



Glorifying the Protagonists as Heroes: A Critique of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and Sarubhakta's *The Peak*

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Abstract

This study brings together Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and Sarubhakta's *Chuli (The Peak)* with a significant focus on a comparative analysis of the flaws of the protagonists in both the novels, which basically delve into the epic battle of the protagonists with the environment. Hemingway's protagonist, Santiago, involves in a struggle with the sea while Sarubhakta's unnamed protagonist confronts the formidable challenge with the mountain. Both the protagonists struggle for achieving something significant. Santiago's is a battle to catch the marlin whereas the unnamed mountaineer's battle in Sarubhakta's *The Peak* is to get victory over the Everest. This study scrutinizes the flaws of the protagonists by analyzing their behaviour and motivations. This research is strictly based on textual evidence and analysis, employing the insights of theory of heroism as a theoretical tool. A significant study of literature gives a shape to understanding the character of the protagonists in depth. The research challenges the idealized portrayals of these protagonists, arguing that they have been unnecessarily glorified. Ultimately, the

study concludes that these characters fall short of the heroic ideals they are often associated with and may no longer serve as ideal characters for contemporary readers. **Keywords:** Epic battle, glorification, heroism, struggle for survival

Introduction

Literature has always praised heroes who show extraordinary bravery and fortitude in the face of hardship and peril. Characters in heroic stories frequently face and overcome difficult obstacles, both internal and external, earning their status as hero. They remain as symbols of fortitude, tenacity, and the human spirit in literature. Such depictions are not without difficulty. These ostensibly heroic individuals have internal conflicts, imperfections, and reasons that call for further investigation. This research compares and contrasts Sarubhakta's *Chuli (The Peak)* with Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* with a particular attention on the shortcomings of each protagonist.

The unnamed protagonist's perilous ascent toward Mount Everest and Santiago's lone encounter with the sea and the marlin both revolve around a fierce, symbolic

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conflict between man and nature. Even though these personalities are frequently seen through a heroic prism, this study challenges the idealization of these figures and questions whether they actually exhibit heroic qualities or only seem heroic because of idealized interpretations. This study examines how both characters' imperfections, motivations, and internal struggles muddy their heroic image, using the concept of heroism as a theoretical framework. This study investigates the flaws of the protagonists based on the textual evidences and finds that the idealized figures are not real heroes. They have some flaws that are responsible behind their failure at the end. These aspects are usually missed or underexamined in conventional literary criticism. In the end, this investigation not only reassesses their hero status but also considers how relevant these characters are to the readers of present era in a shifting cultural environment.

Review of Literature

The Old Man and the Sea is a short heroic novel written by Ernest Hemingway. It was published in 1952. It received Pulitzer Prize in fiction in 1953. It also received Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. The story centers on the protagonist, an old Cuban fisherman named Santiago, who engages in an epic battle to catch a giant marlin. He struggles for eighty-four days and eventually gets nothing. Finally, he hooks a huge merlin and then battles with it. He develops a kind of kinship with the fish and, at times, becomes furious. When the merlin begins circling around the boat, he kills it. He fights with the sharks that attack the merlin. The story of the novel "ends with his [protagonist's] reaching the shore as people nearby cafe mistakenly take the skeleton of the marlin for a shark" (Pun 8). The struggle of the protagonist is meaningless. *The Old Man and the Sea* "is an uncomplicated tale about a piscator named Santiago and his struggle against a sizable marlin" (Sinha 1212).

Some of the themes of the text are struggle for achievement, the meaninglessness of human efforts, resistance to defeat, friendship, youth, and age. The story is set in a village in Havana in Cuba, the Gulf Stream and its shore. Most of the events of the novel take place in the sea. The old man goes with Manolin as his apprentice but the latter's parents call him back saying that Santiago is not a good fisherman. The story is fundamentally based on an event in the life of a Cuban fisherman. According to Farooqui, the story "is inspired by a real-life incident based on the life of an old Cuban fisherman" (186). The protagonist, though considered ideal by many, has some flaws that hinder his success.

