

# The old man and the sea research paper



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This paper delves into the concept of the story “ The Old Man and the Sea” being connected to man’s fight against old age and time.

When examining the story “ The Old Man and the Sea” by Ernest Hemingway, readers would be hard pressed to find a single theme that can be considered as the main point of the novel. For example, it can be stated that the novel delves into the concept of the desire for acceptance as exemplified by the character of Santiago who was a Spaniard trying to integrate himself into the local culture of Cuba (Hemingway, 1952).

On the other end of the spectrum it could also be stated that the novel itself delves into the philosophical and the metaphysical as exemplified by the scenes wherein Santiago considered the marlin as a brother or when he delved into a distinct introspection about his life and how he got to where he was.

It can also be stated that the novel itself has distinct religious overtones as evidenced by Santiago’s reference to the crucifixion in the scene where the sharks came to eat the body of the marlin. Yet, despite the sheer amount of possible references, it is the belief of the reader that this novel delves into the way in which the concept of man fights against the inevitable passage of time.

When examining the novel there are several pivotal scenes that exemplify the concept of man fight against time, these are:

- a.) Santiago’s fight with the Marlin
- b.) His desire to end his unlucky streak

c.) His stubbornness to simply not cut the line

d.) Refusing to show his illness to Manolin.

The events can be considered as character traits that many among the elderly possess wherein they attempt to fight against time. For example the stubbornness of Santiago to not cut the line is the same type of stubbornness seen by many of those with advanced ages wherein they refuse to give up certain activities despite the health risk involved. Refusing to show signs of illness is also a trait shared by Santiago and the elderly as well as the desire to end “ their unlucky streaks” by accomplishing new activities.

What must be understood is that while the age of Santiago is not outright stated, it can be seen within the novel that he has advanced considerably in age. The fact that he has not been able to catch fish is more likely due to his advanced age hampering his capabilities rather than through bad luck. It is based on this that his desire to end his unlucky streak is actually his desire to actively pursue activities that his advanced age would otherwise not permit.

Thus, Santiago’s fight against the marlin is actually symbolic of how the some people fight against the passage of time. His stubbornness, determination and unwillingness to give up are all aspects shared by people in similar positions. This can be seen right till the end wherein Santiago refused to let Manolin know of his illness. In the end it can be assumed that Santiago, like all others before him, lost his battle with time and died, stubborn till the end.

Overall, it can be stated that this story was one that delved into the concept of man and time and how people stubbornly refuse to give in to the passage of time till the bitter end.

Hemingway, E. (1952). *The old man and the sea*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.