

Analysis of Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises* with the Survival Wisdom of Zhuangzi

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Abstract: Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises" is one of Hemingway's most famous works. The descriptions of a group of young men and women who live in self-exile in Paris after world war I reflect Hemingway's heroic life style of "grace under pressure", and it also shows that Hemingway's tough men often have a powerful inner world. If we analyze Hemingway's work, *The Sun Also Rises*, with the survival wisdom of Zhuangzi by making the Chinese literature as the measurement of English literature, we will find that this is a spiritual dialogue between ancient times in China and modern times in the USA.

Keywords: Zhuangzi; Hemingway; Survival system; Value on life and death

1. Read about the Sun Also Rises

The Sun Also Rises is a novel written by American writer Ernest Hemingway. The novel takes the historical period from 1924 to 1925, and the famous city of Paris as the background, revolves around a group of British and American young men and women who have suffered serious trauma in love or serious psychological or physical dysfunction in the war, and the undisciplined life and the emotional entanglements between them^[3]. It reflects the painful and sad state of mind of this generation who felt no way out after awakening consciousness^[4].

American youth Barnes suffered a spinal injury in the first world war which made him lose sexual ability, after the war, he was a reporter in Paris and loved a British lady Ashley who blindly pursued carnal desire and joy, therefore, he can only use wine to paralyze himself. The two and a group of male and female friends went to Pamplona, Spain to participate in the bullfight festival so that they could experience mental stimulation through venture. The lady refused the Jewish youth Cohen's confession of love, but fell in love with 19-year-old bullfighter Romero. After a short time, however, the affair ended in despair, owing to the great difference in age and Lady Ashley's unwillingness to ruin the pure young man's future. Lady Ashley eventually returned to Barnes, though both sides knew they would never be truly united.

2. "The Sun Also Rises" has three themes.

(1) "The Sun Also Rises" is both the title of the work and a reference to a passage in the Biblical book of Ecclesiastes: "A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever..." as the name implies, it conveys to the world that change is impermanent, but the laws of nature will not change, the sun and the earth will exist as usual^[2].

(2) "lost". Hemingway was labelled "lost" after a conversation with Miss Gertrude, who shouted at him: "You are a lost generation!" Unexpectedly, a casual accusation made a huge impact and spread^[1]. A sense of "lost" lied in every corner of the work, such as the characters in the work, the background of the story, the social environment and so on.

(3) It is a potential theme of the article that Hemingway cannot be defeated. Through the ending of the novel and the description of the matador Romero, Hemingway suggested the readers that both Barnes and the lost generation would eventually find hope and relief in life again.

It can be seen that *The Sun Also Rises*, a long work, is not only a tragic work, but also a wonderful work with encouraging spirit and the power. To be more specific, this article takes the last theme as the program to analyze under the framework the survival wisdom of Zhuangzi. War is accompanied by casualties and other irreparable physical damage, and even more displacement, separation of families and mental torture. Barnes was a national enthusiast who had served his country in the First World War, hoping to save the country, its people its democracy and its equality by doing his best with a strong constitution, a high spirit and a flexible mind^[3]. Victory or defeat, what did the war bring to this nationalist? It's more about the trauma because the war had savagely robbed Barnes of his male genitals and even his courage. This changed Barnes's character directly: thoughts were in his heart; Dissatisfaction with the words of his peers at first; but he only suffered in silence. Even, he helped his friend Cohen meet Paulette and endure their month-long living together in San Sebastian, and accepted Paulette and other men's frolic positively.

Surprisingly, two thousand years ago, similar situation with Barnes and the solutions presented in Health Preservation in Zhuangzi^[5] in the following. Gong Wenxuan was very surprised when he saw the Youshi: "What kind of person can only have one

foot? What is the reason? Is it born like this, or man-made?” “It is not artificial. It is born with only one foot. The appearance of man is given by God, so we know that it is innate, not artificial. Besides, the changes in the appearance of human beings all derived from the destiny, which is uncontrollable^[8]. Even if Youshi was punished, it was his lack of consideration. This kind of inadequate way of thinking is congenital fault, which is a combination of chance and necessity.

So what should we do when this helpless thing happens? When things that cannot be changed or prevented happen, the best way is to take them with equanimity. Things have already happened, things have changed, and we should take them as they are. It is the So-called “mandate of heaven”, which also follows the development and changes of Tao. Such individual’s seemingly active behaviors as Youshi’s violation of law and so on, if it is seen through the appearance to the essence, it is passive. This is helpless destiny. When life suffered a major setback, what helpless people can do is to change their point of view, and comply with the development and changes of life, rather than change the facts stubbornly.

Moreover, just as Mencius once said, people who know their destiny would not stand under a tumble-down wall and wait to die. Although destiny is helpless, individuals could still do their best to make things not that worse, instead of abandoning themselves. After knowing something uncontrollable, individuals should be more cautious in dealing with troubles. Because people know the helplessness of human beings, they would bear that some things cannot be done in mind, and respect the natural principles.

The story of Gong Wenxuan and Youshi intended to show that, people should be in a positive and optimistic attitude in face of disaster, the fate is unpredictable, while human beings are always small and weak. Thus, when things can not be changed through individual’s ability and capability, people should accept the destiny calmly.

The punishment and the war is to hurt the body, so that the body is maverick, in fact, it hurts the heart of the people, such as Youshi and Barnes. The change of the body is the destiny, people can not control, but people can control their own mind. If people cannot make the positive changes of mind while the body is damaged, then the mind would also be destroyed. (the theory of Zhuangzi telomer). It is not terrible to accept a damaged body as long as the protagonist keeps a good state of mind and live positively. But if having a perfect body without a wholesome, people would loss the initiative and enthusiasm of survival, so that they could not recover. To some extent, it would cause much more severe damages than that of direct damages to human life. Therefore, in face of difficulties which hindered the goal of life temporarily, individuals could embrace an optimistic attitude. For example, Youshi only have one foot, but he still stands in the hall of the court to offer advice, the deformed body can not prevent him from realizing his own value. And Barnes, who lost genitals, still has the courage to embrace life. Because uncontrollable things have happened, but life still have to continue.

The story of Gongwen xuan and Youshi shows that the Tao of Zhuangzi is not in a narrow sense, he does not pay attention to the length of life or the integrity of the body, but pay attention to the spiritual state. The attitudes of Zhuangzi can also illustrate the inner mind of Barnes, who finally accept the reality of his infertility. In the latter part of the work, this poor young man with unique hobbies goes to nature and relaxes himself with a free life style. The scene presented that Barnes launches on the winding road with Bill to fish for trout in the Pomponerati River, and reads a book in the shade against two trees growing together, reads the newspaper and drink coffee alone in San Sebastian and chats with people in the past about current affairs and goes to Concha Bay to fight against waves.

This shows that in Zhuangzi’s view, life and death are about destiny. All we could do is try our best to do what we are supposed to do and care little about the result. True happiness depends on our mental state instead of the value of external things.

Although there is a long time period between Zhuangzi and Hemingway, the philosophies of life and death of them were put forward based on the environment of their era, which provided a way for people to seek for inner peace and broadness under the frequent wars at that time. In face of disease, aging and death, no matter whether individuals are rich or poor, no matter whether individuals are old or young, they would inevitably have anxiety and fear. Besides, both Zhuangzi’s Tao and Hemingway’s grace under pressure show, in the chaotic society, if we want to live as well as possible, we must learn to abandon the interference of external things, thus, we can realize the broad-minded spirit.

References:

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