

# Rethinking Man and Nature in *The Old Man and The Sea*

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the intricate relationship between man and nature in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* through the lens of deep ecology. It challenges the traditional anthropocentric interpretation of the novella, proposing that the protagonist Santiago's struggle is not merely a tale of human triumph over nature but a journey towards understanding and coexisting with the natural world. By applying the principles of deep ecology, the study reveals how Santiago's evolving relationship with the marlin and other sea elements reflects a broader ecological consciousness. The analysis also draws parallels between Santiago's experience and the Biblical narrative of Jonah, suggesting that Santiago's success is not solely due to his physical endurance but also the cosmic forces that aid him. This paper ultimately rethinks the themes of struggle and victory in the novella, emphasising the need for a harmonious relationship between humanity and the environment.

**Keywords:** Deep Ecology, Ecocriticism, Environmental Consciousness, Man and Nature, Santiago, The Old Man and the Sea.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Regarded as a timeless masterpiece, the novella titled *The Old Man and the Sea* [1] has garnered extensive attention and analysis from literary scholars and a global readership. Ernest Hemingway's seminal work chronicles the enduring trials and battles humanity must confront to persevere in a fiercely competitive realm of hardships. However, for the protagonist, Santiago, a seasoned Cuban fisherman, the ordeal he faces is not solely a battle for existence. Instead, it serves as a means of affirming his sense of masculinity, even if the opinions of others are disregarded. In his essay titled "Confiteor Hominem: Ernest Hemingway's Religion of Man," Joseph Waldmeir expresses admiration for Hemingway's work, asserting that Hemingway has successfully advanced his philosophy of Manhood to the status of a religious belief [2].

Waldmeir's critique of the concept of "Manhood" in the novella can also be viewed as a topic of debate in the current era marked by heightened environmental awareness. The novella *The Old Man and the Sea* is commonly analysed through structural binaries, with the primary dichotomy being the contrast between the man and the wild. The term "wild" in this context encompasses various elements, including the sea, the marlin, the sharks, and even the universe when viewed holistically. At the conclusion of the tale, Santiago, representing the collective weight of humanity, is deemed victorious in his endeavour as he successfully brings the deteriorated remains of the marlin to the shore. The circumstance in which the marlin has been consumed to a significant extent by the sharks, resulting in Santiago returning without any catch, appears to be inconsequential to his achievement.

The above can be seen in the famous quote that says, "A man can be destroyed, but not defeated" (page 103 of [1]). The present study is an effort to look at Santiago's well-praised accomplishment from a different perspective. The methodological framework employed by this study is based on the concept of 'deep ecology.' The primary thesis of this study posits that Santiago's recognition of the equality between humanity and the natural world, rather than asserting human superiority, is the key factor for his achievements. Put differently, Santiago's achievement is not determined by the number of fish he is able to catch; rather, it stems from his profound comprehension of the equitable functioning of the cosmos. This study also aims to elucidate the religious portrayal of Santiago, which is frequently overlaid with the image of Jesus Christ, to dispel any misconceptions. The substitution of the Biblical narrative of Christ's triumph over evil through his resurrection, occurring three days after his crucifixion, is instead supplanted by the Biblical account of Jonah. The analysis of Santiago's short sea voyage aims to identify elements of the Biblical figure and ascertain that his achievement is not solely attributed to his willpower and courage but also to the enabling forces of the universe.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of deep ecology has been seen as an ecological trend in various societies prior to its formalisation as an academic discipline. It might be regarded as a derivative of ecocriticism, a field that examines the interplay between literature and the natural environment. The essay titled "The Shallow, and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary" was postulated in 1973 by Arne Naess, a philosopher from Norway [3]. The author delineates deep ecology as a form of dissent against the anthropocentric paradigms of existence prevalent in European and American societies. In his paper entitled "Deep Ecology," David R. Keller examines the origins and fundamental principles of the deep ecology movement.

