

# The Impact of Symbolism in Ernest Hemingway's Novel the Old Man and the Sea<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This research study and examine the masterful writer. The author exhibits their expertise of writing in a distinctive way by utilizing literary devices and approaches. We have a single example of significant authors and novels. *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway is a notable symbolic work of American literature that demonstrates the author's skill in using symbols to enhance the literary value of the text. In order to decipher the symbols and determine the many meanings they stand for, the goal of this study is to investigate their application in the novel. This project is divided into: First, we'll discuss aestheticism in general and discuss typical literary style elements like simile, metaphor, irony, and so on. Secondly the study would be about the concept of symbol and the meaning of symbolism. Thirdly gives the general idea of American literature and the major works of Ernest Hemingway focusing on his novel *The old man and the sea* and its literary analysis . The last thing going to mention with the study all the symbols used in the novel and their meanings. The goal of this work that showing how was Hemingway interesting with his work and writing for symbols and his intention to represent themes behind the use of symbols in *The old man and the sea*.

**Keywords:** Hemingway; Symbol; American literature; *The old man and the sea*.

## INTRODUCTION

One of Ernest Hemingway's major symbolic novels, *The Old Man and the Sea*, is thought to have been written by him. He was driven by reason, had a voracious desire for information, and made an effort to explain the underlying meaning of life using ideas and symbols. *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway relates the tale of Santiago the old man, a struggling fisherman who lives off the coast of Havana. He hadn't caught any fish in 48 days, and his apprentice, a youngster named Manolin who had been sailing with him, switched to another boat, leaving the old man all by himself. After a long time with patience he catches a huge fish and struggles and fight with it for three days before killing the big fish. Santiago was surprised when saw the big fish and was very happy but tired because of the struggles .Then He fastens it to the side of his boat, but several sharks are drawn to it and attack it since the fish has lost a lot of blood. After a protracted battle, Santiago eventually makes it to the harbor carrying only the bones of his fish.

In spite of the age of the old man and his weak body but he didn't give up that means we have to struggle ,fight and be patience in order to reach our goals and the peak. That taught us the life will not stop whatever the circumstances were, *The old man and the sea* was an important lesson to the world .Literature is recognized as one of the most fascinating things in human life, and the social structure's characteristics encourage people to feel happy about their artistic endeavors. As a result, the author or writer explores a range of topics and ideas while using overt linguistic styles and techniques.

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## EARLY LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

Ernest Miller Hemingway as an American author with international renown, Ernest Hemingway has had a significant impact on both American and even global literature. Hemingway was born on 07/21/1899, in Oak Park, Illinois and died on 07/02/1961. grew up in a house that his grandfather Earnest Hall Hemingway constructed for the family. his mother Grace had studied singing, and his father Clarence was a doctor. Hemingway spent a lot of time in Italy while working for the Red Cross as an ally during World War I, and he was interested in reading and well-traveled man. According to many experts, Ernest Miller Hemingway is the most important author in American literature from the 20th century. The current analysis illuminates the multiple symbolic meanings Hemingway placed into *The Old Man and the Sea*. The clear depiction of Christian symbolism, the sea and nature as symbols of life, and the protagonist's struggle to live in this environment.

Hemingway's literary creations are widely read all over the world, and his distinctive writing style has influenced many other authors and Hemingway fans, making Hemingway studies in academia active and successful. According to a lot of people, there has never been an American author like Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway, a member of the "lost generation" of World War I, was in many ways his own finest character. The frequent use of brief, straightforward, direct writing and situations that are entirely dialogue-driven provide Ernest Hemingway's books and short stories a particular accessibility that makes the author instantly recognizable.

## THE STYLE:

According to a lot of people, there has never been an American author like Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway, a member of the "lost generation" of World War I, was in many ways his own finest character. Ernest Hemingway became a legend of his own time, whether as the younger "Champ" or the elderly "Papa." Hemingway was first and first a literary scholar, a writer, and a student of books, despite the fact that the drama and romance of his life can seem to overwhelm the caliber of his work. Hemingway liked in performing for the cameras and reveled in his fame. Hemingway did not wish to achieve fame for the wrong reasons, but he did regard himself as an artist.

