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## THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN DESTINY IN MAUGHAM'S "GERMAN HARRY"

M.A: AHMED RASHEED MAJEED AL\_RUBAIY

Assist. Instructor, Department of English Language, Al\_Yarmouk University College-Iraq.

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AHMED RASHEED MAJEED  
AL\_RUBAIY

### ABSTRACT

We shouted a greeting, but he did not answer. He was a man of over seventy, very bald, hatchet-faced, with a grey beard, and he walked with a roll so that you could never have taken him for anything but a sea-faring man. His sunburn made his blue eyes look very pale and they were surrounded by wrinkles as though for long years he had spent interminable hours scanning the vacant sea. He wore dungarees and a singlet, patched, but neat and clean. He was a savage. He was nothing but a narrow, ignorant and cantankerous seafaring man. As I looked at the wrinkled, mean old face I wondered what was the story of those three dreadful years that had made him welcome this long imprisonment. I sought to see behind those pale blue eyes of his secrets they were that he would carry to his grave "The story teller".

**Key words:** Island, German Harry, existence.

### Introduction

We have one of Maugham's short stories written in 1954, this story are very short dealing with an old man lived on an desert island in the middle of the sea, like the other Maugham's short stories happened in an isolated place in order to make us thinking about how is this man, how he lived the way that bring him or in other words the way that found himself on this island.

At the same time we must say that this story heard it from another one as a teller to it. He begins when he intends to travel to New Guinea may be for trading or for another thing like just to see a new place in the world "I was in Thursday Island much to go a New Guinea. Now the only way in which I could do this was by getting a pearling lugger to take me across the Arafura Sea." "The journey to Merauke and back could hardly take him less than a month". (pp. 213-214).

He continued in his journey and through that a man was appeared in order to ask them if

they would stop in there way at the island of Trebucket for carrying some food like a sack of flour, another of rice and some magazines for the hermit who lived there on the Island, firstly he surprised when he heard this speech because as we know it's very difficult for anyone to live in a place like this island alone without his simple necessities that he uses in the day life for a long time , really it's something very difficult. So the teller said;" I pricked up my ears. It appeared that the hermit had lived by himself on this remote and tiny island for thirty years, and when opportunity occurred provisions were sent to him by kindly souls."(p. 214).

Most of the people in who visit the island know him as German Harry. His history went back a long way, thirty years before, he had been an able seaman on a sailing vessel that was wrecked in the those angry waters .Two boats managed to get away and eventually hit upon the desert island of Trebucket. This is well out of the line of traffic and it was three years before any ship sighted the castaways. Sixteen men had landed on the island,

but when at last a schooner, driven from her course by stress of weather, put in for shelter, no more than five were left. When the storm abated the skipper took four of these on board and eventually landed them at Sydney. (p.214)

This is all what we heard about German Harry and his crew from the narrator that he depends on what was told by German Harry himself. "A strange man and a strange story. I learned more about him as we sailed across the desolate sea."

Moreover he told him that he refused to go with his fellow-men because as he said during three years he had seen such terrible things and wished never to live with them again. He would say no more, and he was absolutely fixed in his determination to stay, entirely by himself, in that lonely place.

He has been able to make himself sufficiently comfortable. They bring him papers, bags of flour and rice, and canned meats. He has a whale boat and used to go fishing in it, but now he is no longer strong enough to manage its unwieldy bulk. He used to collect and sell the pearls to the pearlery for tobacco, and sometimes he found a good pearl for which he got a considerable sum. Even it is believed that he has, hidden away somewhere, a collection of magnificent pearls. After that the world was controlled by the war, so as a result there is no pearls came out and it continued for a long time, and for years he never saw a living soul. For all he know, a terrible thing that happened somewhere in the world like epidemic had killed off all the entire human race, and he was the only man alive .he was asked later what he thought. "I thought something had happened," (p.215)

During the period that spend it the teller with our hero on the island and it's about four months two or three pearlery in the evening surrounding him they are trying to make him drunk in order to get the information from him ,what happened to rest of the crew , after two boats were landed on the island with its sixteen man landed and at the end of that only five were left ,but he never say a word even he was drunk or sober and when they insist he became very angry and leaves them. Here we intend to submit some think about his style

and the way that he deals with the people , so the teller told us that, when they come to the Island and be near the cottage of German Harry, they start greeting him but he didn't answer them , may be because of his older age or his inner feelings towards the strangers who came to his Island in order just to have pearls so he refused the way that ,they ask him to do , in other words ,they come only for their benefit to raise their money by improve their interest on this Island. The last thing, they ask him about the fate of his fellow -men, they landed with him on this Island and for many things we don't know it exactly because it considered as a secret inside German Harry soul or we can consider it as a sign of his ambiguity. In other words it's the strong new way of Maugham's style to make the reader still with him inside the story to the end of it, and trying to understand it step by step in there events, so he should read it all.