The author emphasises Naess's concept by stating, "The idea put forth by Naess suggests that deep ecology should be viewed as an ongoing and fervent call for the advancement of ecosophies, which encompass both foundational non-anthropocentric principles and their various manifestations." Arne Naess has delineated the eight fundamental concepts of deep ecology. Commencing with the intrinsic value that is deserving of reverence in each living entity, this statement further elucidates how the abundance and variety of life forms present on our planet contribute to its overall wholeness and whole. The guidelines additionally emphasise the superfluousness of human action in preserving this diversity. Regrettably, according to Naess, human intervention has disrupted the equilibrium and disrupted the natural balance. The escalating involvement in question necessitates the implementation of deliberate policy reforms within anthropocentric cultures, with the aim of transitioning towards a biocentric perspective. In his scholarly article titled "How Deep is Deep Ecology?", George Bradford presents the argument that the philosophy of deep ecology is founded upon the interconnectedness of all living beings, advocating for equal consideration of all organisms, regardless of their utility to humans or potential harm they may pose [4]. Furthermore, Bradford emphasises the rejection of anthropocentrism, which entails the belief that humans are distinct from, superior to, and hold greater significance than the rest of the natural world.

### 3 ECO CRITICISM

A subset of critical literature is eco-criticism. The primary focus of this research pertains to the correlation between the ecological environment and literature. The development of this phenomenon can be attributed to the growing tension and conflict between humanity and the natural environment. Since the 1970s, several literary researchers have employed literature as a means to foster public awareness regarding the significance and condition of the natural environment. Their aim has been to emphasise the interdependence between humanity and the environment, with particular attention given to the environment and ecology that sustain human life. Ecological literary criticism represents the intuitive manifestation of ecological disaster within the realm of literary analysis. The ongoing advancements in science and technology, coupled with the progressive evolution of society, have led to a steady increase in population.

This, in turn, has exacerbated the energy crisis and brought about a heightened awareness of environmental issues. These pressing concerns pose a significant threat to the survival of humanity, prompting individuals to critically reassess the intricate interplay between mankind and the natural world. Additionally, this also fosters the development and dissemination of ecological literature. The evolution of critical analysis. The inception of eco-criticism can be attributed to the pioneering work of American researcher William Ruckert in 1978 [5]. The introduction of eco-criticism served as a catalyst for the emergence of ecological literary criticism, eco-poetics, and various other literary movements [6]-[12].

During that period, a precise delineation of eco-criticism was absent. The primary objective of ecological literary criticism entails employing literary techniques to raise individuals' consciousness regarding the preservation of the natural environment and ecology. The harmonious and unified relationship between humanity and the natural world is an ideal that has been compromised by mankind's excessive demands and destructive actions toward nature. This has resulted in a severe environmental and ecological crisis upon which humanity relies. Consequently, there is a strong desire among humans to restore the balance and harmony between man and nature. The concept of a unified life.

### 4 DEEP ECOLOGY IN *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA*

The novel titled "*The Old Man and the Sea*" is widely recognised for its anthropocentric qualities, serving as a literary composition that portrays the triumph of humanity over the forces of nature. In this context, the representation of nature is manifested through various elements, such as the sea, flying fish, the warbler, the marlin, the sharks, and even the Sargasso weeds encountered by Santiago during his brief and unforeseen expedition. The act of Santiago's return to the mainland is widely regarded as the pinnacle achievement that individuals attain following their arduous struggle against various opponents, many of which originate from or are connected to the natural world. The author's personal experiences of embarking on daring expeditions serve as evidence against the simplistic interpretation of the character Santiago.

However, while conducting a more thorough analysis of the novel, it becomes evident that it provides a pathway toward a more profound comprehension of its bio-centric essence. Additionally, this would provide a fresh perspective on Santiago's achievement, suggesting that his accomplishment stemmed from factors outside his act of killing the marlin and bringing its skeletal remains to shore. Hemingway characterises Santiago's physicality by attributing to him a profound connection with the water, suggesting that he is an embodiment of the ocean. The protagonist's appearance was predominantly aged, apart from his eyes, which bore a striking resemblance to the colour of the sea. Notably, these eyes exuded a sense of cheerfulness and resilience, remaining undefeated in their demeanour. "Everything about him was old except his eyes, and they were the same colour as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated" (page 6 of [1]).

Attributes of being "cheerful" and "undefeated" might be interpreted as characteristics bestowed upon Santiago by the sea. Moreover, Santiago's visions are depicted as follows: "He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach. They played like young cats in the dusk, and he loved them as he loved the boy" (page 22 of [1]). The author describes the characters' behaviour as like that of youthful felines during twilight and expresses the protagonist's affection for them in a manner akin to his affection for the young male individual. The dreams experienced by Santiago throughout his advanced years exhibit a notable divergence from the turbulent dreams he encountered during his childhood.

