

Depiction of the
theme of death and
its literary analysis in
the snows of
kiliman...



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The *Snows of Kilimanjaro*, a short story by Hemingway, expresses an incredibly solemn, yet pensive theme of death and regret. The main character of the story, a man named Harry, develops an infection after venturing into Africa and his health decreases from there. As the man lay dying, he begins to reflect upon his life, his past decisions, and everything he did not yet accomplish. Hemingway seems to utilize death, in this piece, by representing how it can enhance our aspirations for greatness, mostly because it emphasizes our mortality and indicates how significant it is to accomplish our goals while we can. The author portrays this theme through numerous symbolic references to death, such as the mentioning of “buzzards” and “vultures.” He further exemplifies his message through setting, which plays a very significant role in the story. Finally, Hemingway’s representation of marital conflict seems to express Harry’s dissatisfaction with his own life. In Hemingway’s work, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, death is used to emphasize the brevity of life and the significance of accomplishment through the use of clever symbolism, allegorical setting, and domestic conflict.

One of the most powerful literary elements Hemingway utilizes is his constant allusions to death. In the beginning of the story, Harry notices some vultures and hyenas circling his encampment. He mentions the breaking down of his truck, the frozen carcass of a leopard, and the deathly odor in which he is emanating. All of these symbols relate to the decay of Harry’s life and writing career. Even his infection reinforces this conveyance of putrefaction. Hemingway also uses these symbols of waste to further suggest the life that Harry took for granted, seeming to make the reader

more aware of how short life is and how one should achieve what they can, while they can. Near the end of the story, Harry feels death approaching him, seeming to be a creature creeping closer and closer to him. This emphasizes the idea that death seems to loom like a shadow and awaits its victim. The personification here again exemplifies Hemingway's message, as death could strike at any moment, ending anyone's life and thus their pursuits of greatness. The story definitely represents this point, " It moved up closer to him still and now he could not speak to it, and when it saw he could not speak it came a little closer, and now he tried to send it away without speaking, but it moved in on him so its weight was all upon his chest, and while it crouched there and he could not move or speak..." (page 14).

A significant aspect of literature used in this story is setting. Hemingway sets the beginning of the plot in a small camp in Africa. The main character obtains and further develops his infection here. However, the author describes this location as "...a pleasant camp under big trees against a hill, with good water, and close by, a nearly dry water hole where sand grouse flighted in the mornings." (page 2). Despite the location's aesthetic attributes, there seemed to be multiple references to death, possibly suggesting that death awaits one who lives a wasted—however luxurious—life. As Harry dies at the end of the piece, he dreams of being rescued and flown to Mount Kilimanjaro, which can be translated to the " house of God." Using this mountain as the end setting for the story, in Harry's dream, Hemingway draws a religious aspect into the piece. Harry's fictional rescue and travel to the " house of God" symbolizes his migration from this life to Heaven, or the " next life." This is an obvious allusion,

especially because of Hemingway describing the mountain, "...as wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun, was the square top of Kilimanjaro. And then he knew that there was where he was going." (page 15).

Harry's dissatisfaction with his life seems to be revealed through his quarreling with his wife. He eventually understands that he wasted his life, and is releasing his anger by insulting Helen. In a CliffNotes article, this point is brought up, " As they wait for a rescue plane from Nairobi that he knows won't arrive on time, Harry spends his time drinking and insulting Helen. Harry reviews his life, realizing that he wasted his talent through procrastination and luxury from a marriage to a wealthy woman that he doesn't love." Through this conflict, Hemingway seems to suggest that most people realize their mistakes and ponder about all the things that they never accomplished as they die, unfortunately. So, the marital conflict indicated in this story illustrates Harry's discontent.

Ernest Hemingway's short story, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, represents the death of a man and his writing career. Throughout the work, the man reflects upon the many achievements he never attained. This reinforces a theme of regret and the idea that once one realizes and acknowledges our mortality, we become more aware of our aspirations and the importance of reaching them. Hemingway conveys this deeply contemplative message through his allegorical depiction of death—for instance, the reference to vultures and hyenas. The author also utilizes setting to portray the man's death, as " kilimanjaro" literally translates to " house of God." Hemingway's portrayal of conflict between Harry and his wife illustrates Harry's vexations and regrets. <https://assignbuster.com/depiction-of-the-theme-of-death-and-its-literary-analysis-in-the-snows-of-kilimanjaro/>

Ultimately, it can be concluded that Ernest Hemingway's piece, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, renders death as a reminder of the transience of life and the importance of achieving one's dreams and goals. a