Let us take another side of German Harry's life especially with the environment that surround him and from its effect we know something from the event of life of our hero exactly the place that he lived inside it. "The house to which he presently led us consisted of a single room with a roof of corrugated iron. There was a bed in it, some rough stools which he himself had made, a table, and his various household utensils. Under a tree in front of it were a table and a bench." (p.217) And his description was also signed in the story in order to give us a completed idea about his personality : "I saw the little hut, sheltered by trees, in which German Harry lived, and as we approached he sauntered down slowly to the water's edge. We shouted a greeting, but he did not answer. He was a man of over seventy, very bald, hatchet-faced, with a grey beard, and he walked with a roll so that you could never have taken him for anything but a seafaring man. His sunburn made his blue eyes look very pale and they were surrounded by wrinkles as though for long years he had spent interminable hours scanning the vacant sea. He wore dungarees and a singlet, patched, but neat and clean."(pp. 216-217) "He was a savage. He was nothing but a narrow, ignorant and cantankerous seafaring man. As I looked at the wrinkled, mean old face I wondered what was the story of those three

dreadful years that had made him welcome this long imprisonment. I sought to see behind those pale blue eyes of his secrets they were that he would carry to his grave. "(p.218)

He has his way by dealing with others when we saw him very jealous or sometimes he seemed very greedy when anyone tries to be near of his Island at least as he thought. "I cannot say that he was pleased to see us. He accepted our gifts as a right, without thanks, and grumbled a little because something or other he needed had not been brought. He was silent and morose. He was not interested in the news we had to give him, for the outside world was no concern of his: the only thing he cared about was his island. He looked upon it with a jealous, proprietary right; he called it "my health resort" and he feared that the coconuts that covered it would tempt some enterprising trader. He looked at me with suspicion. He was somberly curious to know what I was doing in these seas. He used words with difficulty, talking to himself rather than to us, and it was a little uncanny to hear him mumble away as though we were not there. But he was moved when my skipper told him that an old man of his own age whom he had known for a long time was dead. "Old Charlie dead — that's too bad. Old Charlie dead." He repeated it over and over again. I asked him if he read. "Not much," he answered indifferently. He seemed to be occupied with nothing but his food, his dogs and his chickens. If what they tell us in books were true his long communion with nature and the sea should have taught him many subtle secrets. It hadn't." (pp. 217-218)

These stories show an acknowledgment master of the genre at the peak of his power. Most are set in the colonies at a time when the empire still assured, in a world in which man and women were caught between their own essentially European values and the richness and ambiguity of their unfamiliar surroundings. in this languid life, Maugham show how a tiny park of a stray emotion acts as the catalyst to human tragedy .in subtle contrast, the stories set in an English landscape provide more familiar territory and are characterized by Maugham's cool and distinctive stamp.

## Conclusion

Most of us think that German Harry has interest with the Island that he lived on in order to show us he was not only such a man that live on this Island but he has more than the others a kind of relationship between him and the Island . When he express that by the imagination of the teller if anyone want to invade the Island he would not notice him in the Island when he enter at the same time it's impossible to discover that treasure of the Island and it will be hiding in a place, considered as especial secret to this Island at the end will get nothing from it and comeback in his boat to still this Island once more be deserted of man. The history of the Island is blood history and the problem is problem of human person, and here can people live peacefully on an isolated Island, we suppose they cannot .But the author not speak frankly he just suppose, when he refused to go to the world he is innocent and he is unoptimistic .We return to the Idea of being German Harry on the Island alone, he hide some secrets as we think that he killed his friends, but at the same time he still refused to deal with other peoples. He doesn't want to contact with people in order to make his secret inside himself and no one discover it to the end of his life, so he insist to stay on the Island forever. In this story we discuss the attitudes of the author and his way of submitting his Ideas about hero inside the story itself. German Harry the person who changes his life by committing suicide after killing his comrades, in his tragedy end. At the end we can say it is a kind of struggle for existence vividly between human beings. German Harry in this story doesn't tell what had happened on the Island but we suppose what happened after a great struggle for existence there on the Island between Harry and his comrades; firstly we think that struggle happened inside the crew without German Harry after they killed each other and become little number. German Harry control on the situation there on the Island our hero became very aggressive and we think that he was very strong man because he still alive and beside that he capable to kill the rest men with him on the Island. He still alive alone but in the very sad position that's mean he was the smart one among his comrades.

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