The individuals have an increased inclination towards tranquillity and quietude, as exemplified by the serene shorelines that he mentally envisioned. The presence of lions, who roam without constraint within his dreams, symbolises the state of liberation and tranquillity that he achieves after a turbulent adolescence characterised by triumph, bloodshed, and aggressive accomplishments in maritime endeavours. The ultimate sanctuary that he envisages is that of the natural world, whereby he perceives himself as a magnificent component. The findings presented in this context illustrate the inherent connectivity between human beings and the natural world. The friendship and sympathy that Santiago feels for the beings of the sea is described as follows:

He was very fond of flying fish as they were his principal friends in the ocean. He was sorry for the birds, especially the small delicate dark terns that were always flying and looking and almost never finding, and he thought, ‘the birds have a harder life than we do except for the robber birds and the heavy, strong ones. Why did they make the birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel?’ (page 26 of [1])

Santiago's maritime experience can be enhanced through his observations of the marine organisms he encounters within and in the vicinity of the seawater. As an illustration, while situated in the marine environment, the individual in question engages in the act of seeing a man-of-war bird engaged in circular flight patterns, so inferring the proximity of dolphins in the vicinity. The ocean and its inhabitants serve as Santiago's instructors and companions, offering guidance in navigating challenging circumstances and assisting him in securing his catch. The sea itself is regarded as the most prominent figure among his educators. Santiago metaphorically perceives the sea as an embodiment of the cosmos, as he consistently refers to it as "la mar," a term of endearment in Spanish. The elderly gentleman consistently saw her with feminine qualities, perceiving her as a being capable of bestowing or withholding significant favours. Consequently, any instances of her engaging in unconventional or immoral behaviour were attributed to her inability to resist such actions.

The novel clearly portrays the companionship provided by nature to its people and the resulting bonds that are formed among them. In the state of alone experienced by the elderly gentleman while navigating the vast expanse of the ocean, he discovers solace and camaraderie through the presence of a warbler that alights upon his small boat. Santiago engages in an ongoing conversation with the bird till it recommences its aerial journey. The protagonist of the story also strives to establish companionship with the flying fish and dolphins while simultaneously engaging in astute observations of the seaweed as a means of passing the time, all while the fish persistently pulls the skiff towards its intended destination. However, an exemplary illustration of camaraderie may be observed in the relationship between Santiago and the marlin. In the absence of Manolin, Santiago finds companionship in the fish. Despite being perceived as adversaries, their paths converge due to prevailing circumstances. Despite their lack of visual contact, there exists a strong emotional connection between them. The novel's central focus revolves around an atypical companionship, which serves to elucidate the profound ecological themes that may be discerned within its narrative. To fully grasp the extent of this relationship, a detailed depiction of the marlin is necessary. “The marlin who gets hooked in Santiago’s line is as much a protagonist as Santiago is. The fish is huge in size; “he is two feet longer than the skiff” (page 61 of [1]).

The text also includes a detailed depiction of the marlin's unwavering will and resilience in pulling the skiff towards its intended destination, steadfastly refusing to succumb to the trap for a duration of three complete days. The extended duration shown in the narrative fosters a profound emotional bond between the two central characters, Santiago and the marlin. The literary work titled "*The Old Man and the Sea*" can be interpreted as a novel that explores the theme of personal growth and development. This process of transformation is depicted in a progressive manner throughout the narrative, with the primary characters responsible for driving this transition being Santiago, the protagonist, and the marlin, a significant presence in the story. At the outset, Santiago is depicted as an elderly individual who is economically disadvantaged, lacking both sustenance and financial resources necessary for his subsistence. The individual in question had endured a period of eighty-four consecutive days without successfully capturing any aquatic organisms, so earning the designation of *salao*, a term denoting misfortune or ill luck.

Therefore, he has ascribed the prerogative to regard the marlin, which becomes ensnared in his fishing line, as his adversary. However, over time, Santiago establishes a sense of kinship with the marlin, as they find themselves isolated in the vast ocean for a duration of three days without encountering any other individuals. Santiago's desire for companionship serves as a vital source of sustenance and emotional well-being, a need that he ultimately fulfils through his encounter with the marlin. One interpretation of Santiago's relationship with the marlin is that it serves as a symbolic substitute for Manolin, the young kid whom he deeply longs for during his arduous voyage.

