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Time and Focalization in The Old Man and the Sea: The Structural Study of the Narrative in the Novel

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Abstract
This research paper examines the correlation between temporality and focalization in Ernest Hemingway's work "The Old Man and the Sea". The objective of the study is to examine the narrative framework of the novel, namely its utilization of time and focalization, and ascertain the impact of these aspects on the overall meaning and relevance of the work. The study utilizes a methodical technique to examine literature, specifically emphasizing narrative theory and the concepts of focalization. This study conducts a meticulous analysis of the text to identify the fundamental components of the narrative and their influence on the reader's perception of the story. The study's findings highlight the significance of time and focalization in generating suspense and depicting the protagonist's battle against the natural world. This study enhances our comprehension of narrative structure and its function in communicating significance in literature and could potentially impact the interpretation and examination of other literary pieces.

Keywords: The Old Man and the Sea, Narrative, Structural Analysis, Time, Focalization, American Novel.

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Introduction

Ernest Hemingway's novel, *The Old Man and the Sea*, is a renowned literary work that has enthralled readers since its release in 1952. The novel recounts the

tale of Santiago, an elderly fisherman, who has been unsuccessful in catching a fish for a period of 84 consecutive days. It portrays his arduous endeavor to capture a colossal marlin in the Gulf Stream. Although he successfully catches the fish, he faces the challenges of fending off sharks and battling the elements throughout his return to land, so putting his strength and determination to the test.

The narrative structure of *The Old Man and the Sea* plays a crucial role in its success, and its utilization of time and focalization greatly enhances the overall meaning and value of the piece. Focalization, the narrative technique that determines the point of view from which the story is presented, enables the reader to directly perceive Santiago's trip through his own perspective, comprehending his motives and challenges. The utilization of time, namely the feeling of urgency and the incessant ticking of the clock, engenders a state of suspense and intensifies the emotional resonance of the narrative.

This research study aims to examine the correlation between time and focalization in *The Old Man and the Sea*, specifically their impact on the narrative framework of the novel. We will examine the fundamental components of the narrative and how they connect to the themes and recurring ideas of the piece, employing pertinent literary theories and notions. Through an analysis of temporal utilization and focalization in the novel, our objective is to acquire a more profound comprehension of the narrative framework of *The Old Man and the Sea*, as well as its literary value.

In his analysis, Baker (1962) asserts that *The Old Man and the Sea* serves as the concluding chapter of Hemingway's literary works. Within this novel, readers encounter a character who embodies Hemingway's values and underlying meanings. In "*The Old Man and the Sea*," Hemingway portrays the universal human experience and the challenges of life and survival via the character of

Santiago, an elderly fisherman. Santiago, a Cuban fisherman, embarks on a journey at sea for a duration of 84 days without catching any fish. On the eighty-fifth day, he ventures into the depths of the ocean and catches a lengthy Marlin. After three days of battle, he manages to retrieve just the colossal skeleton of the fish, as the sharks had devoured the flesh.

According to Das (2018), structuralism defines the novel as a fictional prose narrative. The structure of a narrative is composed of various elements, including plot, characters, topic, and narration. These elements are present in a novel. These aspects collectively comprise the realm of the novel. This study examines the narrative components present in the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* and concludes that Hemingway was a skilled narrator who skillfully weaves together these aspects to create a masterpiece.

Structuralism is a literary theory that is utilized in both linguistics and literary studies. The theory of structuralism was introduced by Ferdinand De Saussure, a Swiss linguist, in his posthumous book titled "Course in General Linguistics." The novel's structural analysis centers on examining its intrinsic aspects. These inherent components are crucial as they collectively form the framework of the book. In structural analysis, the literary text is examined in isolation, without considering the author's biography or the social context in which the work was created.

Suyitno (2006), citing Culler (1975), states that narrative contracts encompass three aspects: (1) the deductions or connections that the narrator assumes readers would accept. Culler argues that the narrative serves the purpose of conveying information to the narrator, including what he needs to know, how he should respond, and what conclusions or connections he is expected to make. Additionally, Culler examines how the narration guides readers in envisioning the world of the novel and how the narrator's role within the story helps readers

understand its meaning (p.25).

Research Questions:

- How does Hemingway use flashbacks, foreshadowing, and other techniques to manipulate the reader's perception of time in the novel?
- What is the effect of the shifting focalization between the old man, the sea, and other characters in the novel?
- How does the narrative structure of *The Old Man and the Sea* reflect Hemingway's broader themes and motifs, such as heroism, mortality, and the natural world?

