

Peculiarities in the Narrative Method in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and The Sea*

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Abstract

Ernest Hemingway is popular for his factual and terse prose method among the multitude of prominent American writers. His novel like his other works was published in his lifetime and The Old Man and the Sea like all the novels Hemingway published in his life, The Old Man and the Sea predominantly mirrors his distinctive writing style. A closer look will reveal that although the language looks simple and natural on the surface, an in-depth reading will reveal that it is in fact calculated and spurious. His modus operandi is associated with his journalistic expertise. The impact of his method is considerable throughout the globe. The Old Man and the Sea contains many facts, the majority of which originate from Hemingway's personal experience. In the initial part of the novel, the facts have been employed to present the quality of Santiago's life, and are told in a simple and natural manner, but in the latter part of the novel, they have been employed from inside Santiago's own awareness and form part of a whole scheme of the novel.

Keywords: method, facts, brusque, narrative, deceptive, Hemingway, predator, marlin

I. INTRODUCTION

The Old Man and the Sea is undoubtedly Hemingway's masterpiece. It is an uncomplicated tale concerning a piscator who is named Santiago and his struggle against a sizeable marlin. Santiago is unable to catch anything for eighty four days, but he keeps his morale high. He ventures deep into the sea and baits a colossal marlin. An aching scuffle follows during which Santiago succeeds in slaying the fish and attaches it to his boat. On his way home, he gets to know that he has to wage a far greater struggle against the predators of the sea lurking around his boat that devour the marlin. What remains is

the skeleton of the fish. The greybeard brings the skeletal remains of the marlin to his abode. He then drops off and starts dreaming, almost dead with exhaustion. But his battle against the odds garners him much respect. Amidst so many significant American writers, Hemingway's is particularly famous for his objective and terse prose style. Being his final novel that got published when he was alive, *The Old Man and the Sea* generally mirrors his unique framing method. This goal of this paper is to examine Hemingway's method of writing and modus operandi in *The Old Man and the Sea* and emphasizes chiefly on the style of language and one among the many significant methods—his usage of facts in his novel.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

William Faulkner in his review of *The Old Man and the Sea* noted:

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. (Faulkner)

As stated by Shuichi Chiba (2019), Hemingway published *The Old Man and the Sea* in 1952, and it was to be his last major work. It is easy to see the parallels between the old man in the novel, called Santiago, and Hemingway. Santiago suffers from bad luck in his old age despite being a great fisher in his youth. Hemingway had been trying to reclaim the literary success of his older books, such as *The Sun Also Rises* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Even though Santiago could have success in the easier, nearer patches of water, he hunts for a bigger fish further out. Hemingway too searches for a big success and writes this ambitious project. (Chiba)

As stated by Cunningham (2016), the villagers view him as *salao*, (the worst form of unlucky), his old body racked and afflicted by years of pain and suffering except for his blue eyes that looked “cheerful and undefeated”. Santiago begins his journey in the vast blue ocean one more time on the 85th day since his last catch and rows his boat far away into the deep sea, towards “the schools of Bonita and albacore” where he might do better: “My big fish must be somewhere” to prove his worth as a skilled and experienced fisherman.

As stated by Schatz (2020), it is a simple story with a deeper message and a significance that surpasses time and place. It expresses the universal truths of a man's existence in this world, where courage, respect, honour, tenacity, pride, dreams, and visions incite man's quest to prosper amidst adversity. It is a tale of the indomitable spirit of man; the old man symbolizes an optimistic attitude toward life, and fights with the giant marlin, and offers life lessons to all. (Bryan Schatz, 2020)

As stated by Shahwan (2019), it is this realization of identity that arouses the element of sub-consciousness that helps to prove the existence of inner being and reflect the individual recognition build on self-esteem and dignity that gives strength and power to fight back even in adverse situations.

III. RESEARCH QUESTION

Through the research, the question arises why a reader should understand that a great deal of knowledge and skill forms Hemingway's narrative, and that the simplicity of his approach to language is deceptive. The research would allow having more perspective and the knowledge of Hemmingway's works. It would help the reader understand the retrospective of how Hemingway's novella, *The Old Man and the Sea* displays his ironic and stylistic attitude and concerns with the theme of recounting intense moral provocation.

IV. CRITICAL STUDY OF THE NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED IN THE NOVELLA

Perhaps the most widely recognized and hailed as one of the compelling stylists in American Literature is Ernest Hemingway. His works are marked by brief, uncomplicated sentences hardly a few adjectives, ample utilization of replication, and informal language. In his method he steers clear of a tendency to regard things emotionally, and his technique is refined largely by the application of euphemism.

The effect of his brusque, regulated outlook in his writing craft brands him as one of the primary sensational writers of 20th century era. His novella, *The Old Man and the Sea* presents his sardonic and grandiloquent technique and handles the theme of chronicling intense moral provocations.

Ernest Hemingway clarifies his standpoint to his modus operandi in *The Old Man and the Sea* in an interview as one that depends on thorough scrutiny; i.e.:

Everything he sees goes into the great reserve of things he knows or has seen. If it is any use to know it I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it underwater for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part that doesn't show. (Plimpton)

Therefore, a reader should understand that a great deal of knowledge and experience in forms Hemingway's narrative, and that the simplicity of his approach to language is deceptive.

