Kesava Reddy’s He Conquered The Jungle: The Struggle For Existence And The Survival Of Fittest

Abstract
This paper analyzed Keshav Reddy’s He Conquered the Jungle, it was written in Telugu; C.L.L. Jayaprada has translated it into English, the paper highlights the theme of struggle for existence and the survival of fittest in the novel. The protagonist is an old swine herd, it set out to the nearby jungle in search of his missing pregnant sow. The story is set in completely in the jungle, the story starts at sunset and ends at sunrise. He is an outcaste old man and an extraordinary man. The writer has not named the central character, the old man’s only mission is to find out the sow and its new born piglets and get them back to his shed. The Hero is a fearless man and a great warrior; he has tremendous faith in himself and in his strength. He protects his loved sow and piglets. The old man in his journey on the moonlight recalled his past heroic battles and experiences to dedicate himself to his only mission. The Sukka sow is well known for its foolishness and irrationality, weakness, cowardice and inability are his three great enemies. He had injured several times by the sow and he is careless attitude to hygiene.

1. INTRODUCTION
He Conquered the Jungle is the translation of Athadu Adavini Jainnchadu, written by Kesava Reddy in Telugu. Kesava Reddy was born in Talupulapally of Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh state on March 10, 1946. He was a physician at the Victorian Hospital in Dic Hpallg in the Nizamabad District of Andhra Pradesh. He writes about outcasts, the downtrodden and neglected member of the society. It is a story of an old Swineherd’s single-minded search for his pregnant sow. He fights predators that came...
after first his sow and then her newborn piglets. The old man seems symbolic of man himself, his courage and unyielding spirit in facing the vicissitudes of life. The protagonist is an old swine herd, it set out to the nearby jungle in search of his missing pregnant sow. The story is set in completely in the jungle, the story starts at sunset and ends at sunrise. He is an outcast old man and an extraordinary man. The writer has not named the central character, the old man’s only mission is to find out the sow and its new born piglets and get them back to his shed. The Hero is a fearless man and a great warrior; he has tremendous faith in himself and in his strength. He protects his loved sow and piglets. The old man in his journey on the moonlight recalled his past heroic battles and experiences to dedicate himself to his only mission. The Sukka sow is well known for its foolishness and irrationality, weakness, cowardice and inability are his three great enemies. He had injured several times by the sow and he is careless attitude to hygiene. The story reminds Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* and it also apt to Swami Vivekananda’s “Strength is life and Weakness is Death”.

