**Examining Symbolism in *the Old Man and the Sea***

Ernest Hemingway's *the Old Man and the Sea* recounts the story of a senior citizen faced with perpetual bad luck in a fishing village in Cuba. This experience makes Santiago, the older adult, unable to feed himself, relying on Manolin, who brings meals and accompanies him on his fishing expeditions as he is isolated and scorned. Finally, however, Santiago catches a large fish after several failures, spending three days in the Sea while pursuing this fish. The recounting of this story depends on the effective knit of symbols that depict common attributes in the fishing community, drawing significant parallels from other standard features to expound the story. Hemingway's *the Old Man and the Sea* effectively leverages animal and religious symbolism through different figures to build the narrative and enhance understanding of the story.

# Animal Symbolism

*The Old man and the Sea* extensively use animal symbolsto typify human experiences and relationships with nature. This symbolism offers insights into how the fishing community perceives things surrounding their environment, enhancing their understanding of the narrative. First, Hemingway uses the marlin to symbolize the mysterious attributes of nature. This depiction enables the readers to understand how the fishing community perceives the marine ecosystem. Second, Santiago recounts his experience with the marlin by noting, "He is wonderful and strange, and who knows how old he is" (Hemingway, 1965; p.40). This description presents the marlin as a mysterious creature that is not effectively understood by the community, including its senior citizens.

Further, it shows the resolve of human beings to brace these unexpected situations while pursuing their dreams. For instance, the marlin was baited despite its mysterious nature (Stephens & Cools, 2013). This baiting demonstrates Santiago's commitment to overcoming nature's mysteries in pursuit of life.

Secondly, Hemingway uses lion symbolism to depict youth vitality and pride among the characters. Santiago dreams of the lions when he sleeps, showing his past glory and achievements in the community. For instance, the lions symbolize the youthful vitality Santiago has lost with advancement in age (Sabudu, 2020). Nevertheless, he enjoyed a glorious past, where he was a champion in arm wrestling competitions. These achievements cemented his name in the community.

Similarly, the lions symbolize the pride of his youthful endeavors. He was named "Santiago El Campeon," signifying his prowess in arm wrestling (Hemingway, 1965; p.61). This name earned him a reputation, which he proudly embraced in the community. When conversing with Manolin, he regarded himself as a strange man, rekindling his youthful achievements. This use of lions to signify his past achievements is repeated in the narrative substantially (Herlihy, 2009). Thus, the lions demonstrated their proud youthful achievements and vitality.

# Religious Symbolism

Ernest Hemingway uses religious symbolism in *the Old Man and the Sea* to connect the religious background and everyday occurrences. This approach enables the readers to relate effectively to the events being recounted, enhancing their understanding of the narrative. First, Santiago is presented with Christ-like characters of determination, resilience, and isolation. While Christ had the twelve disciples, Santiago had Manolin. Further, Santiago faced immense mockery from the community and depended on others for sustenance. Despite these struggles, he perseveres in his pursuits, demonstrating great determination (Nuriadi & Melani, 2021). Santiago's efforts as Santiago arrives at the harbor are similar to Christ's struggles on the way to the cross. The author notes, "He started to climb again, and at the top, he fell and lay for some time with the mast across his shoulder" (Hemingway, 1965; p.113). This description provides religious symbolism that recounts the struggles of Christ on the way to the cross.

Also, Hemingway uses sharks in his symbolism to typify evils and challenges experienced across the world. Sharks in the narrative are presented as vicious creatures that devour the fish baited by the fishermen. Instead of pursuing their prey, they trail that is fished by human beings, destroying their catch and ruining their livelihoods. The author depicts the shark that sought to attack the captured fish as inconsiderate. He notes, "When the old man saw him coming, he knew that this was a shark that had no fear at all and would do exactly what he wished" (Hemingway, 1965; p.113). The shark would stop at nothing to accomplish its mission, demonstrating how perils strive to disillusion and demotivate individuals, shattering their dreams and aspirations. When Santiago recounts the experience with the sharks, he notes states that they beat him. However, Manolin states that the fish did not defeat him, demonstrating his accomplishment even with immense perils (Hemingway, 1965; p.115). Thus, the shark symbolizes evil in the world, with humans striving to overcome them despite their monstrosity.

In conclusion, Ernest Hemingway's work leverages animal and religious symbolism to recount the narrative. Animal symbolisms such as the marlin and lions show nature's mysteries and youth's vitality, with Santiago clinging to his former glory and pride. The religious symbolism demonstrates Christ-like suffering and evils of the world through Santiago and sharks. These experiences are instrumental in restoring Santiago's glory, for in his failings, he is celebrated as one of the most excellent fishermen in the community. This deliberate use of symbolism in the narrative and carefully knit of the story enhances consistency, connecting the events being recounted and real-world occurrences. Through this approach, the author improves understanding of the narrative and fosters its timeliness, making it relevant to contemporary society.

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