Hemingway had a particular writing style that attracted attention from numerous reviewers nearly from the start of his literary career. Long geographical and psychological descriptions are avoided by Hemingway. Because he shies away from making clear remarks and emotive descriptions, his approach has been criticized for lacking substance. In general, his manner is straightforward, clear, and uncomplicated. He honed a straightforward language style with minimal adjectives or adverbs that was compelling. He used clear, lively conversation and precise descriptions of objects and settings in his writing.

Hemingway's early books tended to be told in the first person and from a single point of view, but when he published *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, he employed a variety of storytelling strategies. He used objective descriptions, quick switches in point of view, internal monologues (when the reader is inside the "thought" of a certain character), and generally a looser framework than in his earlier works. "A writer's style should be straightforward and personal, his imagery rich and earthy, and his words plain and energetic," according to Hemingway. The best writers are skilled stylists, serious students, tireless workers, and possess the gift of brevity.

The most serious and politically charged book that Hemingway ever wrote is *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Only a handful of the book's incidents are humorous or light. The book *For Whom the Bell Tolls* makes an effort to provide a thorough overview of a place and people that Hemingway adored. It was an attempt to candidly discuss a very complicated war that was made even more complicated by the ideologies it sparked.

The frequent use of brief, straightforward, direct writing and situations that are entirely dialogue-driven provide Ernest Hemingway's books and short stories a particular accessibility that makes the author instantly recognizable. Hemingway is sometimes portrayed as a "typical" American author whose writing exemplifies the bold, straightforward, and rugged individualism of the American spirit in action due to the direct nature of both his style and lifestyle.

## SYMBOLISM AND MEANING

First of all we have to know the definition of the symbolism then we can explain the symbols. If we want to check the word of "symbolism" is coming from the word "symbol" which comes from the Latin *symbolum*, a symbol of faith, and *symbolus*, a sign of recognition. Using symbols to represent concepts and traits by giving them deeper, more symbolic meanings than their literal meanings is known as symbolism. In most cases, an object is used to symbolize another in order to give it a whole other meaning that is more profound and meaningful. Symbolism is the process by which authors give a text a deeper, inner meaning than the literal one by using an item, person, color, element, or even a circumstance.

The term "symbolism" describes the usage of symbols as well as a collection of symbols used in a text. The practice of giving items that materialize in dreams a specific significance is known as "Freudian symbolism". The term symbol has a long and complicated history dating back to antiquity, symbolism plays a significant part in literature. For example, different traits or emotions are represented by different colors. White color is a representation of goodness, purity, and tranquility. Black color is a sign of evil, and villains in classic films frequently donned it. Red is a representation of love or bravery. Green is a representation of growth, optimism, and fresh life. As a literary movement, symbolism emerged as a response to other trends like phenomenon and naturalism. Whatever, the word symbolism swiftly expanded to include a variety of artistic mediums, from painting and sculpture to theater and music, before moving on to literature and having varying degrees of effect on both European and American literatures of the twentieth century.

Although the ideas, concepts, and aesthetic devices of symbolism are frequently traced back to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many early 20<sup>th</sup> century artists and authors continued to hold on to its beliefs. This movement is frequently noted for taking place during the years 1885-1895. At the same time as some intellectuals began to doubt positivism, symbolism rose to prominence. Because they saw science as the key to understanding the universe and essentially did not see art as an independent branch of knowledge or human endeavor, writers, in particular, responded negatively to various positivist and materialist beliefs. The goal of the Symbolists was to free writing from its conventional oratory and descriptive purposes in favor of describing the transient, instantaneous impressions of a person's inner existence and experience.

