

Human vs Nature

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Abstract

Every Single writer has used nature for writing poem, short story, drama, novel, fiction and non-fiction. I have read three texts in many times such as The Old Man and the Sea, Riders to the Sea and Moby Dick in which all three writers show the power of Nature. Here John Millington Synge and Herman Melville surrender to Nature but Earnest Hemingway does not surrender to Nature. This thinking will be proved through discussion of three texts in below.

Keyword: Riders to the Sea, Moby Dick, and The Old Man and The Sea

Introduction

In 'Riders to Sea' the main character Maurya who has lost her husband and five sons to the sea. The story begins with Nora and Cathleen who receive a dead body that may be their brother Michael. Having already lost her four sons, husband and father –in-law to the perils of the sea, Maurya is understandably bereft when the son considered her favorite, Michael seems to be lost at sea. Maurya says **“The're all gone now, and there is not anything more the sea can not do me” (1)**. For nine days she mourns searching the sea for his body but by the time Bartley is taken by the sea as well, Maurya is all but numb to the sorrow of loss she has had to bear and continues to bear. Bartley is lost when the pony he is leading to Galway fair knocks him into the rough sea, he having decided to go despite Maurya's assertions that she will be left without so much as a single son to be the man of the house. Maurya accepts the final loss gracefully observing that finally the sea can take no more from her. She sprinkles holy water on Bartley's body and Micheal's clothing which are all that she has from him and then acknowledges the truth that

“No man at all can be living forever and we must be satisfied”(2)

Here I can say that J.M. Synge surrenders to the power of Nature.

In Moby Dick, Ismael who narrates this story becomes friend with Queequeg, a big dude who kills whales. They go on a whaling ship together called the Pequod. Ahab is the Captain of the ship. He stays in his cabin because of some random sickness. Ismael and Queequeg meet the others on board. When Ismael sees Ahab fir the first time , he gets creeped out. Ismael describes

all the different sorts of whales. Ahab tells the crew that the whole reason they are there is to find this one whale, the Great White whale (Moby Dick) and kill it. Moby Dick is an evil huge whale that acts up when he is attacked. In search goes on for the whale. All over the world Ahab and his crew go looking for Moby. They run into other whaling ships and men who have seen the whale. In a big storm the Pequod suffers some damage. Ahab grows more and more focused and nutty about finding the whale. He ignores others boats that need his help and just moves on in his search. Finally Ahab sees the big whale. The crew tries to harpoon Moby but the whale smashes the boats and gets away. The next day, they loose a crew member. The next day, Ahab spears Moby's side. The other boats, in trouble, go back to the main ship. Ahab stays to fight the whale. Moby is pissed and wrecks the pequod. Ahab tries again but his own harpoon rope kills him and the Pequod sinks. Ishmael is the only one who gets out alive. He is rescued by another boat, the Rachel.

Here we see that Herman Melville surrenders to the power of Nature.

But in "The Old Man and The Sea" Hemingway does not surrender to the power of Nature. For eighty-four days Santiago has not caught a single fish. At first a young boy, Manolin shared his bad fortune but after the fortieth luckless day, the boy's father tells his son to go in another boat. From that time on, Santiago works alone. Each morning he rows his skiff out into the Gulf Stream where the big fish are. Each evening he comes home empty-handed. The boy loves the old fisherman and pities him. When Manolin has no money of his own, he begs or steals to make sure that Santiago has enough to eat and has fresh baits for his lines. The old man accepts his kindness with a humility that is like a quiet kind of pride. Over their evening meals of rice or black beans, they talk about the fish they had caught in luckier times or about American baseball and the great Joe Di Maggio. At night alone in his shake, Santiago dreams of lions on the beaches of Africa where he had gone on a sailing ship years before. He no longer dreams of his dead wife.

On the eighty-fifth day, Santiago rows out of the harbor in the cool dark before dawn. After leaving the smell of land behind him, he sets his lines. Two of his baits are fresh tunas the boy had given him as well as sardines to cover his hooks. The lines sink straight down into deep dark water. As the sun rises, he sees other boats in towards shore which is only a low green line on the sea. A hovering man-of war bird shows him where dolphins are chasing some flying fish but the school is moving too fast and is too far away. The bird circles again. This time Santiago sees tuna leaping in the sunlight. A small one takes the hook on his stern line. Hauling the quivering fish aboard, the old man thinks it a good omen.

