

A Study on Interdisciplinary Theories Regarding Maritime Nautical Literature

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Abstract

Maritime or (Nautical literature) was ruling the period during the 18th century which was followed by 19th-century writers. These novels depict the effects on the environment, society and economy of the people. In this study, it is observed that the concept approach towards the Interdisciplinary theory with connection to the people's thoughts regarding the sea, their religious or holistic approaches, and the gender description given to describe the sea were correlated with some famous nautical novel with notable incidents or theories to prove that the attributes of plots might be different but the themes relating to such sea novels/aquatic novels are more or less similar to each other and they serve some standard settings and motifs on the whole. The study reveals that maritime novels were written in distinctive plots but the themes are more or less focused on masculinity (gender roles) and heroism, social hierarchies and the psychological and holistic transformation during their hard existence in the sea. Ethical approach, the symbolism of sea and the gender roles are used in this regard of research dealing with interdisciplinary theory.

Keywords- Environment, Holistic, Sea, Social Hierarchies

In most of the perceptive nautical novels interdisciplinary themes seek to study the relationship between man and his environment. On many ways, the environment may be considered with women and colonized population as oppressed and ignored beings. The first and foremost concept dealing with these novels are asserted to be the gender roles. Gender roles serve as a hypothesis / as proposed explanation made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation. Ernest Hemingway in his novel *The Old Man and the Sea* explains the reason for the title "The Old Man and *el – mar*", The sea *el – mar* is masculine, meaning that the title could be perceived as a conjunction of two masculine nouns. However, it is likely that Hemingway did not want his novel to be about a relationship between two masculine entities, and to this end he inserts a substantial internal soliloquy in the mind of Santiago, the old man "he always thought of the sea as '*la mar*' (feminine) which is what people call her in Spanish (*la – mar* refers feminine gender whereas *el – mar* refers masculine gender). Those fishermen who brought the fishes for sale spoke that it is *el – mar* but those who got their bad luck without fish referred the sea as *la –mar* - feminine. They believed that always

women brought bad luck to the men expect dowry and luxury. Earnest Hemmingway has given a figurative speech for Santiago who quotes “the moon affects her as it does a woman” he thought. He thinks of sea as a human entity. He notes that younger fisherman think of sea as el mar, masculine, as their enemy. But the old man always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favors, and if she did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them. (P.20-section A). Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* in early 18th century text was informed by the period’s feminine representations of trade, luxury and credit, and that this aspect of trading culture contributed to transforming masculine mores, and informed the advocate individualism of women at the end of the century whereas Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver’s Travel* claims the sea as a female gender as the sea shall be searched for shells and rocks for gems, which is compared to women’s elegant jewels. Virginia Woolf in her novel *To the Light House* as a woman of the older generation, Mrs. Ramsay’s world and point of view are build on tradition. Her family is the most important thing for her, and she pities those who do not have a family and must live on their own. Consequently, she tries to arrange marriages between her children and the guests who stay with them in their summer house. In her opinion, it is the most important thing for a woman to marry, because otherwise she will certainly be unhappy: “they all must marry [...] there could be no disputing this [...] an unmarried woman has missed the best of life.” (*To the Lighthouse*, 43). In 19th century the people were more traditional and they were strictly following their culture.

Secondly holistic / religious approach ruled over the nautical genre from 17th to 19th century. Holism is an approach to understanding human mind and behavior that focuses on looking at things as a whole. It is often contrasted with reductionism, which instead tries to break things down into their smallest parts. This holistic approach was used by the novelists to make the people know and learn about the principle doctrines of god. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Daniel Defoe has shown a keen observation about the moral and religious dimension of the tale and it is indicated in the preface of the book, which states that Crusoe’s story is being published to instruct others in god’s wisdom and one vital part of this wisdom is the importance of repenting one’s sins. So in this extract he believes that he has been not gained the repentance of god during every lament and it is a firm belief of him that only by thinking that god has not forgiven him, he will be repented for the sins. In old man and sea through crucification imagery Hemmingway purposefully likens Santiago to Christ for the sacrifice and the glory that drives from him. Who according to Christian theology, give his life for the greater glory of human kind. When Santiago palms are first cut by the fishing line, the reader could think of Christ’s suffering his stigmata. The old man was a crucified martyr, for the nail hurting his hands. In *Gullivers’ Travel* It is the Christian doctrine and morality to which Christ says a human should be accepted by others irrespective of their power, physical terms, psyche, etc and that’s the reason the Lilliputians as well Brobdigans have accepted Gulliver at least as a prisoner instead of immediate death penalty irrespective of his strangeness. Woolf is an atheist and thus she was very much conscious not to relate her own work to any religious; Christian mythology. But still here instills a holistic approach to her nautical novella *To the Light House*. In this novel when the children fears for the skulls of small birds – is determined to be demon and thus Mrs. Ramsey secures her children from their fear by hiding it with a shawl. When god is termed to be holistic the readers think that the god’s glory has saved the children from the demons fierce.

Thirdly, is the hypothesis of sea in the genre of nautical literature. Sea is unpredictable and unknown. Sea is used as a symbol in literature to represent life and its hardships. Sea stands for the

life itself and the deadly waves symbolizes the sudden obstacles of life. In *Old Man and the Sea* Santiago refers the sea as a women and quotes “her wild behavior is beyond her control.” First he says that sea is beautiful and benevolent but, also cruel that it rely on the birds which are too delicate for it. By this he refers it to be beautiful like a woman in the beginning but in the end, he denotes it as terribly cruel waters as like a woman. In *Robinson Crusoe* the sea symbolizes the abandoning life of comfort and ease in search of some greater ambition, whether profit or adventure: the ocean is dangerous, but also holds the promise of immense profit it made him to suffer divine force of providence to survive the trip on capricious waves, currents and conditions of the sea. He conducts sea to symbolize ‘opportunity’ and event the ‘American dream’ whereas in *Gulliver’s Travel*, Gulliver went out to sea in search of adventure and impossible fortunes/profit, which accurately describes the mentality of early immigrants in other countries. In *To The Light House* the “Sea” symbolizes the natural world and its utter apathy towards human life. The natural world which encompasses time and mortality proceeds as usual, regardless of whether humans are happy or grieving/in peace or war.

In the above context the three concepts relates to the nautical literature in three distinct manners but all the three symposia subjects are more or less common in general for all the nautical literature. The plots might be different for each and every novel, it depends according to the novelist’s wit but when the contexts theme and motifs are observed it is more or less interlinked or common as a whole. The theory of interdisciplinary coordinates all the three symposia of society in the olden days were compared with four novels namely: *To the Lighthouse*, *The Old Man and The Sea*, *Gullivers Travel* and *Robinson Crusoe* which asserts the gender roles in adventurous society, their holistic or religious beliefs molding the human mankind and the sea ventures and its extremity to show both the ends of adversities and pleasures of human life. Thus the term interdisciplinary suites quite well to analyze and compare the distinctive study which involves two or more academic disciplines by correlating and combining it into one activity. This term is very much essential to study the economical, social, anthropological and psychological nature of humans and there by the study concludes that the 17th-19th century people were very much illogical and god oriented rather than following logical virtues in life but they where self sustainable irrespective of their adversities and courageous enough to exist their hard core life.

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