

HUMANITIES AND LITERARY IMAGINATION: HEMINGWAY'S *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA* (1952) AND RICHARD BACH'S *JONATHON LIVINGSTON SEAGULL A STORY* (1972)

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ABSTRACT

The Humanities play a significant role in shaping students into better human beings. But the shift towards technical skills has reduced the importance of Humanities subjects. In this globalised world of science and technology, Humanities subjects can still hold their premise as they bear a humanist value. What is required is a slight readjustment of the praxis. Students inclined to pursue science and technology courses still require the study of the Humanities as part of their job requirement skills. The skills also include critical thinking skills and life skills that can be acquired through Humanities. These skills contribute to an effective management of the self in a highly competitive world. The other areas of development are creativity, articulateness, leadership, innovation, team work and so on.

Literature forms the core of Humanities and literary imagination spells a world of ideas and possibilities. Literary texts have the flexibility to become educational tools to expand the possibilities of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The study of literary texts that forms part of the Humanities imparts a balance of mind that results in positive personality traits. Analyzing them with a contemporary resonance lends a character to the scientific temper displayed by the student. Teachers can explore many ways of 'integrating these texts into their learning experience' through pedagogic experiments. One such attempt could be Bibliotherapy which includes deriving the therapeutic benefits of a book. This process helps students tune their minds better amidst the many pressures that arise during and after their study. It is at this juncture that the Humanities wing through literature assists teachers in chiseling them to be truly 'fit' to contribute to the society. The paper discusses the concept of Bibliotherapy and its overall benefits for students and how the inclusion of such texts in their schedules would supplement occupation- specific courses. It finally gives them the *human* and *humane* edge. The two texts that have been chosen for study are *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway and *Jonathon Livingston Seagull a story* by Richard Bach.

KEYWORDS: Humanities, Exploration of Literary Texts, Bibliotherapy

INTRODUCTION

As bibliophiles we read to breathe more meaning into our lives and it is this unique permutations and combinations of the letters that make all the difference. In fact letters serve almost everyone who needs them. Life presents itself as an amalgam of achievements and disappointments and all we can do is to move on. I think this is the juncture when the language of hope and healing gains more significance. It comes to our rescue to help us emerge unscathed in mind and spirit. The increasing challenges of the globalised world test an individual both physically and mentally. Bibliotherapy does help in overcoming the anxieties and tensions felt by children, youth and elders in the process of meeting their targets. The only hurdle could be time which has to be somehow managed for a bigger benefit.

Bibliotherapy defines itself in many ways. We acknowledge the fact that reading might be therapeutic in a variety

of ways, not least in easing depression:

...the pleasure of escape into a parallel world; the sense of control one has as a reader; and the ability to distance one's self from one's own circumstances by seeing them from without, suffered by someone else and gathered up into a nicely worked-out plot - somewhere around here is the notion of the Aristotelian purgation and Sartre's idea of 'the purifying reflection'." (Morrison 2008)

By relating itself to an area of cognitive psychology, it increases the potential to convince us about its benefits. History tells us that books were read to and by soldiers to have an upbeat atmosphere during World War II and a general sense of well-being. (Siskell) It is also understood to be a part of clinical psychology but only some serious ailments may need a therapeutic environment which might not be necessary when considered being used in the classroom. Teachers and parents can play a vital role in exploring possibilities of receiving the optimum benefits of bibliotherapy. It helps the teachers in understanding their wards better. Students may be involved in activities in this process. They can be involved in various activities like role-plays, writing a letter to a character, conducting discussions, debating and so on.

It might help students to solve problems relating to goal-keeping and problem solving. (1)The effects might not always be direct but they make a mark on their persona and might surface out to offer intangible help to solve issues that arise at a particular time. They help in learning, social cohesiveness and finally result in enhancing life skills. Kimberly Maich opines that considering the following aspects will make execution of bibliotherapy more effective.