Sarubhakta is a prominent fiction writer of Nepal. He has penned in various genres like poetry, drama, novel etc. He has also secured an unparallel position in Nepali Science fiction writing. He has authored several anthologies of poetry. He has equally contributed to Nepali theatre. The novel *Pagal Basti* received him the most prestigious literary award of Nepal, the *Madan Puraskar* in 1991. *Chuli* is a novella by Sarubhakta published in 2004. It has been translated into English as *The Peak* by Subhash Ghimire. *Chuli* is included in the curriculum of Bachelor's Degree in Tribhuvan University in Nepal. The story centers around the unnamed protagonist. The protagonist struggles with a mountain peak far out into Mount Everest. "The story is about an epic battle between the protagonist and the mountain said to be the biggest goal of his life" (Pun 16). The protagonist begins his expedition from the base camp to the Everest. He begins his journey alone. He faces the challenges that come on the way of climbing the highest peak of the world. He finally reaches the summit successfully. However, on his way back to the camp, he is hit by an ice block. His struggle for life is eventually in vain. He dies a death of victory. Drawing a conclusion from the book, Krishna Chandra

Singh Pradhan writes in the preface, “In the history of the earth, if only one or two people, in an era, take the heart of humanity, then people don't need to imagine God for salvation” (2). He thus glorifies the hero of the novel and equals him to the heart of humanity.

Critics and scholars have valorized the protagonists and taken them to immortality. Both protagonists remain undefeated at the end. For Santiago, exhibiting unparalleled strength and endurance is a better achievement than literally catching the merlin. He becomes a hero who does not accept defeat. Similarly, the unnamed protagonist in *Chuli* remains undefeated though he dies at the end. His ego does not die. His love does not die. Regarding the struggle and its outcome, Pun writes, “Both Hemingway's Santiago and Sarubhakta's protagonist have to live and feed alone; both of them are destroyed but not defeated. Both triumph over every obstacle with the power of their love for their own professions” (17). Santiago is a poor fisherman who has developed a unique enduring capacity. He can endure the pain like Christ. As Farooqui observes, “At the end of the novel, Santiago evokes the image of Jesus Christ who endured pain and suffering and was characterized as a good human being, so is Santiago who is modest and humble” (187). Santiago's poverty is a major theme of *The Old Man and the Sea* which is obvious in the text but there is no textual evidence of the poverty of the unnamed protagonist of *Chuli*. He does not climb the mountain in order to earn a living. It is his ego to challenge nature that he climbs the mountain. There is no issue of breadwinning. As Sarubhakta himself writes in *Kantipur Koselee* that “The struggle of the old and poor fisherman is a struggle for livelihood... In '*Chuli*' there is no struggle for livelihood, there is struggle for being alive.” Hemingway wrote most of his books based on real-life experiences and observation. Various scholars have

interpreted the character of Santiago as a mouthpiece of Hemingway himself.

As Lakshmi observes, “Hemingway described his tragic experience of catching the marlin and how it was destroyed by the sharks through his character Santiago. Therefore, Santiago is the mouthpiece of Hemingway in *The Old Man and the Sea*” (193). In both cases, the protagonists live in aloofness. Santiago talks to the birds and the fish to assure himself that he is not alone. Similarly, the ‘He’ protagonist in *The Peak* talks to his imaginary beloved. Though he is alone in this world, he imagines a conversation with his beloved. P. Niraula writes in his dissertation about the lonesome situation of the protagonist in *The Peak*. He remarks that the protagonist, “has no one in the physical world but in the mental world 'he' has a beautiful lover” (44). The conflict with the environment has been a major theme of the novel. The protagonist is involved in a conflict with the environment. The apparent “conflict between the obsessions developed by the character against the environment even in an unfavorable environment, they have continued their journey through the complex process of climbing the summit” (Neupane 48). Thus, the obsession is the motivation for climbing Everest.

As a researcher, one can find abundant reviews in which the protagonists of both novels have drawn the central attention. They have been projected as flawless heroes and their heroism is immortal. Yongkun Wan focuses on the ‘manhood’ of Santiago. Manhood is taken as a quality of a man to become successful in all the aspects of life. He writes, “Santiago, does embody this real manhood. Indeed, with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck and everything about him being old, he is too old even to dream of women” (403). Wan further writes “Santiago indeed has received a material failure in the world... However, in spiritual terms, the old fisherman Santiago is a permanent triumph because he has displayed all his own courage, power and

