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## EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SYMBOLISM IN ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S 'THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA'

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### ABSTRACT

The current study aims at exploring the effectiveness of symbolism on Ernest Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea'. In addition, this study aims to explore the symbols used by Ernest Hemingway and their interpretations. Moreover, it aims to provide a deep analysis of Hemingway in the Old and the Sea. To achieve these objectives, the researcher conducts descriptive analytical method to make judicious theoretical approach. This study tries to answer the following questions; How effective are the symbols used in Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea'? And why does Ernest Hemingway choose the old man as an angler in the story? Finally, this study comes up with the following findings; Ernest used Universal symbols that everyone agrees upon their meanings around the universe because of their experiences. In addition to that, the study shows that he used individual symbols that help readers interpret the symbols according to their ability in understanding the story. Moreover, Ernest Hemingway's, 'The Old Man and the Sea', protagonist has chosen to dedicate his life to the art of fishing and to the art of living. Furthermore, Hemingway's symbols in 'The Old Man and the Sea' enrich students' critical and creative thinking skills. Finally, the symbols are used in Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea' teach students as well as readers some moral lessons in how to face real life problems.

Keywords: Literature, The Old Man and the Sea, Symbolism, EFL Students

### 1. Introduction

Language is the system of words or signs that people use to express ideas and emotion with each other whereas literature, include all written and spoken works. The term derives from Latin literature! Litteratura "writing formed with letters", it can be classified according to whether it is fiction or nonfiction and whether it is poetry or prose; it can be further distinguished according to major forms such as novel, short story or drama, prose; works are categorized according to historical periods.

Ernest Miller Hemingway was an American author and journalist. His economical and understated style had a strong influence on 20<sup>th</sup> century fiction, while his life of adventure and his public image influenced later generations. Hemingway produced most of his work between the mid-1920s and the mid-1950s, and won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954. He published seven novels, six short story collections and two non-fiction works. Many of these works are considered as classic American literature. The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway is a great

novella with many philosophical ideas. Hemingway is very careful in portraying characters in his works. The novella is centered on one major character Santiago. As the title suggests, Santiago is an old man. He is 75 years old Cuban angler. Hemingway has presented the character of Santiago with strong determination well power, hope and confidence. Ernest Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea' has been a literary masterpiece for over 50 years. Both the timing in Hemingway's life and the sources of inspiration paved the way for a story that has stood the test of time.

## **2. Statement of Problem:**

Most of English language learners/readers who study literature concentrate only on how to infer the elements of literary works through what they can read. It is hard for them to appreciate the literary works; the researcher through his experience in teaching literature in general and more particularly the novel 'The Old Man and the Sea' has noticed that students neglect studying Hemingway's symbols which are used in 'The Old Man and The Sea' in depth. In other words, they do not try hard to infer what the author meant by these symbols. Besides, the hidden messages or lessons. And also the students do not study what is beyond the lines (the symbols).

## **3. Significance of the Study:**

The importance of the study is represented in Hemingway's novel 'The Old Man and the Sea' as it is a worthy symbolic novel, which conveys the ability of the author to employ symbols to give literary value of the text. This writing gave more information to the students of English Department and readers who are concerned with Hemingway novels in a literary works. Moreover, the significances of this study can be concluded in helping students/ readers in knowing what are the hidden messages and meanings as well as understanding of the whole novel.

## **4. Objectives of the Study:**

The main aim of the study are:

- To explore the effectiveness of symbolism in Ernest Hemingway's 'The old Man and Sea'.

- To provide a deep analysis of symbols in Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea'.

## **5. Research Question:**

- How effective are the symbols used in Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea'?
- Why does Ernest Hemingway choose the old man as an angler in the story?

## **6. Hypotheses of the Study:**

The researcher hypothesizes that:

- In the novel The Old Man and the Sea Hemingway uses many elements as symbols,
- The symbols used in Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea' are very effective in which they teach English learners/readers moral lessons and show very effective inspirational lessons too.
- There is strong relationship between the old man and Ernest Hemingway in the story The Old Man and the Sea.

## **7. Methodology of the Study:**

The methodology of this research would be descriptive analytical method. The discussion will make the point on exploring the effectiveness of symbolism in 'The Old Man and the Sea' by Ernest Hemingway in American fiction.