### THE MAIN FACTS THAT CAUSE SYMBOLISM

At the same time as some intellectuals began to doubt positivism, symbolism rose to prominence. Because they saw science as the key to understanding the universe and essentially did not see art as an independent branch of knowledge or human endeavor, writers, in particular, responded negatively to various positivist and materialist beliefs.

The word "symbolism" was initially and principally used to refer to the literary works of French authors who rebelled against naturalism's scientific determinism and the accuracy and objectivity of realism's descriptions. With the publication of Jean Moréas' "Le Figaro" in 1886, the movement began as a French literary trend in the 1880s. Baudelaire's sonnet "Correspondances" and Edgar Allan Poe's writing were also significant antecedents. The critic Jean Moréas used the word "symbolist" in order to separate the symbolists from the associated decadent literary and artistic trend. The symbolist movement in art is connected to the gothic element of Romanticism, which is distinct from but distinct from the symbolist movement in literature. "Symbolism" may be found in Boundless Art History.

To depict instead the transient, instantaneous feelings of man's inner existence and experience, the Symbolists sought to free writing from its descriptive roles and conventional oratory. Numerous symbolists took Baudelaire's theory of correspondences between the senses, which they then paired with the Wagnerian idea of a synthesis of the arts to create a novel understanding of the musical characteristics of poetry. The Symbolists freed their subject matter and writing style from a scientific description that erased all fancy, all feelings, and all errors and contradictions. The employment of the law of cause and effect in writing, which was one of Naturalism's guiding ideas, was somewhat rejected by symbolism since it emerged as a response to earlier literary movements. Through precise depictions of objective reality, it aimed to accurately depict the natural world and human civilization outside of ourselves.

The absolute truths, according to symbolists, should be depicted in art and could only be vaguely stated. As a result, they painted and wrote in a profoundly metaphorical and provocative way, imbuing certain pictures or things with symbolic meaning.

### SYMBOLISM IN LITERATURE

Literary devices have been a significant part of literature history since people first began telling stories to one another. Authors utilize these literary devices to expertly accentuate, adorn, or reinforce their works as well as to express meaning or to give depth and richness to their writing. Symbolism is a literary device that contains multiple levels of meaning, usually hidden at first glance, and it represents additional various aspects, concepts, or traits than those that are obvious in the literal translation alone. It is used in literature to aid readers in understanding a literary work.

## THEORIES OF SYMBOLISM

Different perspectives and meanings are represented by symbols. Additionally, these interpretations take on varied connotations as a result of the numerous thinkers who have contributed their ideas and theories to the growth of numerous fields. Since numerous theorists have contributed their contribution for the development of the use of symbolism in many sectors with their perspectives and theories, symbols represent a variety of interpretations, and these interpretations and meanings also have a variety of orientations. There are many definitions for the symbolism depending on the theorist's beliefs and thoughts of the term symbolism, these definitions vary.

### a. Langer's Theory

The creator of this theory is the American philosopher Susanne Langer (1895–1985), whose research focused heavily on the idea of symbols. Langer considered symbolism to be the main topic of philosophy since symbolism is the foundation of human knowledge and comprehension. She made the implication that once symbols are conceived, one may comprehend their meanings. She also made a distinction between a symbol and a sign. despite the use of signs in addition to symbols, it is provided that symbol and sign be distinct from one another.

### b. Frye's Theory

Herman Northrop Frye was a Canadian literary critic and literary theorist who lived from 1912 to 1991. He defined the term symbol as any literary device that may be separated for analysis (Frye,1957, p.71). In his book *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye asserts that readers often focus their attention in two places at once. The first is called "outward," in which the reader reads outside the text to the things it is intended to mean. The second orientation is inward, when the reader strives to understand and examine the meaning of the word.

### c. Whitehead's Theory

English mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) contributed to numerous fields, but symbolism was his most important one. According to Whitehead, symbolism captures human imagination and cognition. His understanding is that a word may also serve as a symbol, signifying thoughts, feelings, and pictures when used. Whitehead asserts that symbolism is highly flawed because it may cause people to behave, feel, or believe about things that are only ideas without examples in the reality that symbolism leads us to assume. Langer r makes a distinction between signs and symbols, but Whitehead (1927) asserts a distinction between symbolism and direct knowledge.

