

*The Department of English.*

RAJA N.L. KHAN WOMEN'S COLLEGE AUTONOMOUS

GOPE PALACE, MIDNAPORE, W.B.

**Offers**

**COURSE MATERIAL ON**

**The Old Man and the Sea**

For

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**Provided by**

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**The Department of English,**

**Raja N.L. Khan Women's College Autonomous**

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## **ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

### **His life & works (1899-1961)**

Ernest Millar Hemingway was born in a prosperous family on 27.07.1899 in Oak Park, Illinois, USA. He was the second of six kids of Dr. Clarence Hemingway and Grace Hall Hemingway. His father was a Physician and an amateur sportsman and his mother was an opera singer.

Young Ernest was immensely influenced by his father though Grace wanted to raise her son with a genteel education i.e. musical training but Ernest made it clear that the instruments he valued were fishing rods, gun as well as type writer. Although he was not a very popular boy in his school but he demonstrated his ability to write accurately and thus became the editor of his school paper. His School experience was lonely. He actually ran away twice from home during his school years and spent months “on the road” working at a variety of temporary and often laborious job.

Ernest was fond of adventurous life. He was waiting for some chance “winning his spurs” in a situation that would combine glory with danger. The European war seemed to offer such a chance and when America entered the Great Crusade in 1917 Hemingway promptly enlisted his name. He has settled himself as a cub reporter on the “Kansas City Star” After that he volunteered to serve as an ambulance driver on the Italian front, and left his country.

It was a very brief taste indeed and far more bitter than glorious. In the Combat Zone Ernest was hit by a stray shell, at the time he was hit he had been engaged with the activity of handing out chocolates to Italian soldiers.

During his post world war I days in Paris Hemingway was formulating the aesthetic basis of his own works. After returning to US he moved to Toronto, Canada and became a writer of "The Toronto Star" & "Star Weekly" Here he came into contact with several literary men the most important of whom was Sherwood Anderson. After his marriage to Hadley Richardson in 1921 he left North America Once again.

In this time he travelled widely throughout the continent, getting to know and love Spain, Switzerland, Austria & France. He continued his career as a journalist and covered the Great – Turkish war and by the time he was just twenty five and had interviewed the world famous figures as Lloyd George. Mussolini etc.

It was not enough, however, for Ernest to be a celebrity. He was a writer and the job of the writer is to write. Behind all the public clowning and posturing, apart from his various roles as soldier of future or grizzled old warrior Hemingway remained true to the part of his being that was neither public nor posture, the part of himself that alone in the arena, had to carve out a ritual of meaning from blackness. In 1923 he published "Three Stories and Ten Poems":In 1926 he published. "The Torrents of spring". His name was known to millions of readers with the appearance of

“The Sun Also Rises”. With his novel the very phrase “The Lost Generation” became a capsule description for the disillusioned young people who had seen an entire world of ethical, moral and political values shattered in the chaotic butchery of world war I.

His second major work “A Farewell to Arms” appeared in 1929. The book was an immediate critical and financial success , earning the praise of readers everywhere. In 1932 “ Death in the Afternoon” appeared and in 1933 “Winners Take Nothing” was published.

He travelled extensively, especially in Africa and one result of his journeying was “ The Green Hills of Africa” which appeared in 1936. In 1937 with “ To Have and Have Not” Hemingway took the position that a man cannot stand alone, he must have a cause beyond himself for which he can fight and die.

There is no doubt that Hemingway enjoyed his fame and fortune. He was far too fond of good things of life ever to be shy about accepting the rewards of literary celebrity.

His notable creation “The old Man and the Sea” appeared in 1952. After the publication “The Old Man and the Sea” Hemingway travelled once again and in 1954 narrowly escaped death in an airplane crash. In the same year he received the Nobel Prize for literary works. His health was failing. After a period of illness in 1961 he met with death as the victim of a “self inflicted gunshot wound”

## 2. **BRIEF MAPPING OF THE NOVELA**

### *The Old Man & the Sea.*

This is a simple story of a fisherman confronted by a formidable adversary, the Sea, becomes a tale of universal significance where the opponent are Man and Life.

#### 2.1 **Prologue to the Voyage :**

“The Old Man and the Sea” has a cadence and rhythm which is distinctly recognizable as Hemingway ‘s own style . Santiago the old man had fished for eighty four days without success. His companion Manolin, a boy was ordered by his parents to join a luckier boat, was sad at the old man’s failure. Having made some money with the other boat, the boy offered to accompany the old man again. He returned to the old man’s poor shacks. The boy said that he would take the cast net and obtain some bait. Santiago said that he would eat a bowl of rice while the boy has gone, although they both knew that there was no bowl of rice and that the cast net had been sold. The boy returned with a meal and two beers given to him by Martin the owner of the Terrace, while eating Manolin, the boy declared that the old man was the best fisherman , Santiago disagreed. Manolin left with the promise to wake him in the morning.