dignity during the struggle” (403). The determination and endurance of Santiago are unparalleled. Fouad Abbas Ali, focusing on the determination of Santiago writes, “Santiago was determined to navigate farther in the sea where he could find Merlin, so he keeps following his quest for the giant fish so as to save his job” (124). Zhang interprets Santiago, the protagonist of *The Old Man and the Sea*, as a fisherman who develops kinship with his prey, merlin. He looks at this text from an ecological viewpoint. His remark on Santiago, “He believed that man and all the other living things are creatures at the same level of life” (1096) helps to understand Santiago having awareness of ecological concerns. Regarding the Protagonist of *The Peak*, Neupane writes that the ‘He’ character bears the central theme of the novel. The plot revolves around him only. He has strong determination and endurance. He possesses extraordinary brevity and a positive mindset. Neupane writes, “He is a strong-willed character who looks combative. Instead of being pessimistic, escapist and cowardly, the character who climbs Mt. Everest alone without a guide and without help seems to have an optimistic and diligent nature” (6-7). Pun focuses on the struggle of the protagonist of *The Peak*. He has applied the theory of intertextuality to interpret *The Old Man and the Sea* and *The Peak*. He has compared these novels and discovered the themes in common. Regarding the struggle of the protagonist of *The Peak*, he writes “Sarubhakta, through his protagonist, has unfolded the fact that every living creature has to face the struggle which is the inevitable force in life and no one can escape this encounter” (20). Struggle is thus unescapable for the protagonist.

Both novels *The Old Man and the Sea* and *The Peak* have been interpreted by various scholars and critics from different perspectives. Here, the focus is on the struggle and idealistic character of the protagonists. They have been glorified as

‘undefeated heroes’ and projected as role models for the people in modern times. They have been portrayed as ideal protagonists. However, no scholar has revealed yet the dark side of these characters. Therefore, this study explores the weakness of these protagonists.

Theory of Heroism as a Theoretical Framework

The English term ‘hero’ originates from Greek word ‘heros’ meaning “defender” or “protector.” So, hero literally means a person who protects the people from peril. The “original Hero in Greek mythology was a woman, a priestess of Aphrodite, the goddess of love” (Goethals and Allison, 186). Hero can be a God, a Goddess or an ordinary human being. Franco et al. argue that “the most admired Greek hero, Achilles, demonstrates the ways in which the exemplary battlefield legend presents a challenge to his commanders” (3). The theory of heroism has its roots in mythology, literature, and psychology. It showcases certain qualities, actions, and motivations to define a hero among the ordinary. This theory posits that a hero embodies qualities like courage, sacrifice, resilience, sense of good judgement, among others. Joseph Campbell introduced the concept of ‘hero’ outlining a universal structure in which the hero undergoes trials and transformation. Heroism is a virtue that emerges as a response to crisis, danger or threat. This is the situation in which most of the ordinary people cannot act beyond their limits; however, some individuals exhibit extraordinary virtues and rise as ‘heroes’. “Max Weber argued that great men are endowed with charisma” (Franco et al., 4). They rise above the ordinary people across time and cultures. Heroes “refer to persons of great courage and strength, celebrated for their bold exploits” (Goethals and Allison, 186). With regard to the risk that a hero takes, “Becker and Eagly defined heroes as individuals who choose to take physical risks on behalf of one or more people,

despite the possibility of suffering serious consequences, including death” (Franco et al., 6). Thus, heroes choose to take risk despite their probable death.

The theory of heroism explains why cultures hold particular individuals in high regard as well as how heroic ideals impact social transformation, identity, and values. The hero possesses virtues “including self-efficacy, self-affirmation, self-theories of intelligence, self-guides, and self-control that enable people to achieve at high levels and to act morally, even when doing so is difficult” (Goethals and Allison, 184). The concept of heroism is also associated with moral virtue of the people who stand out by means of their morality. In this regard, Goethals and Allison put it “Heroes are people who do something that is moral. Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King are widely regarded as heroes because they committed themselves to important moral pursuits” (186). Heroes are not alien, nor are they divine. As “Heroes are not born; they’re made” (Kohen, Langdon, and Riches, 1), they are self-made figures who challenge the obstacles. Any ordinary person, whose life has not been hitherto a heroic, can rise as a hero by a certain action. Goethals and Allison assert that “Many heroes are defined by doing the right thing at a critical moment even when their lives until that point have not been heroic” (9). So, becoming a hero is a choice.

According to Goethals and Allison, “Many instances of heroism involve overcoming challenging obstacles” (11). People remember heroes for their ability to overcome challenges. As a matter of fact, “The Greek mythic war hero Odysseus ... attained such heroic status that long and difficult journeys are now called odysseys” (Goethals and Allison, 12). Sacrifice and altruism are other virtues of heroes. They live and die for the common good of the humankind. In the words of Goethals and Allison, “The ultimate sacrifice that heroes make is giving their lives for the greater

good” (189). Heroes take right decision at right time. They may, at times, take a quick decision without any plan. Such “heroic action can also be a one-time decision, undertaken seemingly without a great deal of planning or decision-making time” (Kohen, Langdon, and Riches, 2). However, their decision cannot be wrong. In a study conducted by Sullivan and Venter in 2020, “Heroes were described as intelligent, loving, caring, talented, hardworking, a role model, creative, motivated, and religious” (Franco et al., 7). Not everyone is a hero. Heroes are hard to find. It is accepted that “Although heroes are rare, they exemplify human excellence and deserve empirical attention to understand their development” (Kohen, Langdon, and Riches, 3). They are role model for the ordinary people and their acts are worth-imitating.