The relationship between Santiago and the marlin may be observed to experience three distinct levels of change. Initially, they transition from being adversaries to developing a friendship. Subsequently, this friendship evolves into a deep bond akin to that of brothers. Finally, the relationship reaches its pinnacle as Santiago sees himself reflected in the marlin, symbolising a profound connection with his own inner self. In the initial stage, Santiago starts to converse with Marlin only to keep him entertained. This is a normal human act of tempting the Marlin to get caught on the hook. “Come on, the old man said aloud. “make another turn. Just smell them. Aren’t they lovely? Eat them now, and then there is the tuna. Hard and cold and lovely. Don’t be shy, fish, eat them” (page 39 of [1]). The utilisation of these terms as a method of enticing the fish undergoes a transformation into authentic apprehension as the marlin becomes ensnared and commences to pull the skiff in a divergent trajectory.

The initial phase of friendship begins to form on the inaugural day. The individual communicates to the warbler, perched on his skiff, that he was accompanied by a companion, specifically the marlin. "Fish, he said softly, aloud, I'll stay with you until I'm dead'. He'll stay with me too, the old man thought, and he waited for it to be light" (page 50 of [1]). The sentiment of sympathy experienced by Santiago towards the marlin gradually evolves into a state of empathy. Santiago's assumption that the hooked fish is a marlin is based on his extensive knowledge of the water.

Upon recognising the insurmountable task of hauling the marlin onto his skiff, the protagonist gradually experiences a burgeoning sense of empathy towards the animal. The individual envisions the marlin as possessing substantial dimensions and formidable physical prowess. Santiago briefly catches a glimpse of the marlin as it momentarily breaches the surface. Santiago's perseverance and determination are sustained by his intellectual acumen as the sole driving factor, preventing him from succumbing to discouragement and motivating him to persist in his endeavours. "I wish I was the fish, he thought, with everything he has against only my will and my intelligence (page 62 of [1]). However, the protagonist eventually comes to the realisation that the fish's ability to endure the hardships of life with wisdom and dignity renders it more deserving of admiration than most human beings. "But are they worthy to eat them? No, of course not. There is no one worthy of eating him from the manner of his behaviour and his great dignity (page 74 of [1]). In this instance, a move from the anthropocentric attitude to the biocentric attitude can be viewed.

Arne Naess places significant emphasis on the acceptance and empathy that every living entity should possess towards its counterparts, as highlighted in his principles of deep ecology. The comprehension of this concept serves as a defining characteristic of the camaraderie that blossoms between Santiago and the marlin. Santiago, at one point, says, "I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends" (page 52 of [1]). Further, Santiago befriends a small warbler who seeks to rest in his boat. He tells him, "Take a good rest, small bird, then go in and take your chance like any man or bird or fish" (page 53 of [1]). He further asks the bird to take its leisure time before it begins its flight and apologises for not taking good care of it during its stay. "Stay at my house if you like, bird. I am sorry I cannot hoist the sail and take you in with the small breeze that is rising. But I am with a friend" (page 53 of [1]). The friend that he refers to here is Marlin. Thus, the gradual relationship that blooms between Marlin and Santiago transforms from enmity to kinhood.

From friendship, Santiago takes another step further in understanding Marlin. He develops this thought while he has food to quench his hunger. While Santiago is hungry and has food, he immediately thinks of Marlin and wishes that he could feed him since he considers him his own brother. Later, when one of Santiago's hands cramps, he thinks to himself: "There are three things that are brothers: the fish and my two hands" (page 62 of [1]). When instances of tiredness and failure appear, he gives confidence to himself, assuring that he will kill the fish for sure "in all its greatness and glory" (page 64 of [1]). He further adds to this, "Although it is unjust" (page 64 of [1]). The realisation that Santiago attains serves as a pivotal moment throughout the novella, as it evokes a sense of fraternity within him towards a being that was originally perceived as his adversary. When Santiago recounts his past experience, he thinks, "Man is not much besides the great birds and beasts" (page 66 of [1]). It puts him in a hard situation in his final attempt to kill the fish.

