sign of something invisible (For example, the lion is the symbol of courage and the cross is the symbol of Christianity). The symbol generally does not stand for the meaning, not for anything absolutely definite; it evokes an object that suggests the meaning. The author seldom expresses his own feelings directly, nor does he make any comments or explanations.

On the contrary, he tries to narrate and describe things objectively and blends his own feelings harmoniously with the natural narration and description. There won't be great difficulties to understand the literal meaning of his short sentences and simple words, but a work by Hemingway demands deliberate attention. In other word, one has to keep a close eye on Hemingway's words and to read between the lines because of his highly symbolic language. To begin with, the title of the novel itself is the symbol. The old man represents the human race and the sea represents the nature. The whole story could be eyed as the metaphor of the struggle that takes place between human beings and the nature. But the story also indicates that the nature is, to some extent, superior and that the humankind is not able to win this fighting.

The old man, Santiago to some degree symbolizes Christ in many ways. His name derives from San Diego (San James), suggesting the old man's ties with the Christian religion. And he embodies much of that religion. For instance, his strong right hand is his salvation and his left hand is the traitor to his body, he carries his mast up the hill to his home and falls beneath it like Christ bearing cross. Secondly, the major symbol is the sea, which

stands for all on which man must sail. In both the sea and the life, there are serious possibilities that lie hidden from the common eyes. Some are gifts to be treasured and some are problems to be solved and defeated.

Neither will be found unless man embarks on the journeys; if man is lucky enough to discover a treasure (maybe it is love or family or education), he must fight until death to retain it; if man is unlucky enough to discover an evil lurking underneath the surface of the sea, and he must fight bravely and nobly until the end. In the novel Santiago undergoes a sea journey (life) and encounters a giant marlin (treasure). He battles nobly to earn the treasure and fights the sharks (problems) to save it. The marlin is graceful and noble, and its existence supports Santiago's life and his faith. Yet the sharks are those dark forces that are destructive to human life. They are indicative of all the violence and injustices in the world. Finally, the giant marlin is a symbol of the mysterious world of the unknown that challenges everyone.

For a large part of the book, Santiago is pulled by this giant, a mysterious creature, and yet he does not know what it is or what it looks like. The old man can only imagine its strength, power, and determination. Yet he still identifies with it. Knowing it is the part of the natural order of existence, he is even more amazed at its grandeur and size when the old man actually sees the fish. Santiago is determined to show what a man can do and what a man can endure. In addition to the main symbols mentioned above, there are many minor symbols in the story. For instance, the sea and the experience, can be regarded as the miniature of people's life.

The old man's weatherworn face symbolizes his unlucky fate, and his particular eyes are the symbol of his unconquerable willpower. The scar of his hands suggests that he does not give up forever. The lion playing on the beach symbolizes his exploring spirit, strength and bravery. This is his strength source when he is in danger. Also the bleeding hands of Santiago are the symbols of the suffering of Jesus Christ, whose hands were equally wounded by the nails used to crucify him. Another recurring symbol in the novel is that of DiMaggio, the particular handicapped baseball player, who often figures in the old man's waking thoughts as well as in his dreams.

DiMaggio inspires him with the determination to win in spite of his handicap.

The image of the baseball hero playing in pain gives Santiago renewed vigor and stamina to put up his own pain. Therefore the great DiMaggio is said to be a symbol of courage, endurance and success. To sum up, symbolism is a noted writing characteristic in *The Old Man and the Sea*. The old man, the sea, the marlin, the lions and so on and so forth, to a large extent has deep symbolic meanings respectively. One can get different kinds of interpretations in accordance with a variety of points of views. In addition, by using symbols, Hemingway succeeded in reaching his goal of conveying the main theme of the story that- courage leads to success. V.

Analyzing the Reasons of the Heroic Outlook's Formation in the Work 5.

Writing Background Actually the parable of a man's struggle against the nature, *The Old Man and The Sea* was published in 1952. Hemingway knew a fish man after the Second World War. Once, when he dropped in the sea, the fish man saved him, and then they became good friend. After a few days,

Hemingway knew a story about the fish man that he caught a big fish long ago, but because the fish was too big and there were many sharks attacking it, he took the fish bone back home. This story became Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* at last. Acknowledged as his best works, the novel reinvigorated Hemingway's literary reputation after the violent attacks, he received from *Across the River and Into the Tress*.

The positive reaction that followed the novel included praise not only from the reviewers but also from a broad spectrum of the mass, from ordinary readers to fellow men of letters. The publishing of this work showed that Hemingway had shown he could still achieve a major triumph, whether or not the reviewers and critics or the public could appreciate the true value of his achievement. *The Old Man and the Sea* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and Hemingway's famous iceberg technique, which is a simple but highly suggestive style, was vividly embodied in the work, thus he was awarded the Nobel Prize for his "mastery of the art of modern narration".

5. 2 Family Background Regarded as a giant both in American literature and the world literature, Ernest Hemingway was born on July 21, 1898, at Oak Park, Illinois. Hemingway is a famous American writer of modern times. He is also an international literary celebrity in the world.