Literature Review:

Structuralism and Structural Analysis:

Structuralism emerged in the 20th century as a literary theory in response to Formalism. Habib (2011) elucidated that structuralism diverges from romantic conceptions of literature, wherein the author assumes the role of the originator of meaning. Conversely, structuralism focuses on the objective linguistic framework. The field of structuralism was originally introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure, and later developed further by Roland Barthes, Jonathan Culler, and Roman Jacobson. Habib believes that structuralism is a crucial methodology for analyzing a literary work in terms of its romantic and impersonal linguistic patterns.

Habib (2008) establishes a correlation between structuralism and the examination of myths. Levis Strauss proposes that myth is a distinct sort of language that adheres to the structure outlined by Saussure's concepts. In addition, he asserts that prior to Saussure, language was examined through historical and philological analysis. However, Saussure adopted a synchronic method, which regarded language as a structure that could be comprehensively analyzed at a specific moment in time. He discovers that both structuralism and

myth can be utilized to analyze any work of literature. Nevertheless, he values Saussure's synchronic approach as a more effective method for analyzing literary works in relation to certain social patterns.

In their work, Malik & Batra (2014) elucidate the essence of structuralism, stating that it initially emerged as a theory only focused on linguistics. However, throughout time, structuralism evolved into a literary theory that had a profound influence on several disciplines such as literature, anthropology, religion, history, and psychology.

The Old Man and the Sea:

In his work, Bloom (2007) discusses Hemingway's pride in his ability to achieve aesthetic economy as a writer. Bloom quotes Hemingway's belief that *The Old Man and the Sea* could have been an extensive novel, including detailed descriptions of every character in the village and their daily activities, such as their livelihoods, education, and family life. That is accomplished with exceptional skill and proficiency by other writers. When writing, your options are restricted to what has already been accomplished in a satisfactory manner. I have made attempts to acquire a new skill. Initially, I attempted to remove any superfluous elements in order to effectively communicate the reader's perspective. This way, once the reader has finished reading, the events described will be integrated into their own personal experience and perceived as real occurrences. This task is quite challenging, and I have dedicated much effort to it (p 162).

The Old Man and the Sea is arguably Hemingway's finest masterpiece. According to Wagner (1987), William Faulkner argues that *The Old Man and the Sea* is the finest work of art among Hemingway's contemporaries due to its exceptional theme and technique. Faulkner believes that in this piece, Hemingway not only explores the world but also touches upon the divine.

Wagner cites Faulkner, who proclaims *The Old Man and the Sea* as a singular work due to its sublime theme and manner.

Baker (1952) contends that the depiction of Santiago and Manolin is the subject of discussion. Hemingway employs symbolic doubling in his work, as seen when the old man expresses his desire for Manolin during his difficult experience, which symbolizes his determination and resilience. Their friendship transcends superficiality and extends to a profound spiritual dimension. Baker explores the significance of Manolin as a symbolic and spiritual source of power for Santiago, enabling him to overcome his challenges and ultimately attain his objective with success.

In his work, Baker (1962) asserts that this novel serves as Hemingway's concluding statement to all of his literary works (p.05). Baker holds the belief that *The Old Man and the Sea* encompasses all the distinctive qualities of Hemingway as an author.

Research Methodology:

The present study is of a qualitative character and employs the close reading method to understand the text, utilizing the narrative notion proposed by Herman & Vervaeck (2005).

Gay (2009) asserts that qualitative research is the most effective approach for studying literature and social science phenomena. Therefore, the present investigation is of a qualitative character. In qualitative research, scientists gather data primarily by collecting broad and diverse information on many variables over a prolonged duration.

Bryman (2004) discusses qualitative research as a method that employs an inductive approach and frequently produces hypotheses. Through qualitative research, scientists analyze the social environment and uncover novel social realities.

Theoretical Framework:

Current study is the structural analysis of the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* written by Ernest Hemingway. The study is qualitative in nature and the method of interpretation applied is close reading. The theoretical framework of the current study is Herman and Vervaeck's (2005) book entitled *"Handbook of Narrative Analysis*". We have invoked Chapter two and level two of Narrative from the book for the current analysis.

Data Analysis:

Analysis of Narrative in the Novel:

The Narrative level of analysis holds the utmost significance in structural analysis. Narrative analysis presents the events of the story in a tangible manner. As previously stated, the narrative analysis consists of three levels: time, characterisation, and focalization. Only time and focalization are analyzed in the current investigation.

Analysis of time:

In structural analysis of the narrative, the time is most important factor. From time, the scholars mean the time of the story and the time of narrative. The structuralists study the relation between the story time and narrative time. During the study of time, the scholars study duration of time, order of events and frequency of events.

