

# Heldt 1

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Heldt 1 Benjamin R. Heldt Mr. Bender English 10000 8 May 2012 The Sea

After reading *The Old Man and the Sea*, written by Ernest Hemingway, I found the most interesting part of the book to be the sea itself. One can almost consider the sea another character, due to the vital role it plays in the short novella. The sea provides a glimpse at Santiago's knowledge and experience that he has acquired throughout the course of his life. As well as the sea is used as a metaphor to the literary community, if one looks at it this way. I also find its role polarized since it is both a provider and a threat at the same time. This eventually teaches a good life-lesson to the readers. Throughout the story, Santiago and Manolin are on the sea often. This setting allows for Santiago to present his wisdom and experience to Manolin, and the readers. He has knowledge of the current " He was rowing steadily and it was no effort for him since he kept well within his speed and the surface of the ocean was flat except for the occasional swirls of the current. He was letting the current do a third of the work as it started to be light he saw he was already Heldt 2 further out than had hoped to be at this hour. " (Hemingway, 10), the depth of fish inhabitants " This time it was a tentative pull, not solid nor heavy, and he knew exactly what it was. One hundred fathoms down a marlin was eating the sardines that covered the point and the shank of the hook where the hand-forged hook projected from the head of the small tuna. " (Hemingway, 14-15), and how each of these affects his situation on the sea. By allowing this the readers can imagine the experience and wisdom of the old man. I find the role of the sea to be a metaphor of the literary community. There are two types of fish that come from the sea: the marlin and the sharks. The marlin is Santiago's brother; the shark is his

enemy. If one reads the book from a metaphorical standpoint; the marlin then is the book itself, and the sharks are literary critics who pick apart the artist's work. The sea, therefore, is the entire literary community, an artistic journey in which an author must venture far out, hook a great fish, only to have it eaten away. Comparing this to the real world, an author must try and write a piece unlike any others, begin and complete the work in his/her eyes to be a great novel, only to have it torn apart by critics. The sea is the natural element of Santiago, since he has been a fisherman all his life. However, its role is contradictory since it is both a provider and a threat at the same time. It provides every fisherman, including Santiago with fish, but at the same time it is full of sharks. Santiago must battle against the elements of nature intrinsic with the sea (storms, extreme heat, attacks from sharks, hunger and thirst) to catch the great marlin. It is a metaphor for Santiago's journey. The only way he can hook his great fish is to venture far out, to risk not being able to return. He does so, hooks the fish, but suffers on the way back. The way the novella eventually turns out shows an extremely important life lesson. In order to achieve goals, one must journey far beyond his comfort zone and risk many things. Not everything works out according to plan and failure is inevitable, but throughout all else, you should have the contention that you did succeed by going out of your comfort zone and risking things most important to you. Without risking things, one never really lives. In conclusion, I believe the sea served an absolutely vital role in the novella, *The Old Man and the Sea*. It guided readers to the realization of Santiago's brilliance through his actions on the Ocean. The sea metaphorically describes the literary community and how challenging it can

be to accomplish something so great only to have it wasted before anyone can see what you have achieved. Finally, it cast a very antithetical role by combining victory and risk and relating it to the water, which teaches a good lesson to readers. To fulfill any of your intents in this life, you will be forced to risk things that you might lose. Heldt 4 Works Cited Hemingway, Ernest. The Old Man and the Sea. MacMillan. 1952. New York, New York: MacMillan Publishing