Is the story simple, clear, brief, non repetitious, and believable? Is it at an appropriate reading level and developmental level? Does the story fit with relevant feelings, needs, interests, and goals? Does it demonstrate cultural diversity, gender inclusivity, and sensitivity to aggression? Do characters show coping skills and does the problem situation show resolution? (2004)

Some or all of these aspects manifest themselves in many texts and their themes succeed in going beyond geographical remoteness and cultural otherness thus enabling readers especially students with the right attitude to excel in a globalized world.

Hemingway and Richard Bach are two eminent modern writers who have given us two great books namely, *The Old Man and the Sea* and *Jonathon Livingston Seagull a story*. They serve us as pair of paddles that help us move forward our canoes when in troubled waters. Their literary excellence proves again that literature doesn't just spring up from events of life but transcends them to offer a universal value. It is up to each individual to draw meaning that could help enrich one's life or alleviate one's pain. The words gradually open windows to show the readers the most unselfish word 'hope'.

DISCUSSIONS

Both Santiago and Jonathon Livingston are breaking away from the ordinary compromises of life. Their intentions of moving ahead in life are quite clear from the beginning. If Santiago still wants to go ahead, waiting for his 'catch' even after an eighty four day futile search in the sea. Jonathon Livingston wants to steadfastly move away from the 'Breakfast Flock' to learn a higher level of flight in the sky. Their journeys into the sky or the sea underline a quest and a fight with and within themselves. The sea and the sky seem to be open to all but for these two, they pose a challenge and a chance to prove themselves. For us these two books show us the depths of the sea and the heights of the sky, their themes etching themselves on our minds.

Plato's words that the muses gave us the arts not for "mindless pleasure" but "as an aid to bringing our soul-circuit, when it has got out of tune, into order and harmony with itself" prove that books have been regarded as tools of personal development from ancient times (Morrison). Both these books in discussion demonstrate powerful strategies of bibliotherapy.

Bibliotherapy dates back to the 1930s. (Hayati 2002) The fundamental understanding of this concept is that books especially literature has a healing effect on the reader or listener. It can "assist children in building confidence and self-esteem. It attempts to normalize a child's world by offering coping skills and reducing their feelings of isolation, reinforcing creativity, and problem solving". (Lehr 1981:76-79)

We, a team of teachers teaching English, at our engineering college tried taking up bibliotherapy for the undergraduate students. Initially it didn't take off but gradually it worked. Being students of technology, the students took time to internalize this concept that was attached to literature. But we knew that it would help them face their many challenges and help them overcome issues like loneliness, low self esteem, body image, diffidence in taking risks and so on. Our attempts did pay us returns when we found some students improving. Some preferred to listen and some to read by themselves but finally they all agreed on the benefits they received.

The books included fiction, non-fiction and motivational writings. I noticed that these two books were among the other books they were drawn to. Both these novels in discussion focus on making the most of one's life. Both the protagonists; Santiago and Jonathon; the seagull are alone and removed from their communities that is their spirits exhibit a special temper to exhibit the latent strength of their minds. Both find solace in accepting a higher challenge and this is how we find them moving away from ordinary standards of achievement. Santiago finally returns only with the skeleton of the fish; his most prized possession. In spite of this, Santiago remains a role model in displaying the right attitude towards life and duty.

***The Old Man and the Sea* is a Parable of Man's Struggle**

The Old Man and the Sea is a parable of man's struggle with the natural world showing his noble courage and endurance. He says "...I will show him" (the giant fish) "what a man can do and what a man endures". (Hemingway 1952:49) [1] Dreaming of the lions on the beaches of Africa he goes about his task of his quest for marlin. "...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." (3). He was considered to be "*salao*" meaning 'unlucky' as he couldn't make it at the sea for forty days. His only companion apart from himself is a boy Manolin who believes in the old man's potential.

So this is how the story begins with 'failure' and Hemingway shows both the internal and external fight of the old man while saving the big fish he had caught from the sharks that tear the fish to pieces. The most striking feature is that the old man is so human like any one of us swinging between many feelings of hope and doubt. He talks about his baits and says "...I keep them with precision. Only I have no luck any more. But who knows? Maybe today. Every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact. Then when luck comes you are ready". (22) These words come out of his determination of mind and precision at work. He does not believe in short cuts and he keeps his line

...straighter than anyone did, so that at each level in the darkness of the stream there would be a bait waiting exactly where he wished it to be for any fish that swam there. Others let them drift...and they were at sixty when the fishermen thought they were at a hundred". (21-22)

He demonstrates a belief in ability rather than chance and strives to make the best of the opportunity.

