

The old man and the sea



Suzana Zdravkovska 09 May 2008 " The Old Man and the Sea" is the story of the reconciliation of youth and old age " Christmas gone, we start thinking about the New Year. We recall things bygone and past. However, we must admit, passage of time is what marks our existence. Nothing lasts forever. Some poet has once said 'Change and degradation all around me I see'. Anyway, we have all become used to the fact everything has its beginning and its end", (Udruga krscana za promicanje duhovne kulture, Rijeka, Croatia, " Good Seeds 2008", " 31 December", 0701).

Old age ends youth, and death ends old age. Should we fear old age That depends on how we have lived our lives. A wonderful youth behind us or not, one thing is certain, - we must accept passage of time and come to terms with oldness. Hemingway's " The Old Man and the Sea" should be everyone's guidebook towards old age. However, his description of Santiago and everything about him strikes with the simple notion there is nothing much beautiful about oldness.

" The old man was thin and gaunt with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck. The brown blotches ran well down the sides of his face and his hands had the deep-creased scars But They were as old as erosions in a fishless desert The boy took the old army blanket off the bed and spread it over the back of the chair and over the old man's shoulders his shirt had been patched so many times The old man's head was very old though and with his eyes closed there was no life in his face"(Hemingway, Ernest, " The Old man and the Sea", Skopje, Detska Radost, 1995, ISBN: 9989-30-062-3, p. 6, 16).

Nevertheless, dreaming of the lions (symbols of male strength and virility) and having a wonderful friendship with Manolin, (his fishing disciple), Santiago lives his " second youth". Wishing Manolin were there to help him

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wrestle the marlin he recalls his youth. The conquer (in spite of everything), suggests his reaffirmation of his pride, identity, self-control, endurance, strength and wish to defeat weakness that comes with old age. Bringing back at least the skeleton of the huge marlin, Santiago proves still worth the epithet " the best fisherman". His conversation with the boy about fishing again (together), and his passing the spear to the boy, show Santiago's and Manolino's mutual faith, hope and life-wish. Moreover, they show the contrast and the unity of the old man's decaying and the boy's youthful vitality.

Santiago reconciles old age with dignity and grace many people do not possess. The " recipe" for welcoming old age is not a secret. One must live a fruitful life with no room for either hatred or regrets. The only thing that matters is life's contents. Thus, embracing old age and looking " above" occasionally, is the only way to avoid fear of growing old, and of death. " She was sitting on the bench, her hands laid on the cane, looking down every once in a while, looking up in the sky now and then. She caught my sight with her tired eyes, and implanted a thought in me, the one of the inevitable end - the time of resignation." (Goceva-Zdravkovska, Suzana, " Tractate on Time", A. F. W. M. A. Examination, Skopje, 25 September, 2007, p. 8.)

Sources:

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