## **8. Literature Review**

### **What is symbolism?**

According to Oxford Dictionary (1784) "Symbolism means use of symbols like object, character use of figure of color to represent abstract idea concept or quality" The element of symbolism is presented in all the works of Hemingway. However, the word symbolism came to be associated with him only after the appearance of his novel "Old man and the sea". Hemingway's use of symbols comes to climax in this novel. As a result, the novel is reach in symbolism images and motifs that enhance both the plot and the themes. Symbolism is an essential literary device used by Ernest Hemingway in his book The Old Man and the Sea. Hemingway uses numerous forms of symbolism

but a recurring contour id biblical allusion. Hemingway filled this story with biblical allusion to create a deeper meaning within the text. Knowing biblical allusion allows a reader to have wider perspective of the story.

### **The Emergence of Symbolism**

Though the definition of symbolism most often relates to a literary device, there was also a nineteenth-century literary movement called "Symbolism". During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Paris was the center of the avant-garde and modernist movements. Symbolism as a literary trend appeared as a reaction to some other movements, such as Naturalism and phenomenon. The term symbolism, however, quickly came to cover a range of arts, from painting and sculpture to theater and music, then moved to literature, and influenced the European and American literatures of the 20th century to different degrees. As this movement is often known for taking place between the years 1885–1895, the ideas, thoughts and aesthetic means of symbolism are often traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century, and many early twentieth-century artists and writers continued to believe in its ideas.

### **The Reasons behind the Appearance of Symbolism**

The rise of symbolism occurred simultaneously in a specific era, when some intellectuals started to question positivism. Writers, in particular, reacted against some theories that were based on positivism and materialism because they considered science as a key of knowing the world, and did not allow for the existence of art as a unique form of knowledge and human activity. Symbolism was primarily a term particularly applied for the literary works of the French writers who reacted against the descriptive precision and objectivity of realism and the scientific determinism of naturalism. It originally developed as a French literary movement in the 1880s, with the publication of Jean Moréas « Le Figaro » in 1886, Baudelaire's sonnet « Correspondences » and the work of Edgar Allan Poe were also important ancestors of the movement. The term "symbolist" itself was first applied by the critic Jean Moréas, to distinguish the symbolists from the related decadent movement of

literature and art. Distinct from, but related to, the symbolist style of literature, symbolism of art is related to the gothic component of Romanticism Source: Boundless. "Symbolism." Boundless Art History. Boundless, 21 Jul. 2015. Retrieved 09 Mar. 2016 from Reacting against the rationalism and materialism that had come to dominate Western European culture, the anti-idealistic styles that attempted to represent reality in its gritty particularity, and to elevate the humble and the ordinary over the ideal. On the other hand, symbolism favored spirituality, the imagination, and dreams. These two movements declared the validity of pure subjectivity and the expression of an idea over a realistic description of the natural world. This philosophy, which strongly defended the idea that reality should be expressed through poetry since it contrasted nature, rather than reproducing it, became the central doctrine of the movement.

### **Significance of Symbolism in Literature**

Symbolism has played a large role in the history of literature. Symbols have been used in cultures all around the world, evident in ancient legends, fables, and religious texts. One famous example of symbolism is the story of the Garden of Eden, in which the serpent persuades Eve to eat an apple from the tree of knowledge. The serpent in this story represents wickedness and the apple is a symbol for knowledge. Symbolism is equally important in poetry, [prose](#), and plays, as well as in all genres of literature, from science fiction to [fantasy](#) to fiction for young adults (just think of Harry Potter's scar—a symbol of his being the "chosen one", as well as his ability to overcome evil). When analyzing a piece of literature, examining the primary symbols often leads to a greater understanding of the work itself. Though the definition of symbolism most often relates to a literary device, there was also a nineteenth-century literary movement called "Symbolism." The movement was chiefly based in France, Russia, and Belgium, and was greatly influenced by the works of Edgar Allan Poe. Symbolists rejected realism, and instead thought that truth could only be represented in an indirect manner, i.e., through symbols. Famous symbolists were Charles

Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud, and Ezra Pound.

#### **Facts about Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea***

*The Old Man and the Sea* was the last major work Ernest Hemingway published in his lifetime. The simple story is about an old man who catches a giant fish in the waters off Cuba, only to have it devoured by sharks. Defeated, he returns home with the fish's skeleton attached to the boat. Many consider this spare novel to be Hemingway's best work.

