

A THEMATIC STUDY OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S "THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA"

By

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Abstract

The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway explores how man fits into a violent and destructive universe. Hemingway seems to be implying in this narrative that, at least in the natural order, man might discover his own beauty and dignity by discovering the mystery of human power that lies at the core of so much that seems harsh and violent. This paper addresses the subject of courage; yet, the novelist appears to have placed a great deal of faith in conceptions or ideals, and courage devalues in the story. Hemingway appears to have just given up on society's illness and every sociological, philosophical, and spiritual attempt to heal it. In the universe of The Old Man and the Sea, both humans and animals must act bravely in order to survive. Without courage, there can be no love, kindness, charity, or justice in this harsh world. Hemingway exhibits a kind of dignity in the exercise of the body of both man and fish that is only possible when two beings become brothers via an endurance test that tests every ounce of power and ability they possess.

Keywords: *struggle and resilience, isolation, nature and the sea, pride and dignity, cuban setting*

Introduction

Santiago is characterized by renowned American author Ernest Hemingway as a man who dares to fight deformity and agony in life with his own unique life force. He faces down failure and death on his own, facing them with dignity, fortitude, and determination. It says that Santiago represents Hemingway's bravery in general. He thinks that "people" are something that can only be vanquished and never overcome. In this tale, after eighty-four days of unsuccessful fishing, the elderly fisherman Santiago decides to take the boat out to sea by himself and catches a large marlin. He finally caught the huge fish after a dogfight

that lasted three days and two nights. Regretfully, the shark attacked back, leaving behind only the large fish's wreckage. The elderly fisherman Santiago was unlucky at the start of the book. He never lost confidence despite the child, who was always by his side, leaving him when he needed him most. After all, this is what he was meant to do, so he decided to go deeper into the sea. Regretfully, the shark attacked back, leaving behind only the large fish's wreckage. The elderly fisherman Santiago was unlucky at the start of the book. He never lost confidence despite the child, who was always by his side, leaving him when he needed him most. After all, this is what he

was meant to do, so he decided to go deeper into the sea.

His entire sense of respect and dignity as a fisherman rested on his ability to complete the assignment. Therefore, in the moonlight, the elderly fisherman—Santiago—made the decision to launch the boat and begin his ocean voyage in order to diligently complete his search mission. Through his bravery and self-assurance, he was able to portray the positive symbolism of the powerful hero image while fighting the large fish and sharks. One could consider Hemingway to be a son of nature. His natural upbringing, his parents' early education, his own experiences in nature, and his intimate interactions with it have all had a direct impact on the development of his outlook on the natural world. He finds that nature is not only serene and sacred, but also helpful. He praises its magnificence and beauty, expresses empathy for nature's degradation, and parodies the haughtiness and hubris of humanity. Hemingway's early works feature a large number of separated characters. They feel cut off from the natural world, from other people in society, and from themselves. These people live in conceit and hopelessness, have lost their intimate connection to nature, and lack authentic spiritual communion. They are oppressed by social, spiritual, and environmental crises in such an extent that they fall into severe despair.

Hemingway explores the causes of human separation in addition to revealing it. He believes that modern technology,

mechanized manufacturing, and war are to blame for the devastation of nature, the root of all social issues in contemporary society, and the rise in confrontations between people and their own selves, with nature, and with each other. He has been trying to find a way to make men feel less alone. He believes that the best way to remedy man's estrangement is to get back in touch with nature. Hemingway views nature as the primary theme in both his writing and life. The primary characteristics of Hemingway's writing are his superb descriptions of nature and the intimate bond between it and humans.

Hemingway considered *The Old Man and the Sea* to be his best work of writing. This tale tells of Santiago, an elderly fisherman who fished the sea by himself. He went 84 days without catching a fish before he snagged a monster marlin. The fish was two feet longer than the old man's skiff, something he had never seen or heard of. After experiencing several setbacks, the elderly man dispatched the massive marlin and secured it to the skiff. But sharks surfaced on his way home. The elderly guy was hopeless in this fight for his life; in the end, the fish was reduced to just its bare backbone. Hemingway did a good job at creating Santiago as the main character.

Although the idea seems straightforward, it is actually very well thought out. The theme of this work, according to the majority of critics, is man's ability to endure and overcome adversity in both time and place. Santiago's encounters with the sharks and

marlin serve to illustrate the point. Hemingway describes passing the fundamental endurance tests that Santiago must pass. In order to resist the forces putting him to the test, he is responding bravely by bringing forth both physical strength and creative vision. The novel's focus on what man is capable of and the world as a place where heroic deeds are possible makes it truly amazing. Everybody in this universe has a part to play, and Santiago's is to go after the big fish, or "that which I was bon for," as he puts it. Being a hero means being more courageous than other men.

Being a hero involves taking a bigger risk, both in terms of potential loss and depth, by putting oneself in more danger. Santiago passes this bravery test. Saying that he accomplishes little and that things are done to him would be ridiculous. On the 85th day, Santiago rows well outside the traditional fishing region. That's accomplishing a lot on its own. He catches the big fish when he ventures too far out into the ocean. The fish is so strong that it drags his skiff out further and farther until he is unable to return in time to save the marlin from being eaten by the sharks. Because of amazing experiences and nature's inevitability, humans have countless opportunities to have amazing experiences. There is a steep, sad cost associated with the experience. In his village, Santiago's accomplishment causes quite a stir among the fishermen. The story's tourists also experience a sense of the

remarkable, even though they misidentify the marlin for a shark.