#### 2.2. **The Voyage Begins.**

As leaving the harbor on the darkness the oldman heard the trembling sound of flying fish. He always thought of the sea as “la

mar” i.e, related to the capricious mood of a women. Before it was light, Santiago had his baits out and was drifting with the current. His preparations were precise, when the sun was two hours higher, he saw the circling of a man-of-war bird. Santiago realized that the bird must have watched fish. So he gently rowed towards it. Flying fish broke the surface of the water, and Santiago concluded that they were being pursued by a dolphin. The dolphin moved out too fast and too far for the old man, but he contented himself with the thought that he might pick up a stray dolphin for bait and that his big fish might be somewhere near. Shore was far off Santiago was happy to see so much plankton, which was a sign of the presence of fish. He saw a small tuna broke the surface. Other appeared, chasing the bait fish, which were trapped in panic between the tuna and bird . A bite tightened the line under Santiago’s foot and he hauled a ten-pound albacore aboard.

### **2.3 GLORY IN OPTIMISM.**

In the first attempt Santiago came to know that hundred fathoms down a marlin ( the extra ordinary fish, its length is 18 ft) was eating from the hook. Twice , the fish nibbled at the bait. The third time, the fish took the bait and Santiago realized that he hooked the fish. He prayed that marlin would swallow the hook so that it would pierce his heart. Santiago could not move the fish which began to pull the boat off slowly towards the north west , Santiago was towed slowly and steadily by the fish which was pulling the boat out to sea even after four hours. During the night Santiago felt that he had never before hooked one that was so strong or behaved

so strangely. He also wished that if he had the boy Manolin, to help him. At day light , suddenly the great fish lurched again and the bird flew off. Santiago was pulled down into the bow and he cut his right hand on the rope, he was annoyed at his own carelessness in injuring his working hand, he resolved to pay attention to his work. He came to know that without help and far from land he had hooked a fish that was bigger than any other he had ever seen or heard of, still his left hand was gripped by cramp. He was determined to kill the fish. As the sun set he ate the raw meat and decided to sleep But his dreams were interrupted by the sudden jumping of the fish, it pulled the old man heavily against the bow. The pulling on the line cut his left hand. Time and again he failed. Finally he was able to turn the fish on its side as it glided close to the boat, quickly the old man lifted his harpoon as high as he could, and drove the iron into the fish.

#### **2.4 VAIN GLORY :**

Santiago lashed the fist securely to the side and prepared to return to the harbor. The skiff sailed well inspite of the attached weight. Towards the end of his battle when he had been feeling so badly it had all seemed like a dream. Now looking at the fish and at his cut hands and by the feel of his back, he realized that it has truly happened. The first sharks struck an hour later, attracted by the spilled blood of the fish. The sharks tore into the dead fish, the old man pierced the attacker's brain with the harpoon. The shark was killed but not before it had torn forty pounds of meat from the great fish. After two hours he saw two more sharks. The struggle with

these sharks proved more difficult than his encounter with the first. The old man killed both of them but not before they had ripped away one quarter of the great fish. The next attacker was a single shovel nose. Santiago killed it but snapped his knife in this process. He knew that the sharks had beaten him, but he decided to fight as long as he had weapons (gaff, oars, the tiller and a shorter club). Two more sharks appeared to attack the fish and they became successful in tearing at its flesh, and the old man was only able to drive them off. Now he became so hopeless to see the great fish as he knew that half of it had been destroyed. By midnight he was fighting again. The sharks appeared in a pack and left only when nothing remained of the great fish. Santiago expressed his feeling.

“Fish that you were I am sorry that I went out too far. I ruined us both”.

## 2.5

### **EPILOGUE**

When everyone was in the bed the old man somehow dragged the boat on shore. After reaching home he took a drink of water and threw himself down to sleep. Manolin came next morning before Santiago was awake and wept at the sight of the fisherman's injured hands, he left to bring coffee. Everyone including the



proprietor of the terrace, tourist, fishermen stated that there had never been such a fish. Manolin's only concern was that they should not bother Santiago. Manolin was crying for him. When he awoke Manolin offered him Coffee and said that inspite of his family's unwillingness he would sail with Santiago. Everyone was surprised at the height of the great fish (18 feet long). At the shack Santiago slept, dreaming about Lions, while the boy sat by him.

### **3. GENERAL ISSUES OF THE NOVELA**

#### **"THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA"**

##### **3.1 Plot Structure**

"The Old Man & the Sea" has a very carefully fashioned plot structure which helps to clarify Hemingway's opinion. The narrative is skillfully portrayed. The elements are not separate and distinct in the story. A critical juxtaposition of three elements – drama, tempo, and motif have been examined in detail here. They blend together to form this sophisticated creation. It is a kind of drama in three acts.

The prologue sets forth its protagonist. In this section another character Manolin is used as a mirror to reflect the potentialities of the old man Santiago.

Careful reading of the second “act” reveals the rhythms which are formed by a subtle weaving of action, medication, and recollection. In this section the main focus is on the hooking of the marlin, the chase, the capture and the attacks of the sharks. The total dramatic effect is created through the ebb and flow of the old man’s strength and resolution.