A New Perspective on Defeat and Success

In this novel Hemingway guides us to look at defeat from a very different perspective. Santiago says “Man is not made for defeat. A man can be destroyed but not defeated”. (80) As he is not made for defeat, he can fight against all odds with his indomitable will displaying the best of his abilities. He may be defeated but his spirit has succeeded in posing a sincere fight putting all possible efforts. It is a situation in which a defeat is redefined and its effect is uplifting. The spirit remains undefeated and gets ready to try again. The story shows a tragic pattern but also shows one the will to go ahead fighting the many sharks in life. The struggle redefines the concept of success in life. Much has to be endured and one may sometimes fail in ‘getting’ something but what remains important is the struggle and how one faces defeat. Santiago’s struggle displays a different perspective of victory and also the spirit to accept defeat. Success defines a man’s place and finally it is what is looked at by the society but the process to gain it amidst life’s mercurial twists and turns and one’s conduct during these times is also important.

Santiago’s Courage, Tenacity, Love, Compassion and Humility

Santiago displays courage, tenacity, love, compassion and humility even in his ordeal. Though he has separated himself from the other fishermen as such he is not isolated. He expresses solidarity and interdependence with the society by thinking about the boy, the baseball player De Maggio, the lions in his dreams and speaking to the environment around him. He has a kind word for the birds and the other creatures of the sea. He remarks “...no man was alone on the sea”. (45). He also draws emotional support from his thoughts. He keeps wishing the boy were with him knowing pretty well he cannot. By doing so he not only softens his struggle but also alleviates his pain. He also draws inspiration from De Maggio’s game and the lions come back to him as symbols of his youth and his strength in the past. He also remembers how he won over a huge Negro in hand wrestling and emerged a champion. These thoughts feed him emotionally and spiritually and thus he self-motivates himself. We perceive another good lesson in personality development.

The attitude he displays towards his challenge is seen in these words “I must improvise to his because of his great size” (44). Adaptability and a positive attitude strike us. He says “If I were him I would put in everything now.....But thank God they are not as intelligent as we who kill them; although they are more noble and more able”. (47) These words redefine the relationship between the hunter and the hunted. He develops respect towards his adversary and starts regarding it as his ‘brother’ and ‘friend’. He says “You are killing me fish, but you have a right to ...Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful fish, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who.” (71)

Hemingway’s anthropomorphic pattern helps in creating a wonderful bond between Santiago and the other creatures around him. He also apologizes to the fish “I am sorry fish” (71) His feelings arise from a fine comprehension that all of us including the creatures participate in similar patterns of necessity and he understands the basic harmony that binds us or the basic environmental principle that keeps us in a kind of an inevitable tension. He says to the bird “Take a good rest, small bird... Then go in and take your chance like any man or bird or fish.” (40)

Santiago’s Fishing Expedition: A Philosophical Journey

To ‘be in the race’ has become the modern mantra for gaining success and one has to move in this direction. But at the same time a certain moderation in pursuing it might help. Instead of a belligerent temper one can look at the ‘fight’ more positively. Hemingway subtly shows us the philosophical implications in Santiago’s ‘journey’. Santiago goes into the sea after eighty four ‘fishless’ days and on the eighty fifth he heads into the Gulf and goes far into the sea and gets his catch; a giant fish . He holds on to the line for three days before finally killing it with a harpoon. But he returns home as he

left; empty handed. The metaphors of life and its vanity come flooding but at the same time there is no escape from life. The implication of the transience of human achievements enriches our perception about 'gains' and 'success' in life.