Duration:

The duration is the primary feature of time in a tale. Herman & Vervaeck (2005) define duration as the comparison between the time it takes to read about an event and the time it takes for the event to occur inside the story (p.60).

Within the field of temporal analysis, scholars examine several aspects like ellipsis, acceleration/summary, scene, deceleration, and any pauses that may occur.

Summary or acceleration refers to the condensation of a lengthy event into a single sentence or a series of shorter sentences. Upon analysis of the novel, a significant number of instances of summarization were identified.

The following are the examples of summary in the novel" *The Old Man and the Sea*".

"He was an Old Man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream. And he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish. In the first forty days a boy had been with him. But after forty days without a fish the boy's parents had told him that the old man was now definitely and finally salao, which is the worst form of unlucky, and the boy had gone at their orders in another boat which caught three good fish the first week" (p.01).

As previously said in the overview, the term "structuralists" refers to the condensed events that occur within a narrative in a shorter duration than the actual story time. This passage exemplifies a well-executed overview. The narrative of eighty-four extended days is condensed into a solitary sentence. The subsequent phrase provides a concise summary of the events that occurred over a period of forty days. The subsequent forty days are summarized in the third sentence. Hemingway has succinctly encapsulated the arduous and protracted series of events spanning eighty-four days in a remarkably concise and pithy manner, using only three phrases. By the conclusion of the third sentence, we are provided with a summary of the events that occurred over the course of one week.

"They sat on the Terrace and many of the fishermen made fun of the old man and he was not angry. Others, of the older fishermen, looked at him and were sad. But they did not show it and they spoke politely about the current and the depths they had drifted their lines at the steady good weather and of what they had seen. The successful fishermen of that day were already in and had butchered

their Marlin out and carried them laid full length across two planks with two men staggering at the end of each plank, to the fish house where they waited for the ice truck to carry them to the market in Havana. Those who had caught sharks had taken them to the shark factory on the other side of the cove where they were hoisted on a block and tackle, there livers removed, their fins cut off and their hides skinned out and their flash cut into strips for salting"(pp.2.3).

This text succinctly summarizes the happenings of an entire day in just a few phrases. The author has succinctly summarized the happenings of the entire day in the opening sentence of the text. The narrative depicts the process of capturing the Marlin, transporting it to the coast, and subsequently loading it onto trucks destined for the market. The fishing process, including trading and market preparation, is succinctly summarized. In reality, these events are the extended occurrences during the storytelling, but in this narrative, they are condensed and made briefer than the original story duration. The author's concise summarization of these lengthy events saved both energy and space. This also implies the author's expertise and command of the craft, as he is renowned for his concise words and condensed portrayal of events.

"He did not remember when he had first started to talk aloud when he was by himself. He had sung when he was by himself in the old days, and he had sung at night sometimes when he was alone staring at his watch in the smacks or in the turtle boats. He had probably started to talk aloud when alone, when the boy had left. But he did not remember when he and the boy fished together they usually spoke only when it was necessary" (p.22).

This sentence succinctly encapsulates the extensive events of his past through a straightforward use of flashback. The elderly gentleman reminisces about his former inclination to engage in soliloquies and converse audibly with inanimate items. The protagonist's extensive recollection is eloquently encapsulated as he

spends time alone in a boat, engaging in audible self-reflection while simultaneously reminiscing about the presence of the youngster who used to accompany him in the past.

Deceleration and pause are two additional components of temporal duration. Deceleration, as defined by Hermen & Vervaeck (2005), refers to the amount of time required to read a description of an event that is longer than the actual duration of the event.

Deceleration is the antithesis of acceleration. *The Old Man and the Sea*, written by Hemingway, is a meticulously crafted narrative that has numerous instances of acceleration, but lacks any examples of deceleration. In the absence of any instances of deceleration, there is no indication of a pause in the narrative, which represents the most extreme manifestation of deceleration. During a pause, the story becomes burdened with superfluous details, causing time to seemingly come to a standstill for an extended duration.

The examination of length indicates the presence of several instances of summarization, acceleration, and scene shifts within the novel. The text does not contain examples of deceleration and pause, yet examples of ellipsis can be discovered. The plot's progression occasionally decelerates in the narrative; however, it always avoids any complete cessation or stagnation. The novel's narrative spans over a period of more than 84 days, however it is succinctly presented in just 78 pages, which can be read in approximately two to three hours at an average reading pace.

Order:

In the context of storytelling, the term "order" pertains to the arrangement of events in a linear chronological sequence inside the narrative (Herman & Verveack, 2005, p.63).