The last section is composed in a cinematic technique. The setting moves quickly from old man’s shack to harbor. As the brief movement is over we are transported to shack once more. The final “scene” is a tableau where the old man asleep and the boy sitting silently by him. The dramatic quality is vividly illustrated in this narrative.

**Tempo:**

In “The Old Man & the Sea” a rhythm is aptly described by Carlos Baker, a prominent critic of Hemingway as “the constant wavelike operation of bracing and relaxation”. The movement involving the struggle with the marlin, the lurching of the fish, the emergence of the fish, the jumping of the great fish, and the marlin’s attack on the line evoke a tempo out and out.

Motif in structure :

Hemingway uses recurring references to a person or a thing or an idea to indicate the characteristic moments in his narrative. Manolin's role in symbolic terms explicitly states about motif. It makes a clear distinction between Manolin as an image of youth and the lions, thereof, become associated with the energetic, hopeful, confident, qualities of youth. Manolin's great gift to the old man is more than food and other necessities. The boy actually brings the gift of life itself. Manolin is thus more than a little Cuban boy whose presence lends an air of pathos to the figure of Santiago.

### **3.2 Imagery :**

In "The Old man and the Sea" the character or object similar to a possible significances and is described as an image. Santiago is aroused continually by the image of Manolin. The boy is the representation of all the youthful powers that the old man can find within himself. No one can't be external or physical being alone; he is what he is by virtue of his inner qualities. Manolin revives those inner powers. The boy is the image of Santiago's youth. The lions indicate the undying hope and confidence within a man. The image does not die or wane, and thus may also represent the real presence of resources upon which the old man can still draw. In this novel the religious imagery is exhibited through the sufferings of Santiago. His injuries are the reminiscent of the experience of Jesus. Then another imagery is found in the relationship of Santiago and marlin. The fish and he - they are "joined together" until death . He expresses his desire which is strange for a hunter.

The sharks which beat Santiago become an image. They might be thought of as the ancient force of Nemesis.

#### **4. Human Characters of the Novela.**

“The Old Man and the Sea” offers an interesting character that form the unusual texture of the book.

**4.1 Santiago** – Santiago is a protagonist of the novel. He is poverty stricken fisherman. By nature he is simple and straight forward, Physically he is thin and there is a deep wrinkles in his back. His shack is furnished with only three items a bed, a table, and a chair. His shirt has been patched and repatched. He can hardly afford food for himself. Fishing is his only livelihood . He considers fishing as an unpleasant task that he must perform to sustain his existence. Regarding his disposition everything is old except his eyes. His eyes are similar to the colour of deep sea, and they are “Cheerful and undefeated” This feature exhibits the heroic qualities to his portrait. He is full of optimism. Even after accepting his failure he remains undefeated. He possesses courage and resolution in his character. He is a good tutor of Manolin. He knows many tricks . He possesses skill and expertise. He is compassionate. Thus he is not sorrowed by the loss of his catch rather he feels sorrow by the indignity inflicted upon a once noble creature. In this novel the old man is meant to present the definitive portrait of a religious man. His simplicity, his honesty his humility, his skill at his craft, his joy in simple pleasure, his loyalty -- all of these evoke our high

admiration for him. The struggle of this heroic character becomes an epic in dimension.

#### 4.2 **Manolin :-**

The close association between Santiago and Manolin begins when Manolin is just five year of age. In spite of the old man's months of bad luck the bond between them has not been weakened. The boy has not deserted his master willingly Manolin is a caring boy. He always takes care of Santiago . He tends constantly to the old man's needs. When the old man returns form fishing the boy brings him a supper of stew, black beans, rice and fried bananas, which are provided by Martin, the owner of the Terrace. He also obtains sardines for bait. Manolin's youth feeds and revitalizes the old man's age. Though Manolin appears only in the prologue and epilogue to the main story but he is never absent from the narrative . Santiago acknowledges Manolin's gift of food, clothing and bait. They are an acknowledgment of all the strength that Manolin has contributed. His youth has fed the old man's age. His vigour – the splendid confidence and resolution of youth has infused Santiago's body and spirit , warming the fires of his courage and strength.

4.3 Apart from these two characters the other people in the novel stand in the shadows – vague, insubstantial figures who do not take part in the dominant conflict,

**Martin** – Marin is the charitable owner of the Terrace who responds sympathetically to the boy's pleas for the old man.

**4.4. Pedrico** – Pedrico is the fisherman. He is only known by his name. The fact is that he is to get the head of the great marlin.

**4.5 Waiter** – Waiter is the insignificant and less important character at the terrace.

**4.6 Tourist** - Some male and female tourists are there in the epilogue. A woman from the party of tourist stares without comprehension of the spine of the great fish, she tells that she doesn't know that sharks have such a handsome tails.

## **5. Conclusion :**

Simplicity is the key note of Hemingway's work. His heroes are neither callous nor mindless., They possess enormous sensitivity to human dishonesty and universal suffering. His style communicates far more than it overtly states. According to Carlos Baker and Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway considers the world as an arena where the human soul must struggle to face its own morality.

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