You are killing me, fish, the old man thought. But you have a right to. Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or nobler thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who. (page 92 of [1])

Not long after killing the fish, he acknowledges to himself that he killed his sibling and is now forced to perform slave labour. Upon successfully bringing the fish near the small boat, the protagonist contemplates his need to physically engage with and experience the marlin. The motivation behind his desire to physically sense the fish is not driven by his intention to measure its weight. "I think I felt his heart when I pushed on the harpoon shaft the second time" (page 95 of [1]). The depth of the relationship between the old man and the fish can be seen in the above lines. The relationship becomes so intense that he feels as if he has murdered his own brother. He constantly feels guilty about killing the fish. "He did not like to look at the fish anymore since he had been mutilated. When the fish had been hit, it was as though he himself were hit" (page 103 of [1]). By the end of the novel, Santiago feels one with the fish.

In his article titled "Beyond Anthropocentrism," John Seed, a deep ecologist, writes: "I'm protecting the rainforest" develops into "I'm part of the rainforest protecting myself [13]. I am that part of the rainforest, and I recently emerged into thinking." What a relief, then! The thousands of years of imagined separation are over, and we begin to recall our true nature. That is, the change is a spiritual one, thinking like a mountain, sometimes referred to as "deep ecology."

Seed's insight regarding the phenomenon of profound ecological transformation occurring within an individual is exemplified in the life of Santiago. The marlin, who initially served as his adversary and intended prey, undergoes a gradual transformation, becoming a comrade and, subsequently, a brother, ultimately reflecting on the protagonist himself. The initial state of animosity gradually evolves into a state of sympathy, which then progresses into a state of empathy, resulting in a complete change. Santiago experiences a profound sense of remorse after his act of killing the fish. The individual contemplates the potential moral transgression of having taken the life of the marlin. The story consistently engages with the concept of sin, which remains a prominent theme in Santiago's mind. The individual engages in introspection and attempts to achieve emotional equilibrium by drawing upon their personal philosophy. "He thought much, and he kept on thinking about sin. You did not kill the fish only to keep it alive and to sell for food, he thought. You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman. You loved him when he was alive, and you loved him after. If you love him, it is not a sin to kill him. Or is it more?" (page 105 of [1]).



Through a subtle critique of traditional religious beliefs, Hemingway presents Santiago as rejecting the concept of sin and instead embracing the inherent principles of existence. “Do not think about sin. It is much too late for that, and there are paid to do it. You were born to be a fisherman, and the fish was born to be a fish” (page 105 of [1]). In the end, Santiago consoles him, saying that it was self-defense that he killed the fish and “everything kills everything else in some way” (page 106 of [1]).

Santiago finds it necessary to engage in significant self-consolation to rationalise his decision to kill the fish. This form of remorse is improbable, as is the case with other fishermen who possess an anthropocentric worldview and lack awareness. The narrative of Santiago's encounter with the marlin in the water serves as a catalyst for the development of a profound ecological awareness within him, reflecting a deep grasp of the natural world.

This study endeavour also aims to redefine certain Biblical allusions that have gained popularity within the narrative, drawing inspiration from the principles of deep ecology. The novel titled “*The Old Man and the Sea*” has garnered significant attention and analysis within the realm of theological criticism. Santiago has frequently been compared to Jesus Christ, as explored by Sandamali K. P. S. in her scholarly paper entitled “Symbolism in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*” (page 128 of [1]). The three-day maritime expedition undertaken by Santiago is metaphorically likened to the temporal interval spanning from the crucifixion of Christ to his subsequent resurrection. The wounds and tribulations experienced by the individual are metaphorically juxtaposed with the sacred wounds of Christ. While it is true that the narrative of Christ does exhibit a corresponding parallel in Santiago, it is worth noting that there exists another Biblical figure who shares a similar storyline with him.

Jonah, a prominent figure in the Book of Jonah within the Old Testament, assumes a significant role within the given narrative. Jonah is divinely commissioned by God to embark upon a mission to Nineveh with the purpose of delivering a message of repentance to its inhabitants. Then, the protagonist opts to embark on a vessel bound for Tarshish, which then encounters inclement weather conditions, leading to Jonah being engulfed by a colossal aquatic creature. After a span of three days, he is regurgitated onto the coastline of Nineveh, where he resumes his previously designated duty. In the literary work, Santiago experiences a tempestuous event similar to Jonah's vessel, with the sole distinction being in their respective motivations.

