



Review

Triumph of Spirituality against Materialism in *The Old Man and the Sea*

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Abstract: In Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, the thesis tries to disprove materialism by demonstrating how spirituality triumphs over materialism. When the protagonist's decisive will triumphs over life's challenges, such a victory is attained. The work is divided into four sections, the first of which serves as an introduction to the novella. The novella's second portion examines the idea of materialism in the context of Marxist ideology. The final portion examines key quotations from Hemingway's story to disprove the idea of materialism. Finally, the story concludes with a conclusion and recommendations for additional research.

Keywords: spirituality, materialism, triumph, *The Old Man and The Sea*, Hemingway

1. Introduction

The Old Man and the Sea are regarded as one of Hemingway's most significant works, and it tells the story of an older man named Santiago who, in the book, waits eighty-four days to make a livelihood from fishing. The novel's climax occurs on the eighty-fifth day when the protagonist enters the Gulf Stream with his boat. Unfortunately, when he puts his bait into the Gulf, a large fish known as a marlin eats it. As a result, he cannot get the fish into the boat; instead, the fish drags the boat, causing the older man to suffer. The agony from the fishing line inspires the protagonist, 'Santiago,' to conquer nature's destructive might. When Santiago loses his huge catch due to a shark attack, he returns to his shanty and has recurring nightmares about the lions of Africa's eastern shores.

To put it another way, Santiago does not abandon the practice despite the agony and suffering he experiences while fishing. According to Gurko [1], *The Old Man and the Sea* is the pinnacle of Hemingway's lengthy quest for detachment from the social world and embracing the natural world. This is one of the critical topics, and it may build on the writer's and man's desire to escape the materialistic world. He utilizes his hope to capture the large fish via hardships and trials, but he fails since the fish is attacked and consumed by the vicious sharks. The fishing technique is crucial because it reveals the protagonist's strength since he shows no concern for the loss when he returns home and discovers that the fish has been devoured by sharks, leaving just a skeleton. The novella may be assessed not just from a victory/defeat standpoint but also from a religious one. In worldly words, he lost the marlin and was defeated, according to Chakraborty [2]. However, in a moral sense, he triumphed when his deed was seen as that of a martyr, such as Christ or even St. Thomas Becket. When Santiago sees the fish being devoured, he is unconcerned since he has accomplished something worthwhile, demonstrating the power of the human spirit and resolve.

Citation: Ali, F.A. Triumph of Spirituality against Materialism in *The Old Man and the Sea*. *Central Asian Journal of Social Sciences and History* 2024, 5(2), 9–13. <https://doi.org/10.17605/cajssh.v5i2.1067>

Received: 8 December 2023

Revised: 12 January 2024

Accepted: 28 January 2024

Published: 8 February 2024



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2. Marxist Idea of Materialism

Marxism uses the economic system as a foundation for society's demise. It concentrates on "superstructure," which includes politics, art, religion, and philosophy. According to Tyson [3], the economic system shapes the path toward establishing a culture and the institutional context for Marxism. As a response to social injustice, this concept was born. According to Lodge & Nigel [4], Marx and Engels were more affected by the inequity of material distribution combined with social strife. The Marxist approach exemplifies the critique of the contrasts between the bourgeoisie (the owners of the production) and the proletariat (the wage-earning working class). Spiritual concepts have no place in Marxist conceptions of social functioning. Materiality is the most critical priority in their lives, and they aim to reorganize the social order by fairly redistributing the material of production across all social strata. In Hemingway's novella, the protagonist, 'Santiago,' is a member of the working class or one of the proletariats who struggles to make a livelihood and whose endeavour to chase the marlin, which means a great deal to him but from which he has failed to profit, is regarded a failure. Sylvester (1966), a book by Ernest Hemingway, demonstrates how his successful work has finally evolved into a unified metaphysical scheme. This philosophical naturalism provides meaning to harsh inevitabilities and sheds light on human matters. Materialism is given less weight in this view. According to Eddins [5], Santiago is a guy in his natural condition, basic and naive, and therefore an excellent figure to express Hemingway's message. The spiritual power and tenacity displayed in the novella are very important in presenting the novel's topic. The fishing incident is critical for the protagonist's fight to maintain his existential significance. Furthermore, the protagonist's physical battle might be utilized as a metaphor for the universal sorrow of the human condition, which is one of Hemingway's core concerns. The failure of Santiago's effort to catch the marlin will be revealed in the portion of the analysis that offers him hope rather than despair.

3. Analysis and Discussion

3.1. Hemingway's worldview

Hemingway's perspective on the world in which he lives may be divided into two categories: despair and hope. His struggle indicates that he has chosen the path of optimism. The protagonist's resolve is described as legendary, and without it, he would never be able to fulfil his obligations. The protagonist's sense of need might be a beginning point for motivating him toward his life goal. Santiago struggles to overcome his negative thoughts and confront all challenges until he achieves victory. He does the most extraordinary feats. Despite his harsh circumstances, Santiago is presented as a mythological figure. Despite the challenges, he was described as patient, realistic, and conscientious. It is evident that he works professionally and struggles to make ends meet. He only had one companion, a little kid called 'Manolin,' who was forced to leave him by his parents. Santiago is constantly alone and cut off from the community in the novella. However, after time, Manolin appears and begins to hang out with him, and the two become incredibly close friends, even though he is older than him. Manolin enjoys spending time with the elderly fisherman, and he is always willing to assist him in various ways. Santiago's mentality is imbued with an unshakeable determination. He never considers giving up. He may be a guy of masculinity because of this attribute.