Santiago does not complain against the pain and difficulty he faces. He takes it in his stride. His hands are hurt "When the speed of the line was cutting his hands badly..." (63) and he feels faint and weak but he never gives up. He cures his bleeding hand by washing it with the salty sea water. "It's not bad" he says "And pain does not matter to a man". (64) He satisfies his hunger and thirst with what he gets. He keeps giving himself auto suggestions and tells himself to be cheerful " Think about something cheerful old man ". (80) He further says "Now is no time to think of what you do not have. Think of what you can do with what there is." (85) Gives himself and us lessons in improvising and resourcefulness.

Santiago doesn't quit in the face of a great challenge. He maintains his integrity even after putting up a great fight.

Jonathan Livingstone's 'Flight': A Metaphor of Thinking Processes

If Santiago rises to a challenge at sea, there is another protagonist Jonathon Livingston Seagull who soars high up to the skies to unfurl what Santiago has at sea. Richard Bach's most inspiring creation the Jonathon gull like Santiago teaches himself and us the lessons to live a fuller life. Jonathon is very different from other seagulls who don't believe in just eating and surviving. Like it is for many birds, flying for him is not just for food. He seeks a higher meaning in his flight and this is the quest that makes him stand out from the "Breakfast Flock". (Bach 1972:3) [2] His passion for flying pushes him to experiment to a point where it results in his expulsion from the flock. He is made an outcast but he doesn't cease setting his flight goals. Unshaken, he continues to perfect himself till he meets two seagulls who take him to another and higher world of perfection. He meets Chiang a learned seagull. Later he returns to earth to impart his skills to the others in the flock. He is successful in his mission. He trains Fletcher Lynd Seagull who becomes a teacher. Jonathon leaves to teach other flocks. A homily; the novella redefines human potential for self- perfection.

Richard Bach successfully makes 'flight' a metaphor for thinking processes that facilitate an expansion of the mind's horizons resulting in a physical and a spiritual ascent. When looked at from the context of the students such themes display a capacity to influence and inspire them to maneuver through their everyday challenges. The impact of reading such books may not help them directly but will have the power to chisel their thinking processes thus making them strong from within. Both Hemingway and Bach discuss 'precision' acquired by both; Santiago and Jonathon. Santiago ' keeps his lines with precision' (22) and Jonathon speaks about ' precision flying' which is " ...a step toward expressing our real nature". (70) Precision which has proven to be one of the most required qualities for a human being to compete aids both the protagonists.

But even Jonathon, the Son of the Great Gull also is attacked by the Flock when Fletcher survives an accident when he snaps into a cliff of hard granite. Jonathon offers him a choice of a higher level but Fletcher prefers to come down to the Flock. But the Flock takes it be a miracle performed by the Devil and the gulls attack both of them. Fletcher wonders how Jonathon still manages to love them who have tried to kill him. But Jonathon rises in his stature to spell the gospel of humanity when he says "You have to practice and see the real gull, the good in every one of them, and to help them see it in themselves. That's what I meant by love. It's fun when you get the knack of it". (85) At this juncture he makes Fletcher their new instructor and asserts that he is no God.(86) and just a seagull who likes to fly. Fletcher begins his lessons only to realize that "His race to learn had begun". (87)

The two novellas really don't conclude, they end only to begin. Richard Bach dedicates his novel "To the real Jonathon Seagull, who lives within us all" (Dedication)

The Possibility of Human Transformation

Jonathon shows the possibility of human transformation which results in unfolding one's inner potential." His thought was triumph. Terminal velocity! A seagull at *two hundred fourteen miles per hour!* It was a breakthrough, the greatest single moment in the history of the Flock, and in that moment a new age opened for Jonathon Gull". (17) Inspiring words to set one into motion. The grit and determination tell us "How much more there is now to living! Instead of our drab slogging forth and back to the fishing boats, there's a reason to life! Richard Bach makes his protagonist a metaphor for the individual's desire to perfect himself and the flight becomes the attempt to make it happen.

If Santiago preferred to be alone, Jonathon Gull is exiled. He tries to shed life on the aspect of making life more daring and beautiful"...to learn, to discover, to be free! Give me one chance; let me show you what I've found". (25) If Santiago survives in the sea all alone for three days, Jonathon Gull "...learned to sleep in the air, setting a course at night across the offshore wind, covering a hundred miles from sunset to sunrise".(26) He discovers that boredom, fear and anger are the reasons that shortens lives. Surely Jonathon Gull etches on to the minds of all who need him. The novella helps opening the doors of possibility and encourages one to look within.