#### **Hemingway wrote the novel to prove he was not finished as a writer.**

When *The Old Man and the Sea* was published in 1952, Hemingway had not written a significant literary work for over a decade. His last successful book, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, came out in 1940. To make matters worse, critics panned his 1950 novel *Across the River and into the Trees*. People were saying that Hemingway was "through" as a writer. He began *The Old Man and the Sea* to prove that not only was he still in the writing game, he had yet to produce his best work.

#### **The story had been in his mind for years.**

In 1936, Hemingway wrote an essay for *Esquire* that contained a paragraph [describing](#) an "old man fishing alone in a skiff out of Cabañas" who hooked a big marlin that dragged him eastward for two days. The man killed the fish and then fought off sharks attracted to its blood. When the man was finally picked up, "what was left of the fish, less than half, weighed eight hundred pounds." Two years later, Hemingway started writing *The Old Man and the Sea*, but then got sidetracked by *for Whom the Bell Tolls*. By the time he returned to the story, it had been percolating in his brain for at least 16 years.

#### **The old man was based on a blue-eyed Cuban named Gregorio Fuentes.**

Although Hemingway said the old man, Santiago, was based on "nobody in particular," he most likely used aspects of his fishing buddy [Gregorio Fuentes](#) when developing the character. Like Santiago, Fuentes was gaunt and thin, had blue

eyes, came from the Canary Islands, and had a long, battle-scarred history as an angler. Fuentes was the captain of Hemingway's boat and the two frequently talked about the novel.

#### **The fish was an Atlantic Blue Marlin.**

While living in Florida and Cuba, Hemingway frequently fished for marlin in his boat, the *Pilar*. Not to be confused with a swordfish, Atlantic Blue Marlin are large billfish that live in [the temperate and tropical regions of the Atlantic Ocean](#). They can get up to 14 feet long and weigh 2,000 pounds. Like in the book, a common predator is the white shark.

#### **The book was dedicated to recently deceased friends.**

The dedication in *The Old Man and the Sea* reads "To Charlie Scribner and to Max Perkins," both friends who passed away before the book came out. Max Perkins, who also edited F. Scott Fitzgerald and Thomas Wolfe, died in 1947 and Scribner, who was president of Charles Scribner's Sons, died in 1952. They were among many of Hemingway's literary peers who died in the preceding decade, including Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, and James Joyce.

#### **Hemingway claimed there was no symbolism in the book.**

The fable-like structure of the novel suggests that the story is symbolic, which is why many view *The Old Man and the Sea* as an allegory. But Hemingway thought all that was bunk—or at least, that's what he said. "There isn't any symbolism," he [wrote](#) to critic Bernard Berenson. "The sea is the sea. The old man is an old man ... The sharks are all sharks no better and no worse. All the symbolism that people say is shit. What goes beyond is what you see beyond when you know."

#### **Hemingway believed the novel was his finest work.**

When Hemingway sent the manuscript to his editor, Wallace Meyer, he said, "I know that it is the best I can write ever for all of my life, I think, and that it destroys good and able work by being placed alongside of it." Then he added that he hoped it would "get rid of the school of criticism that I am through as a writer."

**The Old Man and the Sea made Hemingway a celebrity.**

Of course, Hemingway was a known and respected author beforehand, but *The Old Man and the Sea* elevated his reputation to the literary giant we think of today. Critics loved the book. It won the 1953 Pulitzer Prize and was cited as a reason Hemingway won the 1954 Nobel Prize. It was also a best seller and made Hemingway a fortune. In 1955, it was made into a movie starring Spencer Tracy.

**Even Hemingway's literary rival, William Faulkner, liked it.**

The following is a one-paragraph review Faulkner wrote about *The Old Man and the Sea*, published in *Shenandoah*:

"His best. Time may show it to be the best single piece of any of us, I mean his and my contemporaries. This time, he discovered God, a Creator. Until now, his men and women had made themselves, shaped themselves out of their own clay; their victories and defeats were at the hands of each other, just to prove to themselves or one another how tough they could be. But this time, he wrote about pity: about something somewhere that made them all: the old man who had to catch the fish and then lose it, the fish that had to be caught and then lost, the sharks which had to rob the old man of his fish; made them all and loved them all and pitied them all. It's all right. Praise God that whatever made and loves and pities Hemingway and me kept him from touching it any further."