2. SEARCH OF THE SOW

*He Conquered the Jungle* is a novella like Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. T. Vinoda said, “Kesava Reddy’s credit that he never sentimentalizes poverty not does he explicitly draw our attention to it; for the struggle of his characters in this strata of society, poverty merely provides an unobtrusive setting” (Reddy XII). Kesava Reddy put strength in his characters, a character are always thinking positively and an optimist. The greatest opinion of the reader is that Kesava Reddy’s novel *He Conquered the Jungle* is readily brings to mind Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*. It is true that in both the novels the old men go too far out and have only their courage, determination and endurance to fall back on their love, heroic, unequal fights. The novella begins with the description of the old men, “The old man lay sleeping like an ancient boulder. The evening sun-light fell on his feet through the open doorway. His feet were as broad as winnowing trays and rough as rocks, cracked all over” (Reddy 1). He has two Sukka sows, he was depending on them, and one Sukka pig had borne twelve piglets other one was carrying. One day he was ill, that day his grandson had taken those pigs out to gaze but he had not returned and the sun has been setting in the west. He was worrying about his pigs, his pigs were everything to him and they were his sole of a wealth. He was leading his life very naturally, he was bathed very rarely. But in the modern days people gets bath twice a day. When the boy did not turn up he thinks that, “Perhaps pigs got out of control and into trouble. Or was the boy himself in danger?” (Reddy 3). He went himself to find out his sow, the old man was struggling for existence he said himself, “I am going in search of the pigs now. If they are in danger, I have to reserve them mustering courage and strength. If only I could gulp another pot of toddy” (Reddy 3). He left the hut and set off the west on the mud track. He had owned twenty pigs; two of them were Sukka sows, special bread. The old man does not like everything mixed up, he is very specific about the Sukka breed, “the old man did not want his sows to mate
with any pigs other than those of the special breed” (Reddy 5). The pigs also surviving, she could be like a devil for a week after birthing; she would not allow any one neither friends nor foe. She would struggle for its existence even she would not allow a fly to rest on her little one. The old man went to search his pig and grandson Gopal. His grandson was approached him but he was weeping because his Sukka pig has been missing since the evening because it was full blown and about to have piglets. The old man is like an old man in Hemingway’s. The Old Man and the Sea both were struggling for their existence. He said to his grandson “Why are you crying now useless fellow? Drive these Swine carefully into the yard. I will go in search of the sow” (Reddy 7), he took his few steps towards the barkala ditch; he could not find it theirs. He thought that it might have gone into the jungle to have a safe deliver the forest is safe place for animals. He entered into the jungle. He had lot of experience in his life, once he had gazed the cattle in the jungle, jungle incomprehensible, perhaps it does not know its own mysteries. Each and every animal in the word should struggle for existence, if they are fit then only they survival otherwise they will dies. He talked about the modern world, how survival is only fittest, “I should be cautious. If the sow is in there and senses my presence she will attack like a tigress. She might grip a leg or arm and crunch it off. She might even kill me. She is a brute and cannot distinguish between enemies and well wishers” (Reddy 11). On his search of the pigs he met a tribal Yerukala and chenchus an aboriginal of Andhra Pradesh. They were very expert in the jungle, they understood animal’s language, and the old man lived in the Sugali forest for two years. There was a little rain but he has decided to search his pig and moved alone in the eastern direction. He shouted “Huch”! Huch!” walked across the Balasa and Kasara creepers, he throw some stones into the bush but could not find it. He was great human being, he was hungry once he thinks killed rabbts but he did not like to kill them. He remembers Saint Valmiki’s life, he met a hunter, he hunted a male bird and the female bird was crying, that shokha turned as a sloka. He is a great human being, he thinks greatly, “I should have killed one of the rabbits that jumped out of the wild liquorices shrub and eaten it. For some time he blanked himself for not having done that ‘But then I was not hungry. And the rabbits were a pair; it’s a great sin to separate a couple” (Reddy 15). The rabbits can run faster on the earth, it can circle twice a forest in a day.

He was searching his pig in shrubs and caves like Bhimasena rushing to rescue Drupadi from Keechaka’s hands. He was walking like a roosts, he got back ached because of continuous slouching. He was very expert of his own pig, he firmly believed in that the foot prints of his sow and moved that direction. The old man stood on the areca nut branches watching the jungle very closely like an eagle perched on a tamarind tree at the centre of a village watches for chicks and frogs, he watched in the jungle. He entered into the heart of the jungle, he heard babbler cries. He sensed the smell of after birth; the sow had laid the piglet in the shrub. After some time the old man’s wish was fulfilled, the wind shifted to a south-westerly direction. He tightens his loincloth, held his knife and spear and went silently out of the cover of the balder and he moves like a...
The old man did not realize what happened to him, his body and mind froze in a fear. He felt that the tree on the ground was floating in the air and the clouds in the sky were falling down. He dashed up the Sunkenu tree and sat on a branch; the old man was sitting on the branch and saw his sow. But he was in dilemma, he asked himself that was it true or a dream! He was so happy; he was counting his piglets because pig and piglets were sources of his income. He counted that his Sukka has given birth of ten piglets. He was shouting and slid into a coarse song,

“Oh you fellow! Song of your mothers
Oat. What are you doing there?
Here is the girl. Polyga’s daughter

Saw her first menstrual blood” (Reddy 28). Whenever he joleys, he was singing a song, he went on singing until his voice grew hoarse. The old man was very innocent, he appreciates the babbler, he praised its selfishness and he was obeying its service, “Ori your mother? I forget you altogether. If it hasn’t been for your good deed in showing me the way, I would not have seen the sow. I’d have wandered in the jungle all night. I won’t forget your help in this life. When you need my help, I will return yours two-fold” (Reddy 29). The old man helpless to help him, he cannot take him to his home and feed something. He wants let it in the jungle, he do not want keep it in a cage. He said to modern men, “The greatest service men can do to a bird or beast is to leave it free” (Reddy 30). He stood on the branch of the tree and protecting his piglets, he was dreaming about the piglet and taking them to his home.