## THE SYMBOLS

Any picture or object that represents anything else is a symbol. It can only be a letter, which serves as a sign for a specific sound . Similar to this, every word serves as a sign for the concept it refers to. Flags serve as national emblems. Symbols, which include letters, objects, figures, and colors, are used to convey ideas that are abstract.so these symbols are:

### 1.Santiago

The shape or the image of Santiago, that depict the elderly guy, represents someone who is upbeat, optimistic, and unbeaten. He represents a person who is powerful and self-assured. He is the other fishermen's go-to expert and the man in command.

### 2. The Marlin

The marlin, a majestic and spectacular fish, represents the ultimate competitor. In a world where "everything kills everything else in some manner," Santiago considers himself extraordinarily fortunate to have come up against a foe that forces him to display his courage, strength, respect, and love. In contrast to sharks, Santiago believes that the marlin is a worthy opponent.

### **3. The Lions**

Santiago had a lovely dream about the lions having fun on the "three beaches of Africa." The first takes place the night before he departs on his three-day fishing trip, the second occurs while he spends a short period of time sleeping on the boat in the middle of his struggle with the marlin, and the third takes place right at the conclusion of the book. In actuality, the closing sight of the lions supports the novella's somber promise of the triumph and renewal. Santiago identifies with the lions as being in his youth, hence the dream alludes to the circle aspect of existence.

### **4. Shovel Nosed Sharks**

Sharks, in Santiago's opinion, are unimportant low predators who serve no purpose in life and are not worthy of greatness. Sadly, the flesh of the large fish is destroyed by sharks, who stand for wickedness and disgust. Although they consume the marlin, they are unable to consume the bones or Santiago's victory, which will serve as inspiration for Manolin and other fishermen.

The shovel-nosed sharks are more than just irresponsible, ruthless marlin attackers on the move. They "stand in strong contrast to the marlin, which is worthy of Santiago's work and might" as the old man's adversaries. They represent the destructive rules of the cosmos and demonstrate that they may be broken precisely when equals engage in life-or-death combat.

### **5. Manolin**

Santiago's single best and last companion, as well as his apprentice, is Manolin, or "the youngster," as Hemingway refers to him in the book. Manolin serves as the protagonist's student, son, and representative of youth, just as Santiago does in the novel, representing the mentor, guide, holy father, and elderly man. A sign of kindness, the circle of life, and unadulterated love is Manolin. The significant age difference between Santiago and Manolin is a testament to their prowess as fishermen. Manolin represents hope at last. Manolin never abandons Santiago inside, even when his parents forbade him from going fishing with Santiago.

### **6. DiMaggio**

Joe DiMaggio, represents endurance of hardship and hope. DiMaggio serves as Santiago's source of inspiration, strength, and pride. Despite the fact that DiMaggio does not appear in the book, he yet plays a crucial role. When Santiago has to convince himself of his own excellence, he turns to DiMaggio, whom he adores and regards as a role model for character and responsibility. Despite receiving a painful bone goad that may have hurt another player, DiMaggio nevertheless managed to have a good career.

DiMaggio represents the tenacity of the human spirit, according to Santiago, who sees him as having such respectable traits. Santiago believed that because of their similar backgrounds and experiences, DiMaggio would understand him.

### **7. The mast**

Santiago spends three days in the water, his hands' palms and back bearing painful scars. There is no denying that the mast is an allusion to the crucifixion of Jesus. It alludes to Jesus' cross. Where the mast is located on Santiago's boat, Santiago is made to suffer. He battles in the sea for three days while having neck and hand palm injuries.

### **8. The Harpoon**

While battling the sharks, Santiago misplaces his harpoon. This represents those who get disillusioned when faced with hardships in life. In the same way that Santiago is "defenseless" after losing his harpoon, those without faith are.