The tale demonstrates Santiago's determination and fortitude in the pursuit of his objective. However, drawing a parallel with the story of Jonah leads us to surmise that it is not alone his display of masculine qualities but also the intricate workings of the cosmos that contribute to the successful attainment of his objective. In the absence of any other individual, Santiago finds solace in the companionship of the marlin, with the additional presence of the warbler who initially provided him company. Jonah demonstrates resilience and adaptability inside the confines of the fish, while Santiago also exhibits similar qualities in his coexistence with it. The temporal interval characterised by the presence of the fish serves as a phase of intellectual and spiritual awakening for both Jonah and Santiago. Jonah embarks upon his unresolved quest, while Santiago comes to the realisation that he remains a proficient fisherman, devoid of the misfortune associated with being *salao* (unlucky).

## 5 RETHINKING MAN AND NATURE

The topic of combat and triumph can be regarded as significant in Ernest Hemingway's novel, “*The Old Man and the Sea*.” In Ernest Hemingway's novel “*The Old Man and the Sea*,” the author extensively contemplates the intricate connection between humanity and the natural world. Ecological literary criticism ought to undertake a reassessment of the intricate interplay between humanity and the natural world, with particular emphasis on reevaluating the relentless subjugation of nature by civilisation and offering a critical analysis of this prevailing ideology. Indeed, it is evident that the domination of nature is inherently transient and confined to a specific extent. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the potential of nature remains boundless. Ecocriticism posits that human beings are inherently interconnected with nature, functioning as integral components within the natural ecosystem.

Accordingly, proponents of this perspective advocate for the integration of people into the ecological framework rather than adopting an adversarial or exploitative stance towards nature. In Ernest Hemingway's novel “*The Old Man and the Sea*,” the marlin serves as a distinct representation of nature, while the protagonist, Santiago, valiantly struggles to endure the challenges he faces in his pursuit of survival. During combat, Santiago consistently engages in a competitive dynamic with the formidable marlin, constantly evaluating himself against the marlin across several dimensions within his inner consciousness. This analysis entails a comparative examination of the characteristics and dynamics of human beings in relation to the natural world. From Santiago's perspective, he possesses a distinct edge over the formidable marlin in terms of possessing weapons and superior cognitive abilities. Conversely, the marlin holds an advantage in terms of its inherent nobility and heightened capabilities.

Santiago posits that his ability to overcome the formidable marlin is solely attributed to his possession of weaponry. The author, Hemingway's portrayal, can be interpreted as a rejection of humanity's perceived dominance over the sea and nature, so highlighting the ironic character of human folly. When an individual devoid of weaponry is situated within a natural environment, their capacity to engage in actions and potentially prevail against non-human organisms may be severely limited. The attainment of victory by dependence on weaponry might be regarded as a contrived triumph. The orchestrated triumph has engendered human avarice and will inevitably result in calamity for humanity. The hubris and self-assured domination of the natural world by humanity will surely incur retribution from nature. The representation of the shark inside the literary work serves as a symbol for the concept of revenge, ultimately leading to the triumph of the shark over Santiago. Santiago exhibited a multitude of paradoxes and complexities as he engaged in a struggle with the sharks.

He engaged in introspection over his acts and conveyed a distinct feeling of remorse and culpability. Despite the ultimate demise of the shark at the hands of Santiago, the scepticism and introspection surrounding this event serve as a poignant critique of humanity's relentless domination over the natural world. The shark was terminated by the inhabitants of Santiago; however, the prestigious marlin, which served as a symbol of achievement for Santiago, was thereafter consumed by the sharks. All that remained was a skeletal structure of a fish. The conflict between human beings and the natural environment has the potential to inflict harm upon both parties involved. In the concluding section of the literary work, the character Santiago is depicted as dragging a fish skeleton of negligible value, with the intention of relying on the natural ebb and flow of the tide to carry it away. The civilisation established by humanity via the subjugation of the natural world will ultimately unveil humanity's lack of wisdom and knowledge, potentially leading to self-destruction. Ever since the advent of industrial society, human civilisation has experienced significant advancements and progress.

The exponential growth in productivity has led to the development of societal ideals that prioritise human self-interest, resulting in a disregard for the power of nature and a focus on maximising human interests. Inherently, indiscriminately infringe upon the rights of other beings. While engaging in this behaviour may provide short-term advantages for individuals, it also carries significant potential risks and hazards. However, "*The Old Man and the Sea*" also highlights the importance of recognising the value of human beings once they have gained a spiritual victory over nature, which poses a challenge to maintaining a constant spiritual ecology. Ecological values prioritise the cultivation of a deep appreciation for nature, fostering a harmonious coexistence with the natural world, and relinquishing the relentless chase of material possessions.