**You can watch the Oscar-winning stop-motion film of the book.**

Russian animator Aleksandra Petrov made this stop-motion animation of *The Old Man and the Sea*. The film uses 29,000 images that he and his son, Dimitri, painted on glass over two years. It is no wonder it won the 2000 Academy Award for Animated Short Film.

**9. Previous studies:**

Mohammed Hussein: Ghanim, 2015 Investigating Recognition of Symbolism in "The Old Man and the Sea" among the Students of English Department, College of Education for Humanities,

University of Kirkuk. This study tries to shed light on investigating recognition of symbolism in 'The Old Man and the Sea'.

The study aims to measure the ability of students to recognize some famous symbols in 'The Old Man and the Sea' and to help students of English recognize the meaning behind the symbols and how these symbols differ from other words used in literature, such as metaphor, image, allegory, irony, simile, etc. A sample of (114) students of morning and evening studies in the second year, Department of English has been chosen. After teaching the above mentioned students 'The Old Man and the Sea' in the second semester of the academic year (2014-2015), a test has been constructed, its validity and reliability have been measured, then applied on the sample. The data of achievement test have been analyzed, and different statistical methods have been used. At the end of the study a number of conclusions and recommendations are given.

Teknik Sipil: Dosen April 2019 carried out a study entitled; Analysis of Symbols in 'The Old Man and the Sea' a novel by Ernest Hemingway. This study aims to analyze some important symbols contained in the novel 'The Old Man and the Sea', where the symbols often appear but meaning, purpose of the story, and rationale of the author are neglected by the readers. These symbols are representations or interpretations of an idea, personality, object, or abstraction. Data obtained through internet, library research, and the results of related studies from experts. The method used in this study is descriptive objective approach; this approach only focuses on the intrinsic elements of literary work by analyzing and explaining them in detail.

Mohamed Alamin Alshareef: Tariq," 2019" conducted a study entitled; Symbolism in Ernest Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea'. This study targets the big question of symbolism in this masterpiece. Statement of the problem in the study is concerned with the analysis of symbols used in Hemingway's novel "The Old Man and the Sea". He structured a framework to tackle the role of symbolism in the novel, and its importance in



delivering the meaning, the questions of the study are; how did Ernest Hemingway use symbols to convey his hidden themes? and What elements did Hemingway use as symbols in his novel 'The Old Man and The Sea?'. While hypothesis of the study is that Ernest Hemingway used symbols to convey his hidden messages in the novel 'The Old Man and the Sea', He used many elements as symbols. The objective of this work is to explore the symbols used in the novel, to decode these symbols and identify the various interpretations that they stand for. The significance of the study is to fill in the gap in the literature about symbolism and to shed light on Hemingway's artistic use of symbols that help students and readers of literature to have a better understanding of the literary work. The study adopted a descriptive analytical method to explore and depict the aspects and features of symbolism incarnated in the main characters. While the Findings of the study represent the following: the universal symbols are: 'Sea' as a symbol of universe or life 'Sun' as a symbol for a new beginning or a new life 'Night' as a symbol for the end of life or the end of activity and 'Lion' as a symbol of strength. While individual symbols are: 'The old man or Santiago' symbolizes the Optimist; 'the boy or Manolin' symbolizes hope; 'Joe DiMaggio' symbolizes strong Desire; 'Harpoon' Symbolizes skill, 'Bird' symbolizes help; 'Shark' symbolizes destructor; 'Marlin' Symbolizes struggle.

## **10. Findings and discussion**

The researcher tackles the symbols used in Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea' and their interpretations to provide a deep analysis of these symbols.

### **The universal symbol:**

It is symbols which are considered previously and agreed upon their meaning by all people around the world because of their experiences. The researcher categorizes the following symbols in this category.