Textual Analysis

Flaws of Santiago in The Old Man and the Sea

Santiago is an old man having unparalleled endurance and perseverance. Throughout the story he exhibits a higher degree of strength and endurance. He never gives up. He says, “A man can be destroyed but not defeated” (103). Despite his old age, he goes to the sea for fishing to make a living. However, he is not a hero figure. He has got some flaws within him. Hemingway “saw war as a compelling emblem of a complex, morally ambiguous world that offered nearly unavoidable suffering, harm, and devastation” (Sinha 1213). Santiago is a man of unstable mentality. He has got a shifting mentality. After hooking the merlin, he develops a kinship with the fish. He talks to it frequently:

“How do you feel, fish?” he asked aloud.

“I feel good and my left hand is better and I have food for a night and a day. Pull the boat, fish.” (73)

At times, he gets furious with the fish. He then decides to kill the fish by convincing it. He says, “Now I must convince him and

then I must kill him” (86). Finally, he kills the fish though it is not easy. He has shown extraordinary strength to hold and kill the fish. He has expressed empathy to the fish. “I must hold his pain where it is, he thought. Mine does not matter. I can control mine. But his pain could drive him mad” (87). He has developed kinship with the fish. He addresses the fish as *brother*. “Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother” (92). How can he kill a *brother*? He wants to give the reason for the killing. He says “I killed him in self-defense... And I killed him well” (106). He then expresses regret for the killing. Unstable mentality is not a quality of hero.

The shifting of mentality might have come out of his aloofness. He is alone on the boat. He remembers Manolin frequently with a sense of missing him.

“I wish I had the boy. To help me and to see this” (45).

“I wish the boy was here” (48).

“I wish I had the boy. But you haven’t got the boy, he thought” (49).

“I wish the boy were here and that I had some salt” (54).

“If the boy were here he could rub it for me and loosen it down from the forearm” (60).

“If the boy was here he would wet the coils of line, he thought. Yes. If the boy were here. If he were here” (82).

He talks to the boy in imagination. He misses the boy a lot. Another cause of aloofness is due to the lack of company of his wife. He lives in the memory of his wife. He looks at the picture of his wife. “Once there had been a tinted photograph of his wife on the wall but he had taken it down because it made him too lonely to see it and it was on the shelf in the corner under his clean shirt” (12). Wrong response to loneliness is a flaw of Santiago.

Santiago is a bull-headed man. His stupid stubbornness does not suit his age. He is not willing to let go of the big merlin. He is determined to bring it ashore

at any cost. He fights unnecessarily with the fish. He says “A man can be destroyed but not defeated” (103). He is not a good fisherman. Many of the fishermen make fun of him. “They sat on the Terrace and many of the fishermen made fun of the old man and he was not angry. Others, of the older fishermen, looked at him and were sad” (7). Confidence is a quality of hero, which he lacks. When Monalin asks him “But are you strong enough now for a truly big fish?” He replies “I think so” (10). It is obvious from his reply that he is not strong enough for the big fish. He only *thinks* so. When Monalin remarks “And the best fisherman is you”, Santiago says “No, I know others better” (19). Santiago is not a good fisherman. He has accepted this fact himself. According to Farooqui, “Santiago cannot come to terms with the fact that he is not as agile and strong as the young anglers even though he has the skills, and he pushes himself too far in proving his worth and thus his character becomes one-sided” (185). Thus, Santiago is undoubtedly a self-doubting man.