3. STRUGGLING FOR EXISTENCE AND SURVIVAL
Kasavas Reddy portrays that Indian were strongly believes in a blind belief. The old man was so happy when he found his sow and piglet. He could not remember that whose face he saw first time in the morning when he woke up. Ironically speaks seeing men’s for is not auspicious but he stood put his finger on his forehead and remembered, “How foolish of me. The first thing I saw this morning was the sow. I am like a shepherd who puts his sheep on his shoulder and looks for it all over the jungle” (Reddy 32). He thinks that he saw, everyday his pigs face from the dusk to day break and dreamt about the pigs. The half night is over, the bilibitri flowers were blooming and spreads their fragrance through the air. He was thinking about his sleep, he has many wounds on his body unless he drinks a potful of toddy he could not forget the pain and went to sleep. It is a question of existence and survival; he could not sleep because he should guard a sow and its piglets and take those safely. In the past midnight, he saw a jackal in the valley of boulders. It is a cunning animal, he knows about the Jackal’s tricks. It could steal sugarcane and groundnuts by fooling the farmers guarding the fields and the way it would shrink its body into the size to a mortar to burrow into the furrows. The old man was very angry and waiting a jackal he said himself, “Come on! Come son of a miser. Don’t know when you were born and where you grew up. But it is written that you will die at the Tindra shrub” (Reddy 35). He is an optimist, he was
thinking positively. He is very calm, watching everything. He was enjoying, he could not sleep. Nobody was willing write song about Jackal, people writes a song about peacocks and swan. He continued singing a song, he cleaned his throat and taking a deep breath started singing a song a folk song,

“Care on Bhima
to hack the blind man's
children with an exe

Come on! Get up Bhima” (Reddy 37), he continued his song until his throat become dry and painful like his injured thighs and muscles. Jackals attacked all the sides to eat piglets. Jackals pigs and the old man were struggling for existence and survival, the old man took his spear and hurled it at the animal, it spread through the air and it stroked the Jackal between the eyes and it fell back on the earth and breathed its last waving its less in the air. Other two Jackals from the north and south leapt into the bush like a thieves, they picked up a piglet each and started running away. That incident gives a lot of pain to the old man, he cried out in pain like a pregnant woman hit by a rice-powder on the belly. The old man counted piglets, they were only eight. His sow kept all his piglets in the bus but count survives his children. He muttered when he lost two piglets, he counted many times but helpless to go near. He got down from the tree the pig could not allowed him to go near, he stood near the bush. He thought, “How strange that both the misery and helpless of a civilized man depend on a beast, life is full of strange contradictions” (Reddy 42). He was so angry on the jackals; he thought that jackals will attack on his piglet. His heart flamed with anger, his eyes covered by a film of tears and reddened, he expresses his angry “I won’t, If it’s necessary, I will burn the whole Jungle” (Reddy 43). He draw the knife from his waist, he aimed at the babbler bird and hurled it, it cries and died. The night ended the old man’s heart grew heavy, he feud three Jackals lay dead. When he saw the dead body of babbler he criticized himself of his evil dead, “The innocent babbler and the recalcitrant sow are both obstacles in the achievement of my goal. It is really a strange predicament. The very sow I am struggling to save is ready to pulp me at the slightest chance. I can rend or rack my brains by thinking about the contradiction in this” (Reddy 44). He repeated that life is full of strange contractions. The sow hides her sorrow and lay quietly in the shrub, he was in wretched condition; he was unable to get down from the tree. The old man worrying about sow and her injuries not only physical injuries but also lost of two young piglets. Her heart must be like a wound, he reconciled that she has not given a birth of ten piglets. Man may tell lie but the sow knows the truth. There was a cooled breeze; he forgets the morning tragedy immediately. He do not actually want to remember the night in which he lost two piglets, it is not wise to repeatedly recall he misfortunes of the past. When sun rise, he was thinking to carry piglets but he cannot open his eyes. He thought, “My surroundings are evil. If I open my eyes, I can see creatures killed violently lying about. In every jungle bush and cave there lurk greed and wickedness. The air is rent by the dance of death” (Reddy 48). He did not tell anyone about the
incident, disaster had once struck his village when he was an adolescent. The military battalion compel across the road, close to the village. The villagers could not tell why the soldiers were living in tents. People used to say that a world war was going on in somewhere for off place and that the soldiers were going there to take part in it.