Hunting or Survival

In *The Old Man and the Sea*, Hemingway describes life as a struggle for survival. It appears that he prioritizes his instinct for survival. Every other factor is incidental. The tale depicts a battle for survival not only between man and nature but also between many elements. Hemingway undoubtedly has compassion for the weak and impoverished. He thought, 'the birds have a harder existence than we do, save for the robber birds and the heavy, strong ones' (p. 20). His ego, the old man, felt sad for the birds, especially the small, delicate dark terns that were continually flying and looking and practically never finding. The long-winged black men-of-war bird hunts the flying fish, the dolphin hunts the elderly man, and the dolphin hunts the flying fish. Warblers are the prey of the hawks. Santiago's fish are devoured by the sharks. The deadly Agus mala is consumed by the turtles.

Occasionally, through the hunting process, the hunter turns into the hunted. Everything boils down to power. When the elderly guy says, "I'm being towed by a fish, and I'm the towing bitt," he turns into the hunted (p. 31). From the first day to the third day's noon, the fish transport the elderly man and his skiff across the water. Hunting is a labor-intensive, risky, and draining sport. It requires a great deal of physical stamina, mental clarity, endurance, patience, skill,

and willpower. Occasionally, the conflict comes to a deadlock when there is no winner and no loser. When Santiago believes, "I can do nothing with me," this is the situation (p. 33). The hunter and the pursued are both under stress in this conflict. Mutual feelings are present: "You're feeling it now, fish," he continued, "and so, for God's sake, am I" (p. 40). When power is distributed evenly, a deadlock results.

After the fight, the old guy believes that his fishing adventure has lost a little of its luster. On page 69, he refers to the remaining labor as "slave work." It is tedious labor, or drudgery." The old man replies (p. 69) that the lines mean nothing now. He shouted at the fish as if he would like the struggle to go on. "Fish, come on," he urged. However, the fish never showed up, and he now lay there in the sea, moping. (p. 69) Santiago experiences a sense of loss and disappointment despite his success. More difficulties, struggles, and tests are what bring him back to life. Such a challenge is offered by the Mako shark, whose appearance persuades the elderly man that his victory is hollow. He reasoned that it was too good to last (p. 73). The shark kills the marlin by biting off forty pounds of flesh, and along with the loot, it also takes down the rope and the harpoon. The elderly man is depressed. He comments, "I wish it had been a dream now, that I was alone in bed on the newspaper and that I had never hooked the fish" (p. 75). It is crucial that the elderly man adds the crucial caveat that "man is not made for defeat" right away. A man is not

weak; he can be destroyed. "Nevertheless, I apologize for killing the fish," he thought (p. 75). The fish also represents man, his suffering, tenacity, and demise.

Vanity

The pursuit of material gain by man is ultimately pointless and driven by greed. The old guy says, "I wish for too many things" (p. 55). The skiff gets light and moves quickly once the sharks have devoured all of the massive fish's meat. Santiago is now able to focus his mind on ideals that are more transcendent and spiritual. It becomes more evident what Christ's suffering and the martyrdom of Saint James, whom he bears, meant. He loses all fear and disassociates himself from worldly possessions, symbolized by the spear given to Manolin and the marlin whose head is given to Pedrico.

Loneliness

The elderly man lives alone, as he dreams. For three days at sea, he fishes by himself and feels completely alone. It is stated why he has Manolin in his life: "No one should be alone in their old age," he believes (p. 34). Manolin keeps Santiago Company, which helps the elderly man escape loneliness. Their friendship is mutually beneficial. With the help of an experienced man he considers the best fisherman; the youngster learns the technique of fishing and is given several opportunities to practice charity. Santiago is relieved to speak with someone after battling the weather for three days. Instead of talking to himself and the sea alone, he

observed how nice it was to have someone to chat with (p. 90). The fact that his apprentice has been catching fish since his absence gives him some joy. It is significant that he responded to Manolin's report on the hunt for him by saying, "The ocean is very big, and a skiff is small and hard to see" (p. 90). How someone might be lonely in today's big, densely populated world is a mystery.

Conclusion

The modern era aims to bring about a wide range of developments that have shifted global intellectual perspective. The primary cause of these modifications was the Great War, which was a popular topic for poets and novelists at the time. Ideas are gathered together in literature. It presents the author's ideas in written form with a message for the audience. Leading concepts have the potential to endure for generations as universal principles. One of the greatest books ever written is *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway. It also has concepts that help us understand the

message. It undertakes, in reality, convey the notion of human dignity and existence. This message is about realizing what it means to be human in social and economic spheres, among other areas. Humans are adaptable creatures who can survive in any environment. Although man can be destroyed, he cannot be vanquished. This phrase develops into the philosophical concept of "human existence." There are numerous didactic undertones in the tale of *The Old Man and the Sea*. Because it describes the straightforward life of an elderly man suffering on the sea, it has become a classic work of literature and is very captivating to readers.

When he battles not just the marlin but also all the challenges he has experienced throughout his life, Santiago appears to be a hero. Hemingway aims to portray a boldness that is well-informed and well-prepared. The foundation of success is a methodical and well-prepared strategy. Santiago once navigated a low tide, but he never lets go of a chance that comes his way.

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