Santiago is a man of strange character. He himself admits that he is a strange old man. In a conversation with Monalin, he says “I am a strange old man” (10). He loves and respects the fish. However, he kills it strangely. This contradictory deed is a key to understanding his strange character for he says to the fish “I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends” (52). His thoughts and actions don't align. He talks to himself and at times with the birds and the merlin. Throughout his adventure he keeps on talking. He talks with the birds. “It’s steady,” the old man told him. “It’s too steady. You shouldn’t be that tired after a windless night. What are birds coming to?” (53). Furthermore, he talks to himself. This one-way communication might be a way to do away with the aloofness. He loves himself and gives self-suggestion. “But you have not slept yet, old man,” he said aloud. “It is half a day and a night and now another

day and you have not slept. You must devise a way so that you sleep a little if he is quiet and steady. If you do not sleep you might become unclear in the head” (76). He is a soliloquist. Furthermore, he was born with a problem with his left hand. He has not trained the hand properly. As he says “Why was I not born with two good hands? ... It was my fault in not training that one properly” (84). He is not capable enough to handle the big fish. He eats white eggs of turtles to get strength. He also drinks “a cup of shark liver oil each day from the big drum in the shack...” (34). Santiago lacks a good sense of judgement. Though he is old, he is not rational enough to make decisions.

Good sense of judgement and ability to take right decision are the qualities of a hero. However, he lacks both. He goes to the sea for fishing along with Monalin who is quite junior to him. Santiago is already a man but Monalin is still a teenager. Their age gap does not allow a good company between them. Being a teenager, who cannot make good judgement, Monalin leaves the old man upon the call of his parents. “In the first forty days a boy had been with him. But after forty days without a fish the boy’s parents had told him that the old man was now definitely and finally a *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” (p 5). The word *salao* is a Spanish slang meaning very unlucky. The old man is considered unlucky because he is not able to catch any fish for the first forty days. Monalin believes in his parents and thinks that the old man is really a *salao*. Santiago should have gone to the sea with a man suitable to his age. His trust on an unmatured boy results in aloofness. If Monalin was with Santiago throughout the journey, they could catch the fish with joint effort. Why does he kill the fish? It was circling around the boat to save itself from the sharks. Had he not killed the fish, perhaps, it would have saved itself from the sharks by circling around the

boat. Santiago lacks a sense of judgement at this point. The sharks eat out the dead merlin with less effort.

According to Freud’s theory, “Humans are inherently selfish creatures who are always trying to manipulate a situation to attain their desires that will not bring punishment or pain” (Parsons 40). Santiago has always been poor. His desire to make wealth is not fulfilled. The time when he lived was post-World War-II. Things had fallen apart. It was not easy to make wealth for a poor fisherman like Santiago. Therefore, his unfulfilled desire to be rich remains permanently in his subconscious mind. According to Sigmund Freud, dreams are symbolic which need to be decoded by exploring the subconscious mind. The repressed desires find a way out through the dream. Dreams “are the dynamic process through which the ego maintains its strength. Therefore, the interpretation of dreams plays a significant role in the psychoanalysis method. Dream analysis plays a crucial role in psychoanalytic theory as the mode of revealing the unconscious” (Sibi 77). Freud says “During sleep, the boundary between consciousness and unconsciousness becomes blurred, and therefore, we are allowed to address our repressed emotions within our dreams” (Parsons 40). Therefore, we can understand the character of a person by interpreting his dreams. While he was having a short sleep, he “dreamed of Africa when he was a boy and the long, golden beaches and the white beaches” (21). As his adventure advances, he dreams of a different thing other than the material possessions. His dream can be interpreted in a sense of the expression of his repressed desire, especially libido. In the following extract from the text, he sees a school of porpoise mating. “He did not dream of the lions but instead of a vast school of porpoise that stretched for eight or ten miles and it was in the time of their mating and they would leap high into the air and return into the same hole they had made

in the water when they leaped” (80). The *hole* that the porpoise made in his dream symbolizes the female genital. Santiago’s dream is a spontaneous expression of Santiago’s unfulfilled sexual desire. The characters seen in Santiago are the outcome of his unfulfilled desire. The sea and the sharks are the causes of his failure on the surface, but the underlying causes are his own flaws.

Flaws of the Unnamed Protagonist in The Peak

The protagonist begins his journey to Everest from the base camp. There he finds some porters, guides and climbers who are preparing for the expedition. But he is alone. He prepares to climb Everest without any group. He carries the necessary materials with him. Upon reaching Khumbu icefall, he cracks a joke. He is resolved to get into his beloved’s heart after getting victory over Everest. He even imagines a beautiful family. He climbs the Himalayas without an oxygen cylinder. He thinks that nature has made man a breathing creature. There is oxygen on the Himalayas. He moves ahead to climb the mountain although he knows that it is dangerous to climb after mid-day. At times, the weather becomes worse but he does not want to set camp. He continues climbing up. He becomes more philosophical than practical. While climbing he thinks on different philosophies and sometimes makes his own philosophy.