Outwardly, the plot of *The Old Man and the Sea* appears to be uncomplicated. It narrates a tale about a piscator hailing from Cuba christened as Santiago and his 3 day long fight to ground a gigantic marlin only to lose his prize to marine predators during his return journey to home. It is told from the point of view of an omniscient narrator that allows the reader to share in Santiago's struggle to realize the purport of his life via his conflict with a fish. For example:

Then he began to pity the great fish that he had hooked. He is wonderful and strange and who knows how old he is, he thought. Never have I had such a strong fish or one who acted so strangely. Perhaps he is too wise to jump. He could ruin me by jumping or by a wild rush but perhaps he has been hooked many times before and he knows that this is how he should make his fight. He cannot know that it is only one man against him, nor that it is an old man. But what a great fish he is and what will he bring in the market if the flesh is good. He took the bait like a male and he pulls like a male and his fight has no panic in it. I wonder if he has any plans or if he is just as desperate as I am? (OMIS 48-49)

The section highlights the straightforward sentence construction that is characteristic of Ernest Hemingway additionally to the co-existing structure in the phrasing, particularly in the reiteration of such words like "hooked", "strange" "fight", and "fish". Furthermore, using alliteration strengthens parallelism. In suggesting compassion for the fish, and identifying the fish as male, the writer in addition provides a peek at his theme and creates a constructional recognition betwixt Santiago and the fish. He proposes that man and fish are each locked in a desperate struggle to survive; however, the desperation and violence of the intense struggle are masked by the use of understatement. The absence of emotionalism bestows the dramatic tension in the internal monologue.

The stress on the masculine nature of the dramatic situation is also important to understanding Hemingway's unemotional style in relation to his theme. "His overriding theme is honour personal honour by what shall a man live, by what shall a man die, in a world the essential condition of whose being is violence?" (Poetry Foundation). Hemingway is interested in representing a man's world in direct conflict with nature: "Fish"; he said, "I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends" (OMIS 54).

The moral struggle of Santiago's evolves progressively when he mirrors on the question regarding the variance which exists between human and non-human bond. For example, Hemingway notes:

It is silly not to hope, he thought. Besides I believe it is a sin. Do not think about sin, he thought. There are enough problems now without sin. Also I have no understanding of it. I have no understanding of it and I am not sure that I believe in it. Perhaps it was a sin to kill the fish. I suppose it was even though I did it to keep me alive and feed many people. But then everything is a sin. Do not think about sin. It is much too late for that and there are people who are paid to do it. Let them think about it. You were born to be a fisherman as the fish was born to be a fish. San Pedro was a fisherman as was the father of the great DiMaggio (OMTS 104-105)

Bounded by unsophisticated sentence construction and native conceptualizations of an incorporeal discourse is a significant ethical query that Santiago is unable to address: how can one value and appreciate nature and require eliminating it simultaneously? The writer employs an internal monologue once more in accordance with a particular sequence to generate a mordant collocation; the reader is compelled to ponder regarding sin and inquire and assume about the supremacy of man over beast. The writer employs an internal monologue once more accordance to a particular sequence to generate a mordant collocation; the reader is compelled to ponder regarding sin and inquire and assume about the supremacy of man over beast.

Santiago's panacea to his thoughts about the morality of killing his fish is deeply fatalistic, and connects to Hemingway's understanding of the importance of appreciating the beauty and power of nature. By using parallel structure, he suggests a pattern that defines the essence of a fisherman in Santiago's world. In other words, Santiago, St. Peter, and Jo DiMaggio's father were all fisherman, and that equivalence creates an order in the world that can be understood as a representation of stability.

Hemingway's account of Santiago's reaction to his loss of his marlin also is a representative of his method:

He knew he was beaten now finally and without remedy and he went back to the stern and found the jagged end of the tiller would fit in the slot of the rudder well enough for him to steer. He settled the sack around his shoulders and put the skiff on her course. He sailed lightly now and he had no thoughts or any feelings of any kind. He was past everything now and he sailed the skill to make his home port as well and as intelligently as he could. In the night sharks hit the carcass as someone might pick up crumbs from the table. The old man paid no attention to them and did not pay any attention to anything except steering. He only noticed how lightly and how well the skiff sailed now there was no great weight beside her (OMTS 119).

This passage exemplifies Hemingway's distrust of using emotion as a rhetorical device. The battle is lost the struggle is over. Yet, Santiago has survived, he has endured. Hemingway believed strongly that to endure great suffering gives meaning to life. (Poetry Foundation)

Santiago is now completely exhausted, and the strong alliteration of sounds reinforces the reader's sense of the scale of the fisherman's loss. The method in *The Old Man and the Sea* is fashioned by the intention of a héros who, at the present, after paying intense attention to seizing his fish, now pays notice to nothing. He is now a man "who is defeated but finds a remnant of dignity in an honest confrontation of defeat" (Poetry Foundation).

V. CONCLUSION

It can be deduced that Hemmingway's method is eventually based on the delusive lucidity of word choice and sentence construction, the congruous usage of reiteration, substantial utilization of internal monologue, and a calculated subduing of sentiment, parallelism, and alliteration. The rhetorical consequence results in the creation of a portrait displaying the theme of the terrible irony of a man's struggle against himself and nature. The gigantic existential squabble is reduced to Santiago's 3-day brush with forces more preponderant than he can master. In his capacity to endure, Santiago's exploit becomes a chronicle that displays the certainty of loss and the tranquility he obtains from its acceptance.

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