Toward noon, a marlin starts nibbling at the bait which is one hundred fathoms down. Gently the old man plays the fish, a big one as he knows from the weight on the line. At last he strikes to settle the hook. The fish does not surface. Instead, it begins to tow the skiff to the northwest. The old man braces himself, the line taut across his shoulders. He is skilled and knows many tricks; he waits patiently for the fish to tire.

The old man shivers in the cold that comes after sunset. When something takes ones of his remaining baits, he cuts the line with his sheath knife. The fish lurches suddenly, pulling Santiago forward on his face, cutting hid cheek. By dawn his left hand is stiff and cramped. The

fish has headed northward; there is no land in sight. Another strong tug on the line slices Santiago's right hand. Hungry, he cuts strips from the tuna and chews them slowly while he waits for the sun to warm him and ease his cramped fingers. That morning the fish jumps. Seeing this leap, Santiago knows he has hooked the biggest marlin he has ever seen. Then the fish goes under and turns toward the east. Santiago drinks sparingly from his water bottle during the hot afternoon. Once an airplane drones overhead on its way to Miami. Trying to forget his cut hand and aching back, he remembers the days when men had called him EI Campeon and he had wrestled with a giant man in the tavern at Cienfuegos.

Close to nightfall, a dolphin takes the small hook Santiago has rebaited. He lifts the fish aboard, careful not to jerk the line over his shoulder. After he rests, he cuts fillets from the dolphin and also keeps the two flying fish he finds in its maw. That night he sleeps. He awakes to feel the line running through his fingers as the fish jumps. Feeding line slowly, he tries to tire the marlin. After the fish slows its run, Santiago washes his cut hands in seawater and eats one of the flying fish. At sunrise, the marlin begins to circle. Faint and dizzy, he works to boring the big fish nearer with each turn. Almost exhausted, he finally draws his catch alongside and drives in the harpoon. He drinks a little water before he lashes the marlin to the bow and stern of his skiff. The fish is two feet longer than the boat. No catch like it has ever seen in Havana harbor. It will make his fortune, Santiago thinks as he hoists his patches sails and sets his course toward the southwest.

An hour later, Santiago sights the first shark. It is a fierce Mako and it comes in fast to slash with raking teeth at the dead marlin. With failing might, the old man strikes the shark with its harpoon. The Mako rolls and sinks, carrying the harpoon with it and leaving the marlin mutilated and bloody. Santiago knows the scent will spread. Watching, he sees two shovel-nosed sharks closing in. He strikes at one with his knife lashed to the end of an oar and watches the scavenger slide down into deep water. He kills the other while it tears at the flesh of the marlin. When the third appears, he thrusts at it with the knife, only to feel the blade snap as the fish rolls. The other sharks come at sunset. At first, Santiago tries to club them the tiller from the skiff, but his hands are raw and bleeding and there are too many in the pack. In the darkness, as he steers toward the faint glow of Havana against the sky, he hears them hitting the carcass again and again. Yet the old man thinks only of his steering and his great tiredness. He has gone out too far and the sharks have beaten him. He knows that they will leave him nothing but the stripped skeleton of his great catch.

All lights are out when he sails into the little harbor and beaches his skiff. In the gloom, he can just make out the white backbone and the upstanding tail of the fish. He starts up the shore with the mast and furls the sail of his boat. Once he falls under their weight and lays patiently until he can gather his strength. In the shack, he falls on his bed and goes to sleep. There the boy finds him later that morning. Meanwhile, other fishermen, gathered about the giant marlin, eighteen feet long from nose to tail. Manolin returns to Santiago's shack with hot coffee, and the old man wakes up. The boy, he says can have the spear of his fish. Manolin tells him to rest, to make himself fit for the days of fishing they will have together. All that afternoon, the old man sleeps, the boy sitting by his bed. Santiago is dreaming of lions.

However the old man defeats the fish after fighting for 84 days. Thus all the three writers use sea as a fighter. Here Hemingway defeats the Nature and he never surrenders to natural power. Hemingway is different from other two writers. We can prove this from his speech

“A man is not made for defeat. A man can be destroyed but not defeated”.

Here the protagonist Santiago emerges himself as an ending force, capable of fighting with the inscrutable forces of Nature.

Conclusion

Actually The old man and the sea is a Hemingway's masterpiece which I think none should miss reading. It talks about the ultimate human strength which can be destroyed but not defeated. And I think the revenge of Moby Dick on Ahab and the Pequod is the revenge of Nature on Mankind which is self-preservation of Nature. Finally I can say that J.M.Synge and Herman Melville surrender to the power of Nature but Hemingway does not surrender to Nature. Hemingway is the greatest sailor all over the world.

Reference:

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