The order is organized into three specific aspects: Direction, Distance, and

Reach. Structuralists analyze the concepts of analepsis and prolepsis, which pertain to the retrospective and prospective depiction of occurrences, respectively. The novel *The Old Man and the Sea* contains numerous instances of analepsis. The storyline of the story primarily focuses on the solitary battle between the Old Man and a large fish in the sea, spanning three days. Consequently, the story incorporates several flashbacks to provide further context.

"He was asleep in a short time, and he dreamed of Africa when he was a boy and the long golden beaches and the white beaches, so white they hurt your eyes and the high capes and great brown mountains. He lived along the coast" (p.12).

This flash back is known as analepsis. Another example of analepsis is found on page no 03 when the boy asked old man.

"How old was I when you first took me in a boat?"

"Five and you nearly were killed when I brought the fish in too green, and he nearly tore the boat to pieces. Can you remember?

"I can remember you throwing me in the bow where the wet coiled lines were and feeling the whole boat shiver and the noise of you clubbing a tree down and the sweet blood smell all over me" (p.03).

Another example of flashback is found in the story when the old man and the boy were talking about baseball. Recalling the event the old man reminds the boy about their meeting with DiMaggio.

"Do you remember when he used to come to the Terrace? I wanted to take him fishing but I was too timid to ask him. Then I asked you to ask him and you were too timid" (p.10).

In the same manner, while struggling with the great fish, the old man recalls his previous experience of catching big fishes and indulges in flashback for example.

"The old man had seen many great fishes. He had seen many that weighted more than a thousand pounds and he had caught two of the size in his life, but never alone" (p.37).

The story reveals that the old man was fond of Baseball and great admirer of American Leagues. While struggling with fish alone in the open and wide sea, he musters courage with the remembrance of baseball players and league matches. In this way a fine example of analepsis is found as under

"He thought of the Big Leagues to him they were the Gran Ligas, and he knew that the Yankees of New York were playing the Tigers of Detroit. This is the second day now that I don't not know the result of the Iuegos, he thought. But i must have confidence and i must be worthy of the great DiMaggio who does all things perfectly even with the pain of the bone spur in his heel" (p.40).

The third aspect of structuralist analysis is its comprehensiveness. Herman & Vervaeck (2005) define Reach as the temporal extent encompassed by both analepsis and prolepsis. Reach can be further separated into two aspects: punctual and durative. If the reach focuses on a specific event, it is considered punctual. However, if it encompasses the entire duration, it is considered durative. The analysis mostly focuses on specific instances, such as the elderly man's recollection of his altercation with a Negro, his encounter with DiMaggio, and his successful capture of two enormous fishes in the past. The analepsis revealed on page 12 is a durative reach that encompasses his youth.

Focalization:

Focalization is a crucial element of storytelling. Focalization encompasses two key elements: the focalized, which refers to the object or point of focus, and the focalizer, which denotes the entity responsible for directing the focus. According to the structuralists, focalization refers to the persons, acts, and objects that are displayed to the readers. The focalizer is an agent who perceives and decides

what is shown to the reader (Herman & Vervaeck, 2005). Therefore, in the study of focalization, scientists consistently examine the connection between the object and the subject of perception.

The structuralists focus on the study of focalization, examining its various types and qualities.

Categories:

There are two types of focalizations: internal and external. The term "type" pertains to the focalizer's position in relation to the fictional universe. If the focalizer is situated within the fictitious universe, it is considered internal. Conversely, if the focalizer exists outside of the fictional world, it is regarded as external.

The focalization in a narrative can take three forms: fixed, variable, and multiple. The type of focalization depends on the perception of the agents involved. For instance, if a single agent perceives the events of the story, it is considered fixed focalization. On the other hand, if the events are viewed by two characters who constantly alternate, it is referred to as variable focalization. Multiple focalizations refer to the presence of more than two centers of perception.

The structural study of *The Old Man and the Sea* indicates that it primarily employs external focalization. This means that the events in the story are often narrated by a focalizer who remains outside of the fictitious universe, as exemplified in the text.

“The door of the house where the boy lived was unlocked and he opened it and walked in quietly with his bare feet. The boy was asleep on a cart in the first room and the old man could see him clearly with the light that came in from the dying moon. He took hold of one foot gently and held it until the boy woke and turned and looked at him. The Old man nodded, and the boy took his trousers from the chair by the bed and sitting on the bed, pulled them on” (p.13).

The Focalization is external because the narrator is not the part of the fictional world, and it is fixed focalization because the event is presented by a single agent.

Another example of focalization is as under.

"The old man went out the door and the boy came after him. He was sleepy and the old man put his arm across his shoulder and said, I am sorry" (p.13).