Both Santiago and Jonathon Gull offer themselves as models and help one in the areas of identification, catharsis and realization. Richard Bach's novella is divided into three parts. It is towards the end of Part One that Jonathon Gull meets the two radiant seagulls from a 'higher home'. (36) He accepts their invitation to go with them to 'Heaven'.(45) But his enthusiasm to break the limits doesn't wane even when he has reached heaven. He understands through Chiang; the Elder Gull's words that " Heaven is not a place, and it is not a time. Heaven is being perfect."(48)

Life's perfection is endless and the levels keep extending themselves. Jonathon is now placed in a set of equals who are "... magnificent birds all of them...".(47) The communication pattern in 'heaven' is also different and more sophisticated than the " screams and gracks" (47) that Jonathon Gull was used to. Sullivan terms Jonathon as the "one-in -a-million' bird because he has come so fast to this world of perfection without having to go through "...a thousand lives to reach this one" (48) Sullivan says " We choose our next world from what we learn in this one, all the limitations and lead weights to overcome". (48)

Jonathan Gull: A Symbol of Perfection and Perseverance

With unending zeal Jonathon Gull aims at learning more "To fly as fast as thought, to anywhere that is "in Chiang's words. Chang also tells him that "You must begin by knowing that you have already arrived". (53) Like Santiago Jonathon Gull tries and waits for the right moment; he 'kept at it' (53) and finally after a fight with himself exclaims "...I *am* a perfect unlimited gull".(53). The application of the knowledge gained places him on a higher pedestal. But that is not the end of learning which is endless and eternal. Chiang offers another challenge to Jonathon of flying 'the past and the future' (54) when he will be ready "...to fly up and know the meaning of love and kindness".(55). Chiang disappears and Jonathon practices his kindness lessons. He is now seized with a desire to return to Earth. Sullivan tries to stop him but Jonathon opens new windows to focus on the aspects of the 'Here' and 'Now' ((57). He gives them a philosophical connotation by saying that overcoming space and time leaves us with the 'Here' and 'Now'. So he moves ahead to Earth to help Fletcher Lynd Seagull an aspiring gull who has been made an Outcast by the Flock but who wishes to seek the glory when he will really learn to fly.

Richard Bach makes Jonathon Gull a symbol of perfection and perseverance and at the same time fills him with humane qualities. Jonathon Gull has not only reached 'Heaven' and further worlds but has also imbibed the art of flying into the zones of love and sympathy. He asks Fletcher " Fletcher Lynd Seagull, do you want to fly so much that you will

forgive the Flock, and learn, and go back to them one day and work to help them know?". (59) He displays a fine balance of education of the mind and heart.

Like Santiago and Jonathon Gull, Fletcher has his own moments of self- doubt "I try and try, but I'll never get it". (69) But Jonathon Gull infuses him and the other group of gulls who have been made Outcasts. He tells them "Break the chains of your thought and you break the chains of your body..." (71). Jonathon becomes their teacher "...at the side of each of his students, demonstrating, suggesting, pressuring, guiding". (73) Jonathon Gull who has isolated himself, singling himself out for a higher gain reconnects with his Flock to empower at least some of them by imparting to them the dynamics of the true flight that sets one truly free. He tells them "...that freedom is the very nature" of their "being, that whatever stands against that freedom must be set aside, be it ritual or superstition or limitation in any form". (77)

The Old Man and the Sea and Jonathon Livingston Seagull a story: Stories of Initiation and Inspiration

Many of us share a natural inclination towards hope and there are so many more that need it. Both the novels can be looked at as works of healing because they make hope infectious and transmit and transfuse a positive energy into their readers. Hemingway and Richard Bach demonstrate the struggles of their protagonists and both Santiago and Jonathon Gull fall and rise through all the dynamics of fishing and flying.