Nevertheless, "*The Old Man and the Sea*" continues to exhibit anthropocentric values. Santiago has a complex emotional state characterised by a sense of shame regarding his actions of killing marlins and sharks, juxtaposed with a simultaneous manifestation of pride and confidence. The author endeavoured to advocate for the occupation of fishing in Santiago, asserting that it is a prominent career in the region. To establish a sense of self-value, it is imperative for the individual to successfully capture marlins and eliminate the sharks that pose as rivals in the pursuit of the coveted trophy. San Diego can achieve spiritual victory solely through this approach.

However, the attainment of such spiritual triumph by humans is bound to have detrimental consequences on the environment, potentially escalating to a level that becomes challenging to manage. When human activities surpass the environmental capacity, the consequences entail environmental pollution, resource depletion, greenhouse effect, reduction of biodiversity, and Ozone depletion, among others. These outcomes pose a threat to the material civilisation that humanity has diligently constructed. Like a predatory shark voraciously consuming a marlin that was fervently captured by the inhabitants of San Diego.

According to Engels, whenever humanity achieves dominance over the natural world, nature will inevitably retaliate. Santiago ultimately succumbed to the sharks following a grueling two-day and two-night struggle against the marlins, during which he emerged victorious over the marlins. Santiago ascribed this failure to his considerable distance from the shore, so exemplifying the notion that in comparison to the formidable forces of nature, all species inside the natural realm are equally modest and insignificant. From an ecological literary criticism standpoint, the portrayal of the man-nature relationship in "*The Old Man and the Sea*" highlights the old fisherman Santiago's courage and determination in venturing into deep-sea fishing as a manifestation of human pride in overcoming the forces of nature.

The old fisherman, through his arduous encounters with large marlins and sharks, became a figure of ambitious pursuit, characterised by his weariness and physical wounds. The marlin and the shark in the story can be interpreted as symbols representing the expanding energy crisis and the escalating environmental issues resulting from mankind's relentless exploitation of nature. The triumph of the old fisherman over the marlin signifies human achievement in conquering nature, while his subsequent defeat by the shark symbolises the failures encountered in this endeavour. Upon encountering failure, the elderly fisherman underwent a profound realisation that humans ought to coexist harmoniously with the natural world. Consequently, he ultimately made the decision to return to his place of origin. The ecological perspective of the elderly fisherman continues to hold significant value and relevance in contemporary society.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The concept of deep ecology places significant emphasis on recognising and comprehending the intrinsic value that is inherent within every living entity. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of fostering mutual comprehension and the coexistence of respective capabilities. The central discovery of the deep ecological interpretation of the novel is Santiago's evolving relationship with the marlin, which transitions from one of hostility to friendship, then to a sense of kinship, and ultimately leads to a profound understanding of his own identity. In addition, Santiago is influenced by supporting characters such as the warbler and the sea, who prompt numerous realizations within him. The individual gradually comprehends that even when confronted with solitude amidst the complexities of existence (symbolized by the sea), cosmic forces exist that aid in their survival and eventual triumph.

Rather than seeking companionship from other humans, the individual finds solace and enlightenment in the natural world and its creatures, which propel them towards a transformative journey where they can transcend their feelings of shame. Moreover, in the instances of Jonah and Santiago, nature demonstrates its capacity to impart knowledge through its maritime encounters. The sea, as do the fish they encounter, assumes the role of an educator. Firstly, the vehicle through which God's astonishing majesty is unveiled is evident. On the other hand, the companion serves as a constant source of support in the face of difficulties. Both Jonah and Santiago achieve success following their respective experiences.

One individual is imbued with the authority and capability to continue pursuing their designated objective, while the other experiences a revitalized cognizance of their capacity to endure and achieve their desired outcomes. Ecological components are advantageous catalysts that facilitate transformative experiences for individuals engaged in their endeavors. Hence, it may be said that *The Old Man and the Sea* bears a resemblance to the Book of Jonah in terms of the influence of ecological components, thereby attributing both literary works to possessing profound ecological implications.

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#### ETHICS STATEMENT

This study did not involve any human or animal subjects and, therefore, did not require ethical approval.

#### STATEMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to this study.

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