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**THE ENDURING WILL TO SURVIVE IN THE REFUGEE BY PEARL S. BUCK  
AND IN THE ULTIMATE SAFARI BY NADINE GORDIMER.**

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**Abstract:** The paper attempts to explore the theme of ‘The Enduring Will to Survive’ in *The Refugee* by Pearl S. Buck and in *the ultimate safari* by Nadine Gordimer. It focuses on the nature of struggle and also shows it from different diverse perspectives, especially through the eyes of a child as in ‘*The Ultimate Safari*’. It centers on the point to show the arduous but undying struggle of the refugees.

This paper seeks to analyze and validate the inner struggle of the refugees and how they accept the pain, the suffering silently. This paper not just represents the struggle but also goes on to explain the hope they find amidst this pain and suffering. They endure the pain in a hope to see the light of future dawn in the eyes of her beloveds.

Here one can see how their hardships, their pain, their struggle, as a united force, for the sake of the survival of their family which they hope would prove to be a fruitful investment that would ultimately lead to them to find the meaning of their existence. And one should never under estimate the will power of the refugees as it is ever enduring and ever persisting. It also depicts how both the stories have a similar theme of struggle for existence.

**Keywords:** Survival, struggle, pain, refugee, Pearl S. Buck, Nadine Gordimer.

**Introduction:** The two texts taken for analysis, were written by two different authors of different time period yet they revolve around one concept of survival. Survival is the struggle to stay alive. Self-preservation is behavior that ensures the survival of an organism. Pain and fear are parts of this mechanism. In both these short stories, these components of survival are visibly reflected. The *ultimate safari* opens with the narrator's cryptic and mysterious statement that tersely sets the tone of the story: "That night our mother went to the shop and she didn't come back. Ever." The narrator of the story is a little black Mozambican girl. Thus the story is from a child's perspective. She never finds out what happened to her mother, or to her father, who had also left one day never to return.

"He was fighting in the war. We were in the war, too, but we were children, we were like our grandmother and grandfather, we didn't have guns. The people my father was fighting the bandits--, they are called by our government -- ran all over the place and we ran away from them like chickens chased by dogs."

As the story unfolds, the readers are told that her people are at war, and her village has been beset by "bandits" that have left the villagers destitute and frightened, and all evidence points to those so called "bandits" who are likely the cause of her parents' disappearance. In fear of their lives, the girl's family, her grandmother, grandfather, and older and younger brothers set out on a long and arduous journey through Kruger Park, the popular national reserve in northeast South Africa that borders Mozambique and has for years been a tourist destination for rich foreigners wanting the experience of the ultimate

African safari.

The grandmother stripped herself of her valuable belongings because her only goal was to survive, to see a brighter tomorrow.

"Our grandmother gave up her church clothes to someone in exchange for some dried mealies..."

which would provide them during the journey.

Along the way, the grandfather, wanders off and is lost in some high grasses and is forced to be left behind. Eventually, the remaining family members, all the other refugees who remain nameless throughout the story, move on to the refugee camp where they are given space in a large tent to live in. There the grandmother eventually ekes out a living carrying bricks while the children attend school.

The ultimate Safari focuses on the theme of struggle, the life of the narrator is not an easy one, neither was the life of the villagers. Like for example, she loses her parents and later the journey through the park. At one point of times she feels like going in circles when she was traveling through Kruger Park, It felt like she was stuck inside a maze. The travelers had to endure hunger and were not able to get even a full night's sleep because they had to keep moving at night and day or else they would die from starvation. And after they reached the refugee camp, the grandmother takes up odd menial paid hard laborious jobs so as to provide for her grandchildren.

Though the story is told through the eyes of the little girl, the depiction of struggle and its portrayal is seen in the life of the grandmother. She could have easily given up and walked away yet she took her stand and stood for the cause of those little ones. When her husband was lost in the tall grasses, and was not

found even after a long hopeless search, she could have stayed there, waiting for her sickly husband to show up but deep in her heart she might have had these thoughts but she foresaw the needs of the children above her own and moved on for their sake. It would have been a heart breaking decision yet that was the only way for survival's sake. "Even after the struggle through Kruger Park they still have problems they have to face. The little boy is sick and has to undergo medication in order to survive.

