

An Analysis of Hemingway's Symbolism in *the Snow of Kilimanjaro*

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Abstract: *This paper analyzes the symbolic meaning of Hemingway's well-known short story The Snow of Kilimanjaro based on symbolism theory, which makes readers better understand the Hemingway's powerful creation of character and his unique language style. This paper analyzes the images of snowy mountains, snow in memory, leopards, wine, gangrene and their relations with Harry, and explains their symbolic meanings in the novel. Although images such as wine and gangrene imply that Harry's death is too heavy, the snow mountain of Kilimanjaro and the leopard symbolize Harry's spiritual immortality.*

Keywords: Hemingway, *The Snow of Kilimanjaro*, Symbolism, Images.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Snow of Kilimanjaro is narrated from the main narrative perspective of Harry, the protagonist of the novel Harry and his lover in the African savannah hunting, outing. An accident on a hunting trip disturbed him in the original life, the car broke down in the hunting road, and the wound cut on the leg was not bandaged in time and had maggots. He and his lover in Africa desperately waiting for the arrival of the plane, his wait is nothing but waiting for the arrival of death.

Symbolism is a literary device in which a writer uses one thing—usually a physical object or phenomenon—to represent something more abstract. A strong symbol usually shares a set of key characteristics with whatever it is meant to symbolize, or is related to it in some other way. Characters and events can also be symbolic.

Hemingway's works are quite charming in both thought and art, and his language art style is unique in American literature with its concise and smooth language and implicit symbol. To explore the serious problem of life and death, Hemingway describes a lot of images in his novels. Simply put, it is a concrete image in reality, "it not only has a unique and intuitive external concrete form, but also contains a rich and vivid symbolic meaning beyond the concrete form", caring for the object, meaning in the image.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CONTENT OF *THE SNOW OF KILIMANJARO*

You just know things are going badly when the story opens with the image of vultures circling in the air and the protagonist apologizing for the odor of his rotting leg and then suggesting that his wife either amputate the limb or shoot him. Africa is a magnificent setting for this story--natural beauty and danger lurk everywhere. Harry's death and dying is punctuated by self-examination and frequent recollections of his past. Much like Tolstoy's character, Ivan Ilych, Harry too has squandered his time and talent. Only near death does he comprehend the truth about his life. He realizes that despite the trappings of comfort and success, he is a lonely man who is actually bored with everything, even his own death! The gangrene of his leg is a striking metaphor for his self-destruction and wasted potential as a writer, husband, and human being. Now he suffers more from his own chastisement than from the painless progression of the gangrene.

Yet his fatal infection deepens his insight and a moment of lucidity replaces all his regrets and failure. "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" speaks to both altitude and attitude--how high we aim, the excuses we make, and what we ultimately settle for. *The Snow of Kilimanjaro* is constructed from dialogues of characters and reminiscences of stream of consciousness. Behind the concise language is a lot of white space. These blanks expand the possibility of rhetorical interpretation of the meaning of discourse. From the title of the novel, readers are brought into the world of rhetoric. In the context of rhetoric, with reality, memory, illusion, in a rhetorical state of addition, those grand plots and small clues are interwoven.

3. THE EMBODIMENT OF SYMBOLISM

3.1 The symbol of the image 'snow'

The best part of the book is Harry's interweaving of reality and memory. Through his memories, Harry shows us a very different living environment from the African plains. "Snow" often appears in Harry's memories. ---- 'Nansen's Secretary asking the old man if it were snow and the old man looking at it and saying, No, that's not snow. It's too early for snow.' 'And the Secretary repeating to the other girls, no, you see. It's not snow and them all saying, it's not snow we were mistaken. But it was the snow all right and he sent them on into it when he evolved exchange of populations. And it was snow they tramped along in until they died that winter.' 'It was snow too that fell all Christmas week that year up in the Gauertal, that year they lived in the

woodcutter's house with the big square porcelain stove that filled half the room, and they slept on mattresses filled with beech leaves, the time the deserter came with his feet bloody in the snow.'... These series of scenes, are all related to snow. Snow is a sign of life and death, a symbol of one tragedy after another.

3.2 The symbol of the image 'gangrene'

The infected gangrene is the direct cause of Harry's death and is an external manifestation of Harry's spiritual world from enrichment to collapse as well. Harry's gangrene began when he and Helen went hunting in Africa, and he was never healthy again. At first, he did not feel any discomfort, did not perceive the gradual erosion of his illness, so did his spiritual world.

3.3 The symbol of the image 'wine'

Wine is mentioned many times in the novel, and whenever Helen tells him that drinking is harmful to his health, and thinks that he is giving up on himself, when he gives up drinking, he often ends up doing nothing. He gave up the pursuit of being a writer, he regarded wine as the best thing to get rid of pain, he dared to look at death after drinking wine, and he was no longer afraid to transfer his passion for writing to wine, and the process of drinking wine made him feel happy and did not have to think about other troubles.

3.4 The symbol of the image 'leopard'

Right at the beginning of the novel, there's this description--'Close to the western summit there is the dried and frozen carcass of a leopard. No one has explained what the leopard was seeking at that altitude.' At first glance, these two sentences are extremely abrupt, not like a sentence that should appear at the beginning, but after reading the whole novel, it is not difficult to find that the image of the leopard has an extremely important and strong moral, which guides the direction of the novel. The body is dried and frozen, which also allows it to be preserved intact, from suffering the tragic fate of the animals below the mountain, which is the return of its efforts to climb to the top of the snow mountain, and the persistence of the pursuit, but also a symbol of immortality and immortality.

3.5 The symbol of the image 'mountain'

The novel opens with '*Kilimanjaro is a snow covered mountain 19,710 feet high, and it is said to be the highest mountain in Africa. Its western summit is called the Masai "Ngàje Ngài," the House of God.*'

Snow is white, quiet, sacred, inviolable, and towering mountain fusion, forever, will not dissipate, symbolizing the victory of eternal life over death. It is not difficult to see that the Kilimanjaro snow mountain is the path from the real world to death, Hemingway let Harry take Helen to Africa, came to the foot of the mountain hunting, is to let Harry in such a "spotless" place to end his life.

4. CONCLUSION

In a word, from the *Snow of Kilimanjaro*, Hemingway's use of symbolism is obvious, and readers can also feel that he has a good grasp of images. As mentioned above, Africa is a primitive and wild place, full of life and death, pursuit and fight, the cycle of life. This not only contains the relationship between the protagonists, but also predicts the fate of Harry. The snow of Kilimanjaro, white, pure, empty and quiet, all reflect a spiritual pursuit beyond the material, beyond the body, beyond the self, as well as the detachment of the soul. Through the embodiment of different images of Africa, the theme of this novel is more profound and broad, so as to arouse readers' spiritual thinking and resonance.

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