## 9. The sea

Given that the title of the book obviously refers to the sea and that the majority of the action in the tale takes place there, the water's presence in the novel is crucial both a backdrop and an image. It represents Santiago's and the universe's separation from one another and from assistance as he confronted his struggle on his own.

## THE MAIN THEMES

### 1. Resistance to Defeat

Santiago is a fisherman who has been searching for fish for 84 days and hasn't found anything. Even after three days and nights of battle with the enormous marlin, despite the physical pain and exhaustion, and just after capturing the marlin, battles against the sharks, the fight against them is obviously hopeless. Nevertheless, he never gives up and sails deeper into the sea than he has ever done. When the situation becomes increasingly difficult and despair threatens to overpower Santiago, he strengthens and doubles his resistance to defeat, recalls his youth and strength, and relies on his pride by comparing himself to his idol Joe DiMaggio or by establishing himself as a commendable good example for Manolin.

A man can be destroyed but not vanquished, as Santiago realizes at the end of his battle with the marlin. Hemingway uses the main character Santiago to show that while he was physically beaten and worn out by the struggle he had to endure, his spirit was not crushed. This emphasizes the idea that man is not designed for defeat. He still has some optimism, though, and wants to go fishing again with the youngster.

### 2. Pride

Pride is sometimes described as a bad quality that leads to people overextending themselves and suffering a terrible fall as a result. After killing the first shark, Santiago, who is certain that the marlin was killed out of pride, questions whether or not pride is a sin, whether killing for pride renders the act a sin, and whether or not the sin of pride was responsible for the shark attack since pride drove him to go out into the sea further than what anglers typically observe.

Although Santiago rejects the notion right away, the story's premise supports his assertion that pride is not the cause of his problems. Pride and humility are not seen as mutually exclusive virtues in *The Old Man and the Sea*; Santiago is explicitly shown to be modest, yet he feels no loss of pride in being so. In fact, Santiago's pride is said to be the single driving force that spurs him on and elevates him; it is his pride that inspires him to endure three taxing days at sea, fending off marlin and then slaying sharks. It is crucial to understand that the old man's pride accurately reflects who he is—a man and a fisherman—and that his struggle may be seen as an attempt to become the best man and fisherman he has the potential to be.

## BIBLICAL INFLUENCE IN THE NOVEL

The majority of Ernest Hemingway's stories have strong religious overtones and symbolism. The religious, more specifically Christian influence is evident in his book *The Old Man and The Sea* when read through a religious lens. Many aspects of the story can be compared to the life of Jesus Christ, such as Santiago, who is an old man but has young eyes, always sees the bright side of things, and believes that man was not created for defeat. These characteristics make Santiago a god-like figure. As Ernest Hemingway opted to use the New Testament version of the Bible in this work, the elderly man is comparable to a parent who instructs his son. Since the old man has encountered many difficulties, the majority of the story's events mirror Christ's suffering.

The novella has several more allusions to Jesus' suffering and crucifixion, which indicates how Santiago is compared to Jesus in conflict. With the mast on his shoulder, Santiago ascends the mound to his cabin, tumbling

several times. He climbed up again, tumbled at the top, and laid there for a while with the mast over his shoulder. He attempted to stand. But because it was too challenging, he sat there, the mast on his shoulder, and regarded the road.

## Themes

Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* has a number of themes and teachings, most of which reinforce the characteristics of naturalism, individuality, and romanticism. In connection to our subject, it is appropriate to list a few of them:

### 1. Perseverance

Given his experience with the enormous marlin, Santiago is not aggressive; instead, he simply drops his baits into the water and sits in his skiff while the tide, currents, breeze, and his oars guide him into excellent water. The marlin, according to Bloom, consumes the bait aggressively because it is a predator; Santiago does nothing more than set the hook, which the fish bites and swallows. Furthermore, the marlin pulls Santiago out to sea; as a victim of the marlin's wrath, Santiago does nothing more than hold the line.