Kesava Reddy narrates the cruelty of the soldiers in the village, “Gradually the soldiers began tormenting the villagers. They used to break into houses in broad daylight and take away grain, chicken and goats. If the villagers protested, they were beaten black and blue” (Reddy 49). One day two soldiers were came to his sack and demanded two pigs but he refund to give. The Jackals encircled the tindra bush, it gradually tightened, the Jackals dend in on the tindra bush. He lifted the spear with his right hand, his right shoulder quivered. There was a terrible incident was going to take place in front of his own eyes. His survival was very important to him than any other things in the world, which is the reason to kill his sow and save eight piglets. The old man gripped the spear, pressed the shout of the pig his left foot and grunting loudly pulled out the spear in one move. As the clotted blood slid along spear point he shouted in a chocked voice, “I killed the sow with my own hands. It is my own doing” (Reddy 53). There was no other way to save the piglets, the old man left spear and walked into the tindra bush, the eight piglets were frisking charmingly. He was so happy; he took at them fondly and smiled his fore creasing into deeper wrinkles. He doubted that, sows might not allow another’s piglets to approach. He gleamed at the sow, he thought himself, “I have reared her myself and killed her with my own hands. I will never forget her. After her death, she will appear in my dreams everyday” (Reddy 53). The battle is over, he won in the war. The morning star would appear the sky; he must reach his shack before day break.

After the battle, he wants reach his home quickly; he must reach along with those piglets to the sow, he thinks to wave basket, he was busy with waving basket. He finished waving the basket and get up. He spreads the leaves of the ganuga thickly on it and placed each piglet on the bed of leaves. He tried to lift the basket and put it on his head. He did not waste his time to lift the basket. He speaks the human condition in the modern day. Kesav Reddy strongly believed in some philosophy. To save the piglet, he lost his sow and shall learn the carcass of the sow for the sake of piglet. He reveals the natural law and the great philosophy, “No man is altogether fortunate, No man is successful in everything he attempts. Life is balance of conquests and defeats” (Reddy 55). He lifted his basket without troubled, he stretched out on arm, took his spear and knife and set off and walked eastwards. The old man felt the return journey was faster that his travel into the jungle, he has no longer needed to search the caves. He has known that piglets would not survive long without milk. He thought, “My determination knows no defeat. If will conquer all weakness. I will take the piglets alive to my shack. That’s my resolve” (Reddy 57). He should not stop his journey; every minute is as precious as a contrary. He joined the Golla, he has eight cows, ten oxen and some calves in his herd altogether about twenty animals. Those animals were only his livelihood, he had no land. Man is always happy in the jungle, “He had no land. Because of a drought
in his place, he had come to the jungle, driving his cattle where he was overjoyed to see green meadows and gurgling streams” (Reddy 58). Arun Joshi’s The Strange Case of Billy Biswas is very similar to Kesav Reddy’s The Conquered the Jungle. In the novel Mr. Billy Biswas is a protagonist, “Billy’s father had originally come from Bengal. His grandfather had at one time been the Prime Minister of a famous Princes State Orissa. His father, after completing his law studies at Inner Temple, had mostly practiced law at Allahabad and Delhi” (Joshi 11), he was a learned and as a employed but he could not find happiness, he went to jangle lives with a tribal woman and got complete happiness in his life. The old man recognized the Golla fellow. When he was carrying the piglets four vultures rubbing their blood soaked breaks against the branches, he felt like smashing their hearts with his spear. He was disappointed; he thought that, “The battle is finished. I am utterly defeated” (Reddy 61). He could not save his piglets. The story spins around just for a night, but the experience of the protagonist from dusk to down is compared with life span humankind from birth to death. He bravely faces all his hardships when he tries to save his sow and the piglets in the jungle. Though he suffers the greatest misfortune and endures countless blows of ill luck. He could not save his pig and piglets, when he feels defeated of his journey but he thinks he will win. He is an optimist, he thought. “But I must put an end to these thoughts and rest my exhausted mind. There are many things I have to do later because this is not the last day of my life. I have suffered the greatest misfortune today and endure countless blows of ill luck. Even then, it is not the last day of my life” (Reddy 62).

4. CONCLUSION
The optimist views of life should be strange in the modern days, to be a here, one need not bring only success. A person who can face the problems confidently is really a hero. He is also a conqueror, like as old man. The novella ends with an optimistic message to the reader and the main theme of the novella is a struggle for existence and the survival of fittest.

5. REFERENCES