His father is a prominent doctor, and also a dab at fishing and hunting. The influence of his father made him full of love with fishing and hunting. He was a common person when he was young. He lives in the common family just like some other people. So when he knew the truth of the hero, he wrote the

work to express it. And only a common person can write the common hero.

5.

3 The Author's Experiences Hemingway is a famous American writer of modern times. He is also an international literary celebrity in the world. His father is a prominent doctor, and also a dab at fishing and hunting. The influence of his father made him full of love with fishing and hunting. His life was active and adventurous, but it was full of pains. The First and the Second World Wars had affected Hemingway a lot, he had once joined the army and had injured in Italy, and he suffered much that was brought about by the war deeply. He was disappointed with the world and pessimistic about the fate of the man.

In his early days' novel, *The Sun Also Rises* depicts the war, describing the bewilderment of the European and American young people, then he was looked down upon by someone around him and some writers. " You are all the generation that has been at a loss. So, seeking way out and seeking the understanding of life is the theme that Hemingway wanted to explore. He was an unyielding man, so he portrayed the distinctive individual character of " the character of unyielding man". From all the works of Hemingway's, we can find that when Hemingway chose personage, he especially liked to choose beggar, hunter, soldier and so on, they could protect their dignity by resisting with the world which is full of hostility, they maintain a graceful demeanor under great force, but on target. The characters of the protagonist are different from that of the early days' novel. For example, the leading character Jordan in *For whom the Bell Tolls* is a hero who devotes himself to

the career he incites the evil force, which reflects the cherished desire for opposing the fascism war of the people, which is full of wide social meaning.

All the characters of the protagonists in his novel show his inward world---he was an unyielding man, and has the desire to be the best one in the world, all these can be improved by the protagonists that are suffering but strong-minded. As a mouthpiece of "the lost generation", Hemingway suffered cold shoulder and attacked almost ten years in the commentary field. In order to save the desperate situation, Hemingway wrote a work that he firmly believes to be the best works in his life, which was called *The Old Man and the Sea*, which is the inheritance and development of Hemingway's unyielding character. Hemingway grew in the time that symbolism was embodied and expanded from circle of poet into the field of literature. Hemingway himself also thought that the novel should be like an iceberg, the one-eighth reveals above the water, the other seven-eighths hide deeply in the water, which needs the reader himself to understand. In other words, one has to keep a close eye on Hemingway's words and read between the lines because of his highly symbolic language. The theme and the description of *The Old Man and the Sea* is very simple, because it reveals only one -eighth on the face, the rest seven-eighths are hidden, when reading carefully and learning about the culture and situation at that time, you can understand the real hidden part by the writer.

So, the distinctive writing style of Hemingway is his iceberg theory and symbolism. ?. Conclusion Santiago is pitted against the creatures of the sea, some readers choose to view the tale as a chronicle of man's battle against

the natural world, but the novel is, more accurately, the story of man's place within nature. Both Santiago and the marlin display qualities of pride, honor, and bravery, and both are subject to the same eternal law: they must kill or be killed. As Santiago reflects when he watches the weary warbler fly toward shore, where it will inevitably meet the hawk, the world is filled with predators, and no living thing can escape the inevitable struggle that will lead to its death. Santiago lives according to his own observation: " man is not made for defeat . .

. " In Hemingway's portrait of the world, death is inevitable, but the best men (and animals) will nonetheless refuse to give in to its power.

Accordingly, man and fish will struggle to the death, just as hungry sharks will lay waste to an old man's trophy catch. The novel suggests that it is possible to transcend this natural law. In fact, the very inevitability of destruction creates the terms that allow a worthy man or beast to transcend it. It is precisely through the effort to battle the inevitable that a man can prove himself. Indeed, a man can prove this determination over and over through the worthiness of the opponents he chooses to face.

As a common hero, power is not a only mark for him. Santiago proves to be a noble hero in the eyes of Hemingway. He is a master craftsman in his enduring strength, skill, and knowledge of fishing, " Santiago determinedly bends all his strength and accrued experience in his craft to the task of playing the fish well. He knows tricks and occupies himself with bettering his ability to fish. He struggles and suffers in order to stay undefeated. He beats

all odds and fights all battles with the thought that he can and will win. And so he does.

He goes far out and acts on what he thinks are right. He does not fear his actions nor does he regret them. He fights every battle as if it is his last and therefore comes out on top. Finally, he accepts defeat. This is the most honorable characteristic. No matter how hard he has fought, once it is over, he does not look back wishing he could have acted differently. He accepts his mistakes and recognizes that, " He has overstepped the boundary of man's finite and limited nature".

He went out too far and this is what he gets. In these ways he is much like Hemingway, a noble hero. His actions and the consequences of them are easily notable and should not be looked down upon. In the long run, Santiago answered his calling, fought his battles, and when he was finally defeated by his own pride, he recognized it and accepted it.