Santiago is insulted in his little community, and other fishermen taunt him by calling him "Salleo." In such situations, he feels powerless. On the other hand, he is unconcerned with the unpleasant atmosphere that surrounds him. As a result, he tries to persuade the people in his village that he is still one of the most excellent fishermen in the area. He will not accomplish success by waiting for a favourable moment; instead, he will achieve it by working and fighting until he obtains what he seeks. He is a person who is always looking for new opportunities. *"It is preferable to be fortunate, but I would rather be accurate,"* says the following paragraph from the novella. *"Then you will be ready when luck strikes"*

[6, p. 2]. According to Chakraberty [2], Santiago has the hope of living and surviving for a long time because of God's grace, which motivates him to keep going ahead in life as if he were a young man. As can be seen from the backdrop of the novella, Santiago is unafraid to get the job done and is very ambitious.

Nevertheless, he loses the marlin and is defeated on a purely material basis. However, in moral terms, he triumphed when his achievement was compared to that of a martyr, such as Christ or even St. Thomas Becket. He returns fatigued and sleeps like crucified after the tale, implying religious importance. This demonstrates Santiago's optimism as a spiritual rather than a monetary commodity.

The sensation of sin is crucial in demonstrating that the novella has a religious tone. It is worth noting that Santiago uses the term 'sin' to demonstrate his faith in God. Eddins [5] refines Santiago's viewpoint, arguing that he is slipping towards apostasy about his personal experience. As indicated in the following excerpt, using belief as a source of power and resolve is crucial in demonstrating a preference for spiritual values over worldly ones. *"I do not know of it [sin], and am not convinced that I believe in it"* [6, p. 105]. *"Let them think about it,"* he says, noting that there are individuals who are "paid" to ponder about sin, such as priests. *"As the fish was born to be a fish, you were destined to be a fisherman"* [6, p. 105].

He is "a peculiar old man, 7 feet", yet he is still strong and smart in his trade methods. After hooking up, he battles the enormous marlin with amazing skill and tenacity, demonstrating "what a man can accomplish and what a man endures" [6, p. 105]. When the shark attack, he vows to "fight them till I die" [6, p. 6], knowing that "a man is not created for defeat. *"A man may be destroyed but not vanquished"* [6, p. 103] The elderly guy was responsible for killing the giant marlin and then losing it to shark attacks. Santiago's will and perseverance demonstrate that he is an influential leader.

On the one hand, the elderly guy dares to demonstrate that leadership is required and crucial for the running of companies, but not when it comes to determining effectiveness. On the other hand, he wanted to return home because he was worried that leadership researchers were hunting for something that did not exist [7]. It is worth noting that the protagonist's outstanding leadership is shown by harsh and painful, cruel and erotic scenes. Santiago becomes one with the fish he loves by murdering it since the unclear "half of him has been annihilated." He has not only taken a life, but he has also known what it feels like to die [8].

Santiago's religious beliefs are not viewed as extreme; he sometimes prays just for God's assistance. As a result, Hemingway depicts him as a Christ figure who is not only a fisherman but also a model or ideal Christian and a sign of grace in the face of great adversity. However, the novella has a Christian background, and the elderly fisherman is a reference to Christ. However, in 'The Old Man and the Sea,' Santiago is given heroic dimensions by using the notion of sin, which men always fall into when they go far beyond their depth, beyond their rightful position in life, as shown in this excerpt. "The old man starts to feel a loneliness and a sensuous majority of remorse for how he has captured him on the first night of his fight with the enormous fish" [6, p. 48]; and after he has slain the marlin, he feels neither pride of success or feeling of triumph. Instead, he seems to feel as if he has betrayed the large fish; alternatively, he views the death of the giant fish as a sin, as shown by the fact that *"I am only greater than him via deceit,"* he believes, *"and he meant me no harm"* [6, p. 99]. The concept of solidarity and interdependence permeates the action from beginning to finish of the novella, providing the structural framework within which the older man's heroic individuality and compassion for his fellow animals arise and operate, giving them their final importance. As a result, he has learned to accept his reality and live in it. Furthermore, in the lineage of Sophocles, Christ, Melville, and Conrad, Hemingway has not accomplished a bleak but ennobling picture of a man [9]. Instead, the protagonist may become an example of physical and materialistic ideals by gaining these attributes.

3.2. Santiago's battle with fate

Most people see destiny as a force that determines what will happen in the future. A human's capacity to reach this point is limited. When someone is lucky, it is seen as a sign that he has spiritual traits that enable him to live a happy life. The elderly fisherman is a wise guy who perseveres through various hardships and tribulations, finally triumphing. Despite his advanced age, he represents a great guy.