Santiago doesn't harpoon the fish until the fish has been played out, which is a kind gesture that ends the animal's suffering and results in a swift, painless death. Throughout the struggle, Santiago suffers punishment from the angry fish, whose lurches injure his hands and back, gash his eye, smash his face against the bow, and wear out the patient angler. Readers can't help but be impressed and sympathetic with Santiago's tenacity as he looks to be the marlin's victim and maintains his composure throughout the experience.

### 2. Suffering

When the fish demonstrates that he, not Santiago, is in control, Santiago realizes that his ordeal has begun. This understanding of being up against a force that is far stronger than himself and his will to battle it to the death is a repeating element in Santiago's heroics. He endures the agony of having his back braced against the line; the easing of contact with a burlap sack; the raw edge his straw hat makes on his forehead in the baking sun; the bleeding hands; the forcing of his face into the raw dolphin; the agony of his hunger; but he is always conscious that the fish is suffering, that the fish is starving, and that the fish is just as brave as he is. Despite the anguish he is going through and being aware of the fish's struggle, he views them as fated siblings, heroes predestined to battle, and in the Christian tale, they would emerge as twin Christs.

## ANALYSIS

The novel's setting may be broadly split into two sections. The beginning and finish of the novel are set in a little fishing hamlet in Cuba, not far from Havana. The primary industry in the Caribbean island of Cuba is fishing. Before Fidel Castro's revolution, Hemingway spent a few years living in Cuba, developing an intimate understanding of the settings for *The Old Man and the Sea*. The Gulf Stream waves, which are responsible for bringing the massive marlins in the months of September and October, are discussed in the midst of the narrative. Because Santiago is a figure for mankind, and the sea is a representation of the entire cosmos, the setting takes on symbolic meaning as the story progresses.

Old Santiago, the book's protagonist, struggles to catch a fish in the opening pages of the story because, despite being an accomplished fisherman in Cuba, he hasn't brought one in for eighty-four days. Moreover, Hemingway's protagonist enjoys baseball. Santiago is made fun of in the community since he was unable to catch any fish.

Even though his parents make him travel on a different boat due to Santiago's misfortune, the young man Manolin, Santiago's apprentice, continues to keep an eye on the elderly man to care for his meals and possessions. Because he thinks that man is not designed for defeat, Santiago therefore intends to sail far out to sea in an effort to avoid his bad fate. The center of the novel allows the reader to see Santiago's fight with the enormous marlin, as well as his subsequent battle with sharks to preserve his magnificent prize. Even though the enormous Marlin was damaged by the earthquakes, Santiago eventually gains popularity among the local fisherman.

## CONCLUSION

The information above taught us that Hemingway's life had a profound impact on his writing. In addition to the wounds he sustained, Hemingway's life was additionally hampered by his various relationships, four marriages, his drinking problem, and his sadness. He had millions of admirers who read his books and short tales with enthusiasm, but he also wrote in his own distinctive manner, which was beloved. *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway is a symbol-rich book, but because it would be impossible to discuss them all here, we have concentrated on the most significant ones and attempted to explain their meaning. Hemingway depicts an elderly man's struggle in *The Old Man and the Sea* to attain his life's pinnacle and protect his achievements from the vultures that came to destroy them. The novel's dense use of symbols to communicate a variety of themes makes it challenging for readers to understand the ideas that lie beneath the words. Hemingway also gave symbols to the novel's hero and other characters, as well as symbols to give the issues in the book greater depth. The writer also employed various symbols and images to portray his hero as a guy who will never accept defeat. As a result, the Old Man represents how death always threatens the sequential order. The three symbols for time are the passions, Nemesis, and sharks. Sharks attacked the Old Man's marlin, causing him to be concerned. To sum up this study, it is reasonable to say that every literary work has a literary method, whether it was put on purpose by the author or not. No genre composition has ever been devoid of literary devices. Hemingway's assertion doesn't change the secret meaning that the reader must discover in order to enjoy reading this masterpiece, of course.

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