### **The sea as a symbol of universe:**

'Sea' has a strong symbolic significance in this novel. It is as old as the history of man. It is a symbol of immeasurable knowledge. Every sea wave

represents passage of time. Man is yet to discover this knowledge with each new voyage. Sea, like nature, is loving and kind. Nevertheless, it is wild and dangerous too. It provides man with opportunities to earn his livelihood on its water. It is generally calm and peaceful. Santiago and all other anglers catch fish on its water. The might of sea represents the powerful nature, which is bent on destroying whatever man strives to build on. When it is angry, it does not spare man. The sea, with all its might, shows the contrast to the insignificant man and symbolizes that man has a lot to endure in this world if he wishes to survive anymore. The sea is also a teacher as it teaches Santiago when he crosses the limit by going "far out" into the deep sea. It crushes and destroys Santiago.

### **Sun as a symbol of happiness:**

'Sun' as a symbol of happiness, it is what men live for; everybody does and acts because of expectation of getting happiness. The sun also gives good news to angler; it informs that the weather will be good. Good weather will help him to sail safely and comfortably the strange light the sun made in the water, now that the sun was higher, meant good weather and so did the shape of the clouds over the land.

### **Night as a symbol of suffering:**

Hemingway tells the old man's sea voyage in three days and three nights. In the dark night, both the old man and the fish persevere not to do big activity. "I can do nothing with him and he can do nothing with me, he thought. Not as long as he keeps this up. Once he stood up and urinated over the side of the skiff and looked at the stars and checked his course". (p.33)

### **Lion as a symbol of strength:**

Both in his bed in the village and in his boat, Santiago dreams of lions on the beaches of Africa, which he saw when he was a boy on a ship that sailed and fished the coast of Africa. The lions symbolize Santiago's lost youth as well as his pride (a group of lions is called a "pride"). Santiago's love for the lions, which are fierce predators, also mirrors his relationship with the marlin, whom he loves but whose death he feels is necessary to his survival. In

this way, the lions also symbolize Santiago's affinity with nature. Now that Santiago is no longer young and has lost his friends, family, and strength, he sees the lions only in his dreams. Santiago's dreams of the lions at the end of the novella suggest that in triumphing over the marlin, he has undergone his own rejuvenation.

"Up the road, in his shack, the old man was sleeping again. He was still sleeping on his face and the boys was sitting by him watching him. The old man was dreaming about the lions." (p.92)

#### **The Mast as a symbol of a religious man:**

At the end of 'The Old Man and the Sea', the exhausted Santiago removes his mast from his skiff, and haltingly drags it up the beach to his shack by resting one end the cross on his shoulder. The position in which Santiago carries the mast exactly mirrors the position in which Jesus Christ was forced to drag his cross on the way to his crucifixion. The mast, then, becomes a symbol for the cross, and cements the parallel that Hemingway sets up between Santiago's ordeal and Christ's.

"He started to climb again and at the top he fell and lay for some time with the mast across his shoulder."

#### **The skiff as a symbol**

The skiff symbol of Scanting himself, as Santiago struggle in his life, the skiff also has to struggle in the sea the skiff also symbols of the defeated human being.

#### **Individual symbol**

It is symbols which are interpreted privately, readers should interpret the symbol based on the context where community does not conventionally agree on their meaning but it depends on the reader's ability in comprehending the story. In this case, readers' interpretation on story can be different among others. The following symbols are considered as individual symbols.

#### **The old man / Santiago as a symbol of optimism:**

In this novella the Old man, Santiago's character is very symbolic. The novella tells about the journey of Santiago to the sea to catch the fish.

Through Santiago's character, Hemingway shows the journey of men in his life. At the end of his life, he suffers terribly. He has skill to catch fish easily and great judgment to go in the sea and choosing fishing place. However, he put poor judgment and it was his bad luck and his fate of defeated by sharks. This situation symbolized as, in our life our great skills sometimes become the reason of our failure. We struggle more to achieve something but our luck cannot support us. In the end of novella, Santiago sleeps like Jesus Christ and compared with him which symbolized that, as Christ Santiago also has to struggle in his life. Santiago had cramps on his hand from holding the fishing line all night while strong fish were pulling him and the boat. Hemingway wrote that the sound Santiago made while having the cramps were the same as the reaction "someone would have having a nail passed through their hand and into blood." This was the same experience Christ had while being crucified. Hemingway included this reference purposefully so the reader would be able to compare and understand the similarity. After this voyage completed, Santiago was exhausted and weak. While bringing in the mast from his boat he stumbled three times under the weight resting upon his shoulders. This resembled Christ's walk carrying his heavy cross to the hill where he crucified. In addition, when Santiago was back in his shack he fell asleep on his bed with his arms out stretched resembling Jesus on the cross.