Frustration, according to Santiago, is a sin, as he tells himself, "It is a sin to lose hope" [6, p. 28]. He implies that his hope and confidence will never go away. He is a strange fisherman who does not like to rely on others. He believes in "constant battle and unstoppable will" to achieve greatness [6, p. 26].

Santiago refuses to succumb to a sequence of misfortunes. Because of his misfortune and poverty, he is seen as pitiful by particular hamlet residents. He has no one to rely on except himself to effect change and handle the exhaustion and suffering he has due to his ordeal, particularly when his land cramps. *"But I must have the confidence, and I must be worthy of the great DiMaggio who does everything perfectly even with the pain of the bone spur in his heel,"* he says [6, p. 68]. As a result, he refuses to be defeated by physical suffering; moreover, he summons the power of his hands against several opponents to demonstrate that he is still an accomplished fisherman in his town.

Of course, not everyone has bravery and masculinity, but everyone may have fortune; as seen by the following remark, he relies on his abilities rather than chance: *"To hell with luck,"* he thinks, *"I will bring the luck with me"* [6, p. 35].

Even though he has yet to catch a fish, Santiago is determined to complete his quest. With Marlin, he had a dreadful battle. He utilizes all of his might to breathe fish, and he fights to get his great reward. Despite his lack of stamina owing to his advanced age, he remains determined to overcome Marlin. The fish 'Marlin' depicts nature, which we all encounter and confront throughout our lives and the troubles and ordeals that man faces. To succeed in dealing with life's significant challenges, however, a man requires the strength of masculinity and manhood to overcome such conditions. It is tough to face all challenges without masculinity. So far, we've seen that the elderly fisherman does everything it takes to show the people and other fishers in his village that he can be exceptional even at his age. He would never rely on others to do his duty with masculinity and manhood. To complete what we began, most of us need not just strength but also manhood and determination.

Santiago is determined to sail farther into the water in search of a Marlin, so he continues searching for the colossal fish to preserve his fishing job. The concept of determination does not appear out of anything. Different aspects come into play here, such as his personality strength and willingness to achieve when he chooses to make his goal a reality no matter what it takes. The second element is that he removes negative thinking since doing so would leave him stuck in negativity. In contrast, on the other hand, positive thinking motivates him to work hard and continue achieving his objective.

He is a humble guy, despite his might and talent. When things do not go his way, he never complains or points the blame at someone else. Even when he catches the giant fish Marlin, he continually tries to figure out why it did not happen. He blames everyone except himself for not carrying proper fishing equipment and not putting up a good fight against the sharks.

The most important thing about Santiago at this critical juncture is that he behaves appropriately and honestly, with sufficient courage and stamina.

Santiago, who has struggled and faced numerous adversities throughout his life, uses his manhood to transform his destiny. In addition, his vows to his life help him win the respect of his community, and he recognizes that he must choose between being beaten or enduring till his death. One of the most significant factors that help him maintain his standing for a long time while enhancing his masculinity is pride.

Fishing is his sole source of income, and it helps him develop his masculinity and manhood. As a result, he would never consider retreating. Sometimes failure is necessary for man's achievement; it motivates him to persevere in the face of adversity by relying on his strength and determination to finish his objective. It has been noted that man has the strength and masculinity to do his best the following time. If a man fails the first time at anything, he should not give up; instead, he should use his drive to take a step that brings us closer to our objective. Such a description might be attributed to the protagonist of the novella, who relies only on his boat for survival. Santiago is said to have nothing to lose but a tiny boat. Everything is ancient, implying that his excellent characteristics were deeply ingrained, as stated in this excerpt: "A man is not created for failure." "A man may be vanquished, but not destroyed" [6, p. 131].

Although most people may have the ability of an old fisherman, not all of us possess the masculinity, determination, and insistence required to keep him on the right track until the end because remaining confident in the face of constant change and maintaining our self-esteem in the face of criticism is a significant challenge that we face. Turning a negative into good is a significant act. This needs repeated machismo to remain focused on our goal and ready to convert failure into achievement.

Masculinity may be necessary in order to live and flourish in all circumstances. Survival entails living past death. Hence masculinity is primarily based on willpower. Because of the significance of masculinity's inner power, which makes a human being capable of reaching his objective, which may be achieved via the protagonist's spiritual strength, everyone must have diverse perspectives on masculinity. As a result, Santiago's quality is significant in demonstrating the victory of spirituality over materialism.

4. Conclusion

In Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, the paper illustrates that spiritual power is more trustworthy than worldly force. We note that the protagonist uses his spiritual power and will to combat age and frailty. His faith in supernatural powers grants him the ability to fish in the Gulf of Stream. When he returns home, he discovers that the large fish that has accepted the bait is nothing more than a skeleton. Such conduct demonstrates that the protagonist defies materialism since, when he sails into deep seas, he overcomes age and materialistic measures via his willpower.

Furthermore, he returns to his bed dreaming about African lions, indicating his positivism. This indicates that he still has optimism even though he has gained nothing. Finally, the study advises that the novella be applied to other ideas such as the psychoanalytical approach or reader-response theory for future research.

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