

Lecture 15

The symbolic significance of the fight against the sharks

The Old man tied the fish alongside the boat and set sail for home. The Old Man saw a shark coming towards him. It was Mako shark. It had teeth like a man's fingers. When they were clung together like claws. They were as long as the gingers of the Old Man. The shark began to cut off the meat from the body of the big fish. The Old Man hit the brain of the shark with his harpoon. The shark was fatally wounded. There was no life in the eye of the shark. The shark took about forty pounds of the meat of the big fish. He had sailed for two hours and rested in the back part of the boat. He saw two sharks coming towards hi. He watched the sharks coming. They were detestable sharks. He drove the knife again ii1C0 the spinal cord of one of the sharks. The sharks swallowed the best part of the fish and it died soon.

Now the other shark began to shake the boat. He was eating the big fish. The Old Man thrust the knife into his hide. It wounded his hands and shoulders. The Old Man stabbed him in his left eyes. The shark would not admit his fault. The Old Man drove the knife between the spinal cord and brain of the shark. It also took one-fourth of the best meat of his big fish, before he died.

Then another shark came. His rose was like a shovel. He came with his mouth wide open. The Old Man left him with the fish. He drove the knife of the oar down into shark's brain.

At midnight, the sharks came in a pack and attacked the fish. The sharks threw themselves on the fish. He struck them on their head with his club. One of the sharks seized the club and it was gone. The Old Man pulled the tiller from the rudder and beat the sharks with it. The sharks tore off the pieces of meat of the big fish. The tiller too was gone. The man stood defeated. He let

the sharks eat the fish. There was left nothing of the fish except the skeleton. He thought only of steering the boat.

The importance of Manolin (the boy) in The Old Man and The Sea

On the very first page we introduce the character of Manolin. This boy is the pupil of Santiago and has been learning the 'Tricks' of fishing from him. When Santiago fails in catching any fish, he is driven away by his parents. So Manolin joining other fishermen to join other fishermen to catch a fish. The boy is sad to part with the old man. The boy is emotionally attached to old man because " the old man had taught the boy to fish and the boy loved him". The old man is a hero for the boy so he is devoted to him. He helps him and serves him like a son. He offers the old man a beer, brings sardines and fresh baits for the old man.

The boy has a great love for old man. He thinks him the best fisherman. He takes care of his needs every time. Manolin's love for Santiago natural and spontaneous. He has deep personal sense for him. He talks to Santiago lovingly in spite of the age difference. Manolin is very careful for the service of Santiago. He looks after his shack. Each morning, he waits for his returning. He serves coffee to old man when he returns from the fishing. He always consoles the old man in his desperation and tells that " now we fish together again". The boy is an important character of this novel, though he does not play an active part in the adventure of the old man. In fact, this character has been drawn to the atmosphere of the story. He fulfills a vital emotional need and sympathy. The old man misses him very much throughout the story. Santiago considers the boy as a source of comfort and help.

The boy symbolizes the old man's youthful strength. He is the constant reminder of youth age, courage and bravery for the old man. He becomes a source of inspiration for the old man. He admits " the boy keeps me alive.

He has a strong faith in the old man. He hasn't materialistic approach. He wants to stay with old man despite the fact that he thought to be 'solao'. He values human relationship above materialism. Manolin is an idealist like Santiago. He has developed his relationship with Santiago without material purpose. Morality and devotion is prominent in his character. His belief in love, loyalty and respect is very deep. Manolin is very respectful to his parents and also to the old man.