The quotation shows that the old man is building a hope that someday he will get his fortune.

"But man is not made for defeat, he said". "A man can be destroyed but not defeated". "I am sorry that I killed the fish thought, he thought. Now the bad time is coming and I do not even have the harpoon. The dentuso is cruel, able, strong, and intelligent. However, I was more intelligent than he was". (p.71)

#### **Manolin as a symbol of hope:**

Manolin is only presented at the beginning and the end of 'The Old Man and the Sea' but his presence is very important, because he has devotion to Santiago and shows Santiago's value as a person and as an angler. Manolins' purity and singleness of

purpose eleventh him to the level of a symbolic character. Hemingway does hint at the boy's resentment for his father whose wish is Manolin obeys by abandoning the old man after forty days without catching fish. This fact helps to established real human being. He stands in the novella's final pages, as a symbol of uncompromising love and fidelity. Manolin wants to go with Santiago but his father denies him and was told to stay away from him. When the old man sees Manolin he sees himself at younger age, he inspired the old man. Manolin symbolized the disciple of Jesus. For Santiago, Manolin was success for him. At the fight with sharks to save, Marlin he says many times that if the boy was with him then it became successful.

"I wish I had the boy," the old man said aloud. "I'm being towed by a fish and I'm the towing bitt. I could make the line fast". (p.31)

#### **Di Maggio as a symbol of strong desire:**

Joe DiMaggio represents many things to the old man. Santiago considers DiMaggio as an equal. DiMaggio, whose father was a poor angler like him; Santiago, is poor angler. When he was out fishing he thought to himself, would the great DiMaggio ever stay his long as he did and quickly replied to himself DiMaggio is young and strong and that his father was an angler so of course he would stay. This made him feel better because now he could compare himself to his hero. Santiago thought that DiMaggio would understand him because of their background being same. He wanted someone like the boy that would listen to him but understood him more and he believes DiMaggio could be that person. Joe DiMaggio also represents hope that the old man has for Manolin. He wishes that he will be like the great DiMaggio so that he will not be a poor fisherman like he is. Joe DiMaggio is symbolized as the indomitably of the human spirit.

"This is the second day now that I do not know the result of the juegos, he thought. But I must have confidence and I must be worthy of the great DiMaggio who does all things perfectly even with the pain of the bone spur in his heel". (p. 48)

#### **Harpoon as a symbol of skill:**

Santiago loses the harpoon as he fends off sharks, symbolic of individuals who lose their faith as life's woes attack. Much like Santiago without a harpoon, those without faith are defenseless.

"The old man dropped the line and put his foot on it and lifted the harpoon as high as he could and drove it down with all his strength, and more strength he had just summoned, into the fish's side just behind the great chest fin that rose high in the air to the altitude of the man's chest". (p.68)

#### **Bird as a symbol of help:**

Hemingway proposed the sea birds as God's help in the story. These birds have shown Santiago the right direction where there are many fish around. Santiago also addresses the sea birds as God's helps directly in the story. This statement is proven as in the quotation below:

"As he watched the bird dipped again slanting his wings for the dive and then swinging them widely, perhaps my big fish is around them. My big fish must be somewhere. The bird has no change". A small bird came towards the skiff from the north. He was a warbler and flying very low over the water. The old man could see that he was very tired. The bird made the stern of the boat and rested there on the line where he was more comfortable". If they do not travel too fast, I will get into them, the old man thought, and he watched the school working the water white and the bird now dropping and dipping into the baitfish that were forced to the surface in their panic. 'The bird is a great help,' the old man said". (p.26)