His flaw stems from his belief. He believes “Man has to live in society but while climbing mountains he should be alone” (9). When he is asked by other expedition teams if he is going to climb the Everest alone, he perceives that they are asking him as if he was going to commit suicide. He replies with a smile “I have climbed all the mountains alone in my life. So, I have got to climb the highest peak alone. Journey to the peak is always a single journey” (12). He gives a reason for being a single climber. When he prepares to cross Khumbu Icefall, he speaks the following

lines and gives a smile. “It is said never to go to the mountains alone. Every moment and every step on the mountains bear a possibility of an accident... life is the name of playing hide and seek with accidents... People are cursed to walk in others' ways. But life is not for such things. Not” (22). His belief puts him in trouble. When he really needs someone to help him in difficulties, he finds no supporting hand. The unnamed protagonist has already climbed numerous mountains before heading toward Everest. He has got overconfidence regarding mountaineering. It is obvious that he has not compromised in preparation for the expedition. He comes to the Everest Base Camp after spending a week at Namche, a week at Thyangboche and another week at Feriche and Lobuje. He spends a week at Base Camp before climbing the mountain. He comes there with porters but without any guide. He thinks that his experience of mountaineering is sufficient for him to triumph over Everest. The porters suggest him to wait for two more days since the weather is not clear yet, “but he does not find himself in a situation to follow the advice of his porter fellows” (26). He thinks that some people just waste their life waiting for good weather. It is good to have good weather but waiting for good weather is not good. He does not even carry an oxygen cylinder with him. He underestimates the weather conditions. He climbs Everest at night. No doubt, heroes stand out alone, but they have self-affirmation, self-theories of intelligence, self-guides, and self-control.

The protagonist in *Chuli* climbs the mountain not for making a living. Nor does he go there only for the sake of adventure. He has an ego in him to get victory over the Everest. He has promised his beloved to give her the gift of the summit. He thinks that human is not for making compromise with the nature. He wants to prove that man must get victory of the nature. He thinks “Man is not a creature to live by the grace of environment or ecology. The

history of human being is not the history of compromising with nature. Man is a valour. Valour itself is a talent" (28). After the successful conquest over the Everest, he is hit by an avalanche on his way back to the camp. He is seriously injured. At this point, his ego is hurt. His last lines before his death literally convey the message that his journey to the Everest is out of his ego that "man's indomitable struggles will not end. People will keep coming to climb the mountains" (70). The protagonist in *The Peak* is suffering from an overdose of philosophy and ideology. He has got multiple philosophies related to life, mountain, ego, humanity, ultimate goal of life etc. He expresses numerous philosophical lines as he continues his journey. He tends to become more ideological than practical. At times, he neglects the practical realities like the bad weather condition. Indulged in depth of philosophy, he forgets the practical aspects of life. He is not endowed with any charisma.

Conclusion

The protagonists in both *The Old Man and the Sea* and *The Peak* exhibit extraordinary bravery, tenacity, fortitude, and resolve. They are undoubtedly the 'heroes' each reader looks up to. They struggle against the unfavorable circumstances in order to achieve something in their lives. Hemingway has projected Santiago as a representation of battle of humans against nature. In a same vein, Sarubhakta's protagonist is a symbol of humanity's victory over nature. However, both the protagonists are not ideal figures for contemporary readers. They have got some shortcomings which, to a large extent, are responsible for their failures. Santiago exhibits irrationality and stubbornness. He is incapable of making judgements. His mentality is unstable. He is a peculiar individual. His unmet aspirations divert him from his goal. He lives in loneliness. He follows the birds and converses with

them in an attempt to prevent loneliness. He talks to himself and remembers the boy who has left him. Another distraction results from this. Similar to this, the protagonist in *The Peak* has an inflated ego in order to conquer Mt. Everest. He lives in fantasy. He communicates with his fictional sweetheart and expresses his affection for her. He is less pragmatic and more philosophical. He does not subscribe to a single philosophy. Furthermore, he has an excessive amount of confidence in his mountaineering skills. Throughout his expedition, he undervalues the unfavorable weather conditions. Despite other expedition teams' advice, he does not wait for favorable weather conditions. He ascends the mountain alone. He climbs to the summit at night. He holds some views that his beliefs are universal. To conclude, these flawed protagonists are no longer heroes for modern readers. The results of this study may provide researchers with a fresh approach to creating and understanding the perfect hero. The status of the protagonist in a modified setting can also be redefined with the aid of this study.

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