"My little brother doesn't play. Our grandmother takes him to the clinic when the doctor comes on Mondays. Sister says there's something wrong with his head, she thinks it's because we didn't have enough food at home. Because of the war. Because our father wasn't there. And then because he was so hungry in the Kruger Park. He likes just to lie about on our grandmother all day, and he looks at us and looks at us. He wants to ask something but you can see he can't. If I tickle him he may just smile. The clinic gives us special powder to make into porridge for him and perhaps one day he'll be all right."

The grandmother still had a hope. She constantly believed in hope to survive. She did not know what lies ahead of them yet they moved on hoping for the best. All she wished was a better future for the children. In spite of old age, the grandmother had a strong will power and determination, a heart of love and compassion that she did not abandon her grandchildren and worked hard to make sure that one day they might have a better future as she says:

'I want them to learn so that they can get good jobs and money'

On the other hand, the story portrayed by Pearl S. Buck, describes the flooding of the river which has forced the farmers of an unnamed country to leave their homeland and look for food and shelter in the capital a few hundred miles away. The city is full of ragged and starving refugees and nobody really knows how to cope with the problem. They have to live in great camps outside the city wall trying to find work and food. The situation is causing a lot of bitterness among the local inhabitants.

An old man, too old for the heavy burden he is carrying, is the last of the procession. When he can no longer go on he sits down near a stand where hot noodles is sold.

"The last one of this long procession of silent men and women was a little wizened old man. He carried a load of a folded quilt, a cauldron. But there was only one cauldron. In the other basket it seemed there was but a quilt, extremely ragged and patched, but clean still. Although the load was light it was too much for the old man. It was evident that in usual times he would be beyond the age of work,"

A passer-by drops a silver coin and a copper penny

into the old man's apron and goes on his way. "The old man is offered noodles and to the noodle vendor's surprise the old man does not spend all the money on food, but only the copper coin. He doesn't eat the noodles but "Then the old man rose with a great effort and took the bowl between his shaking hands and he went to the other basket. There, while the vendor watched, the old man pulled aside the quilt until one could see the shrunken face of a small boy lying with his eyes fast closed. One would have said the child was dead except that when the old man lifted his head so his mouth could touch the edge of the little bowl he began to swallow feebly until the hot mixture was finished."

The boy's mother and father had died in the floods and the old man is now looking after the child. He himself only eats the few scraps left by the boy. Then he hands the bowl back to the astonished vendor, who cannot understand why a starving man with a silver coin does not buy more food for himself. The old man explains that the rest of the money is for seed.

In the story '*the refugee*' Pearl S Buck draws a fine picture of human pathos and agony amidst the scene of natural calamity i.e. the flood. Nature sometimes takes its toll on human beings in a ferocious manner and whenever such horror is let loose, nothing can stop it. It brings unthinkable destruction everywhere and results in endless poverty that transforms a man into a refugee. She draws a painful picture of horrible floods in china. The floods forced the Chinese people to leave their homes, lands and everything that they owned. They are left to die on the barricades of life suffering from miseries and misfortunes.

In spite of such an arduous situation, the old man in the story refuses to give in, he is seen to be carrying a little burden of joy which might have been too heavy for him yet he carries it hoping someday his grandchild would see light of joy and bliss. He saves up money to buy seeds hoping to sow the lands in order to avoid another year of poverty and famine. He says "The best I can do for this grandson of mine is to buy a little seed for the land – yes, even though I die, and others must plant it, the land must be put to seed."

**Conclusion:** Thus one can easily see that both the authors have one common theme yet in the face of a relatively different situation, in terms of the reason they became refugees. The writers are from two entirely different nations yet their stories portray one particular theme of survival from two different perspectives which makes the analysis an interesting one.

Both the stories depict the theme of survival in the face of all odds. As Darwin states "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, or the most

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intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change". In the same way the refugees in both the stories, adapt to the change which fate had put them through, they are like strong warriors fighting the battle of life, though it might seem like a losing battle, their enduring will to survive keeps them going forward without giving in. The refugees

have a sort of undying hope despite their wanderings and sufferings, forced out of their homeland and compelled to live in precarious conditions. They seem to be surviving on the very edge of hope. They are like the Israelites wandering in the desert, yet with an unceasing hope that one day they will reach the Promised Land.

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