#### **Marlin as a symbol of Struggle:**

The marlin is the giant, 18-foot fish that battles with Santiago in the middle of the ocean for three days and three nights. Although Santiago hooks the marlin on his first afternoon at sea, the marlin refuses to come to the surface and instead pulls Santiago farther and farther from land. Santiago admires the marlin's beauty and endurance, and considers it a "noble" adversary, telling the fish repeatedly that though he loves it, he must kill it. Ultimately, the marlin is presented as Santiago's worthy opponent. Struggling against such an opponent brings out the best in an individual—



courage, endurance, and love. At the same time, because Santiago comes to see the marlin as an alter ego—he identifies the marlin as male and imagines the fish is old—the marlin comes to represent Santiago himself as well. In other words, Santiago's struggle with the marlin is in fact a struggle with himself. It is not a struggle of strength but rather of endurance, and a refusal to accept defeat. Santiago's struggle with the marlin is a struggle to face and overcome his own weaknesses as much as it is a struggle to subdue the great fish. In the process, by refusing to give in to the fish or the weakness of his mind and body, Santiago transcends those weaknesses. But I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures." (p.47)

#### **The sharks as a symbol of destructor:**

Scavengers and little more than swimming appetites, the sharks are Santiago's fiercest antagonists. Although Santiago manages to kill most of them, they tear apart the marlin's body and leave Santiago devastated. While the marlin is portrayed as both an adversary and a noble companion to Santiago, the sharks are portrayed as purely vicious. The shovel-nosed sharks can also be seen as symbolizing the destructive forces of nature and of the people of Jerusalem, whose petty jealousies and rivalries led to the crucifixion of Jesus. Some have even argued that the sharks symbolize literary critics, whom Hemingway saw as 'feasting' on the creations of true artists without actually creating anything themselves. He did not like to look at the fish any more since they had been mutilated. When the fish had been hit, it was as though he himself were hit. (p. 74) They must have taken a quarter of him and of the best meat,' he said aloud". (p.90)

#### **The Fish as a symbol of Christianity:**

The fish is also a symbol of Christianity. Hemingway imbues the giant fish with several Christian virtues: kindness, patience, determination. Although hooked by Santiago, the fish does not panic or dive to the depths. Instead, it tries to guide its followers, to win him over. The fish is also described as being a source of food for others, a sacrifice so that others may live. "Fish, he said, I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends." He no longer dreamed

of storms, nor of women, nor of great occurrences, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife.

#### **The Skeleton of the Marlin Fish as a symbol:**

The skeleton symbolizes Santiago as an old angler. It was a long backbone of the great fish which is same with Santiago just an old man. But it was also a handsome and has a beautifully formed tails which is same with Santiago's soul and spirit. The skeleton and Santiago already face many struggle in their life. Fighting and struggling until their final breath. Nevertheless, how hard they try they will face the fact that words are a hard place. Life is hard and even you try very hard you cannot fight the law of nature and the law of God. However, even though he fails people still look at the skeleton as a big achievement. The tourist in the cafe near the beach looked at the skeleton as a beautiful big shark skeleton, which is means someone who catch it must be. The old man, alone at sea, ends up talking to himself, calling on his hands and head not to let him down and, above all, saying repeatedly, so much so that it becomes a refrain: "I wish I had the boy. To help me and to see this"

#### **Santiago's eyes as a symbol of well power:**

Furthermore, though Santiago is physically an old man his eyes continue in the same color with no change. Therefore, these eyes signify the unchanged well power of Santiago to attain his great catching in the life. "Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated" (p. 5)

#### **Other anglers as a symbol:**

All of other anglers in the story were the people who used new equipment for fishing while Santiago goes to fish in a small skiff. When Santiago brings the skeleton of the large Marlin, they try to put him down by saying the following. Hemingway uses these anglers and the proprietors of the coffee shop for the symbolical representation of the people who do not like appreciating others. "What a fish it was. There has never been such a fish. Those were two fine fishes you took yesterday too". (p.58). The anglers represent the persons who would think

about themselves rather than others. In this way, the fishers are like the sharks wanting to take things away from Santiago while Santiago is much like the marlin.