Kay Redfield Jamison writes about bibliotherapy and opines that "It makes both physical and intellectual exploration more likely, and it provides reward for problems solved or risks taken. Through its positive energies, it heals as well" (Jamison 2004:7) Bibliotherapy is also being documented in scientific research and has also been included cognitive behavioral psychology studies. Reading for pleasure does affect the personality and endows one with a self- regulating mechanism to manage one's psyche. Motivating, encouraging and inspiring books are surely an antidote to stress and hopelessness. The recent times have witnessed a growth in the increasing number of 'reading groups' across the world(Wison) [3] It is heartening to know that books; the little doctors have been doing wonders to people all over the world as understood from the success of these 'reading groups' which consist of people who include those suffering from physical and mental maladies.

Message of Hope and Healing

This is an indication that many are coming forward to help themselves and others to reap the benefits of bibliotherapy however big or small their problems may be. They derive comfort, confidence, pleasure and also shed tears. Their focus shifts to someone who is *like* them who is sad and struggling or someone who they would like to be like and the process of identification helps might fill them with a fresh energy or give them strength to reconcile with life and its demands.

The images of Santiago and Jonathon Gull don't erase themselves from our minds. Their courage, piety, determination, endurance and faith arouse our deepest admiration and respect. Through their world view they continue to show us the vision of life. *The Old Man and the Sea* won a Nobel prize and *Jonathon Livingston Seagull a story* reached the top of 'New York Times Best Seller List'. One of the themes in Hemingway's novel is the message to prevail against the threat of annihilation of mankind that was a result of the World Wars. But it holds a 'sea' of hope even in the present context. The language that both; Hemingway and Richard Bach use is very powerful and stretches out a hand to guide us through our journeys of life. The syntactic and semantic combinations pump our minds with hope and power.

The themes of initiation play a notable role in both the novels. Hemingway shows the continuation of the indomitable will of Santiago through the initiation of a code hero in the young boy Manolin. The spirit glimmers in

Manolin's words when he says "The hell with luck...I'll bring the luck with me." Richard Bach displays a similar continuation of that spirit to perfect perfection when Jonathon gull the elevated bird soul passes the mantle of leadership to Fletcher Seagull to coach and educate the flock to discover themselves "...a little more each day, that real unlimited seagull..." (86) Such words and the works they are embedded in no doubt stir the consciousness of the reader to mold the thought processes to build his/her confidence levels. There is a Santiago and a Jonathon Gull in each one of us and discovering them would be joyous process of spiritual awakening to realize that each one of us could be "...a perfect idea of freedom and flight, limited by nothing at all"(57) to light up the unlit corridors of life's process. An understanding of these novels will surely educate one to improve one's personality.

CONCLUSIONS

Storytelling has always been part of mankind's existence and this ancient art has not only promoted social cohesion but has also served in passing on the values of one generation to the other. In the words of Joseph Gold "The role of Literature in human biology is to foster diversity, build reader identity, support balance, nurture balance and assist survival" (Gold 2002: 17) and many a book has been doing this. We have all been with Hans Christian Anderson and Grimm and have also surrendered ourselves to the wonders in the *Arabian Nights* and in the mythologies like *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and *The Jataka Tales* at one point or other in our lives. Our unfailing attention to them displays the nature of our minds to get captivated by a story and be influenced by it. Chinua Achebe says "It is the storyteller, who makes us what we are, who creates history. The storyteller creates the memory that the survivors must have-otherwise their surviving would have no meaning." He also says "Once you allow yourself to identify with the people in a story, then you might begin to see yourself in that story even if on the surface it's far removed from your situation." (Achebe) His idea underlines the essential ingredient of the power of a story that bridges the self with the surroundings and at the same time imparts survival lessons.

In fact Hemingway wrote the story of the old man and his struggle to heal the souls of the suffering humanity after the Second World War. One among 'The Lost Generation'[4] he shared his angst by offering solutions that aided man to be resolute and resilient in times of physical and spiritual loss and hardship. Wrapped in a timeless vision it continues to remain as a valuable resource to draw support from. Richard Bach looks at storytelling as a gift of the imagination. He opines that it is imagination that forms the core of our existence. He says that one cannot really segregate fiction from non-fiction. He says

In the world of imagination there are gifts that come to us and if we were to turn and say to them "You are fiction, you do not apply in my life, and "we'll be turning our backs on showers of gold and diamonds."