### **11. Why does Ernest Hemingway choose the old man as an angler in the story?**

In Ernest Hemingway's novel 'The Old Man and the Sea', the protagonist Santiago has chosen to dedicate his life to the art of fishing and to the art of living. The novel focuses on the hardships which the old man has to endure since he is forced to face the most serious challenge of his life: to overcome a potentially overwhelming run of bad luck. The author according to a special hero code creates the portrayal of the protagonist, his role models and his struggle. In addition, indeed Ernest Hemingway is known for his use of what has come to be called the Hemingway code. Hemingway heroes stand for "courage in midst of danger, grace under pressure, competence in and dedication to one's job, integrity, self-reliance, and stoicism of the sort that is embarrassed by emotional sloppiness. This is reflected in their life style; like Santiago, they neither care about pleasure nor pain and always finish what they started, no matter what consequences it might bring. However, Santiago does not come across as a typical hero. He is an old, poor man with bad luck whose life is cut to the minimum. "Santiago is himself depicted as a natural phenomenon, a strange old man. By examining the depiction of Santiago, his actions, life style and role models as well as his close resemblance to the author, I will show how Santiago grows from an old worn out man into a true hero by not relinquishing his approach to life: his code. As I have noted, Santiago is a penniless old angler, who leads a simple life with only one task and that is to fish. The simplicity of his life is noticeable in the way he lives, as his cabin lacks nearly all furniture or decorations. He owns only what is necessary to him. This also goes for his social life since the old man has very few friends, having devoted his whole life to the art of fishing and gradually losing all other social contact. He is focused on the art of living and does this by doing what he has chosen to do. As Leo Gurko notes, for Santiago "life is more than an endurance contest. It is also an art, which rules rituals and

methods that once learned, lead on to mastery". Santiago's way of living has led him to become a master of his profession. "Santiago is not just a fisherman, he is The Fisherman the one chosen from all others because of his superior merits of skill and character. The old man's body may be old and weak but he still possesses skills that no other angler has. The most serious challenge of his life arises when Santiago has a serious run of bad luck. He has been extraordinarily unfortunate and for eighty-four days, he has not been able to catch a single fish. This has made others doubt his capacity as a fisherman." But after forty days without fish, the boy's parents had told him that the old man was now definitely and finally *salao*, which is the worst form of unlucky. The old man himself is not seriously bothered, since he does not believe in being dominated by bad or good luck. For him, luck is a part of life, he accepts it, still putting his faith in his skill and seeing it as stupidity to rely upon something that is as irregular as luck bad luck: "Only I have no luck any more. But who knows? Maybe today. Every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact. Then when luck comes, you are ready. The old man has not always been seen as unlucky. When he was young, he lived his life without confrontation. He was "El Campeón", a man who was undefeated. Hence, as Katherine Jobes notes, Santiago has a title to defend. "His bad luck jeopardizes a prized championship defined by communal values. Others in his community have seen him as the champion. Thus, when his bad luck appears he is forced to defend the way he has been seen by them. To provide himself with more confidence during the battle with the fish he remembers his former title. Back then the old man was strong even stronger than the great Negro from Cienfuegos who he beat in an arm-wrestling match. Now, the old man may be weaker but he has his wits to depend upon. "And there are many tricks". Santiago is an artisan and he relies upon his expertise to guide him. After many dedicated years as an angler, he has gathered enough knowledge about the profession to know every trick in the book. There is a clear autobiographical presence of the author in the story as presented by the narrator. "By 1952, when The Old Man and the Sea was published, Ernest

Hemingway. Needed to make a big catch. He had not made one since for Whom the Bell Tolls in 1940. Much of his literary reputation rested on work written between 1924 and 1933". This is to say that Hemingway himself was fighting against the same force that his protagonist Santiago fights in *The Old Man and the Sea*; he needed to prove himself worthy of his past successes. Not only were they both fighting for their title and identity but also against age and luck. After for Whom the Bell Tolls Hemingway did not succeed in creating a successful follow-up. "When at last we get his next novel; it turns out to be his worst failure". It seemed like Hemingway had lost his touch and he was getting old; he was seen as a beaten man. The parallel between Santiago and Hemingway is even more apparent, as the line, which Santiago uses to catch the marlin, is described by the narrator as being thick as a pencil. This shows that the creation of the fish is the same for the old writer with bad luck, as it is for the old angler fighting his bad luck. Both are also examples of following the code. "Hemingway was narrowing the gap that had always existed between him and his code heroes. Actually he narrowed it to the point where it is possible to show that on one level *The Old Man and the Sea* was wholly personal...*The Old Man and the Sea* is, from one angle, an account of Hemingway's personal struggle, grim, resolute and eternal, to write his best. With his seriousness, his precision and his perfectionism, Hemingway saw his craft exactly as Santiago sees his". The general view of the narrator is also what makes the connection between the old man and Jesus.

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