He adds,

"Tell me what's going on in your heart, I will feel the magnetism...something to learn from listening. If somebody is using the power of imagination, I think how I can steal ideas to use in mine. I believe we are not bodies, we are expressions of spirit. We are not chained by gravities, by walls, by limits... [5] (Excerpts from an interview)

These are the 'ideas' that make Richard Bach's 'story' interesting. He says "We have seen how ideas the power of imagination translates into the real world." Surely his expressions about discovery, freedom, precision and practice can never fail to make a mark especially on the young minds, not only to solve their own issues but sometimes to possess a strong mind to have any issues at all.

Interestingly both Hemingway and Richard Bach shared a similar vein for adventure whose spirit is reflected in both their novels. Hemingway involved in deep-sea fishing and Richard Bach was a professional pilot. The two novels were made into films.

Many of us might not be receiving professionally guided bibliotherapy but the concept does make its presence felt at one point or the other in our lives and it could be under the influence of a meaningful story, a poem, a biography, a piece of non-fiction or a film. The experience ends up giving a direction to our goal and fortifies the mind to go ahead. Truths of life concealed in these little packages called books open themselves to the young minds to show order in chaos. The grandeur of the two novellas helps dispel the lows of disappointment and pessimism. Gleaning the nuances of life's meaning, the young minds can empower themselves to live and let live even in the most tenebrous situations of life. Universal insights at once become personal and at the same time help them comprehend the fact that sadness and despair are a part of life which not easy to bear. These are the moments during which meaningful books throw a ray of light to show that none of us are really alone and such an experience resonates with all of us. They acquire the role of therapeutic tools when reading becomes directed to address and resolve emotional and psychological distress.

Hemingway's words 'grace under pressure' [6] express their power of rejuvenation and bring forth the latent strength of the mind of man not to subdue the pressure but to conquer it positively. As Richard Bach opines "Every problem comes with a gift in its hands." (Interview) This is what these two novellas succeed in displaying. To sum up in Richard Bach's words it is "...the sense of a book ...and someone might say "I've had a huge block about life and relationships. Now it's gone. Thank you writer!"(Interview)

Giving an extension to their ideas, I wish to quote William Faulkner's enlightening words that he spoke in his Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech. He says,

The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which has been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail. (Nobelprize.org)

The two novellas *The Old Man and the Sea* and *Jonathon Livingston Seagull a story* have done this and have been successful in making one think of giving life a new perspective. So they will surely play a significant role in the processes of healing. Bibliotherapy would definitely be a process of learning and unlearning for the teacher and the taught. If taken up with the right spirit we can make a difference in molding youth into fine citizens to create sensible paths in the mostly chaotic world of today.

Notes

- Hemingway, Earnest. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Arrow Books, London, 1952. All subsequent quotations are taken from this edition of the novel.
- Bach Richard. *Jonathon Livingston Seagull a story*. Turnstone Press, 1972. All subsequent quotations are taken from this edition of the novel.
- The School of Life may be the first organization to charge a fee (if a small one) for literary prescriptions. The company's blog features user-submitted questions and responses from Bibliotherapists. A recent post involves an art student struggling with his or her inability to create original work. Bibliotherapist Ella Burthound prescribes

"Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens, "Jack Maggs" by Peter Carey and "The Conference of the Birds" by Farid Acud-Din Attar. (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/21/bibliotherapy_n_1817968.html)

- The term 'The Lost Generation' was first used by Gertrude Stein. Hemingway popularized by using it as an epigraph in his novel '*The Sun also Rises*' http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_Generation
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JjFn2kMrbM> Interview with Richard Bach
- Dorothy Parker and Hemingway in an interview: Dorothy Parker: Exactly, what do you mean by 'guts'? Hemingway: I mean, grace under pressure.

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