Properties of Focalization:

The structuralists analyze the spatial, temporal, cognitive, and emotional aspects of focalization in its qualities. Herman & Vervaeck (2005) assert that structuralists analyze the narrative perspective in space, which might be panoramic, simultaneous, or constrained. Structuralists analyze the complete spatial composition of a tale through a panoramic view, while readers of simultaneous view can comprehend many locations simultaneously. The limited view refers to the observation of a typical occurrence taking place within a confined location.

During the analysis of *The Old Man and the Sea*, the scholar has found two distinct perspectives: panoramic view and confined view. The panoramic view is observed when the elderly gentleman is situated in the vast expanse of the open sea. Here is the stated example:

"The clouds over the land now rows like mountains and the coast were only a long green line with the gray blue hills behind it. The water was a dark blue now, so dark that it was almost purple. As he hooked down into it he saw the red sifting of the plankton in the dark water and the strange light the sun made now" (p.19).

In this passage the narrator presents the panoramic view of sea with clouds hovering and blue hills, presenting the scenic view in the dark water of Mexican Gulf. Another example of panoramic view is also from the description of open

sea and is presented as under:

"The iridescent bubbles were beautiful. But they were the falsest thing in the sea and the old man loved to see the big sea turtles eating them. The turtles saw them, approached them from the front, then shut their eyes so they were completely carapaced and ate them filaments and all. The old man loved to see to the turtles eat them and loved to walk on them on the beach after a storm and hear them pop when he stepped on them with the horny soles of his feet" (p.20).

Another example of panoramic is given below:

"He looked across the sea and knew how alone he was now. But he could see the prisms in the deep dark water and the line stretching ahead and the strange undulation of the calm. The clouds were building up now for the trade wind and he looked a head and saw a flight of wild ducks etching themselves against the sky over the water, then blurring, then etching again and he knew how man was ever alone on the sea" (p.36).

Except these a few examples of panoramic view the entire narrative presents the limited view. A couple of examples are identified as below.

The shack was made of the tough bud shields of the royal palm which are called guano and in it there was a bed, a table, one chair, and a place on the dirt floor to cook with charcoal. On the brown walls of the flattened, overlapping leaves of the sturdy fibered guano there was a picture in colour of the sacred Heart of Jesus and other of the virgin of Cobre" (p.06).

This is the limited focalization in which a limited scope of the hut of the old man is presented. The narrative is replete with such limited scope of focalization.

Time is another aspect of focalization. The focalization time can be categorized as panchronic, retrospective, or synchronic. The concept of Panchronic Time refers to the focalizer's observation of all time periods, while in retrospective, the focalizer reflects on past events within the narrative. Perception can occur

concurrently with events in synchronic time. Herman and Verveack (2005)

The Old Man and the Sea predominantly employs a retroactive focalization. The narrator frequently engages in retrospection, employing terms such as 'said,' 'was,' 'looked,' 'asked,' and the like. The instances of the story where the elderly man reminisces about his prior experiences such as a wrestling match (p.41), baseball matches (p.40), and events from the boy's boyhood (p.03) are also examples of retrospective focalization.

Focalization can be either restricted or all-knowing. In limited focalization, the focalizer's information is restricted, but in omniscient cognition, the focalizer possesses extensive knowledge and is aware of everything. The events examined and interpreted in the novel indicate that the focalization in this literary work is restricted.

Finding and Conclusion:

Findings:

The structural study of *The Old Man and the Sea*, from a narrative perspective, reveals the presence of ellipsis and acceleration, which are techniques used to summarize events in the story.

- The plot of the novel occasionally decelerates, but there are no instances of a complete halt in the narrative.
- The story spans over a period of more than eighty-four days in actual time, but it is condensed into only seventy-eight pages in the narrative. It may be read in approximately two to three hours at a typical reading speed.
- The focalization of the novel is not limited to a single perspective, but rather encompasses various perspectives. Multiple focalizations involve the presence of more than two internal and external focalizers. The novel features Santiago and Manolin as the focalizers.

- The qualities of focalization encompass both a restricted and an expansive perspective presented by the focalizer.
- The panoramic view of focalization can be observed in the sea landscapes.
- The predominant temporal perspective of focalization is retrospective, with only a limited number of instances of synchronic focalization.
- The focaliser's cognition in this story is restricted.

Conclusion:

The present study employs a theoretical framework to conduct a structural analysis of the narrative in the novel "*The Old Man and the Sea*." The analysis has focused on narrative temporality and focalization. In the first part, specifically in its initial section, the primary structural element was the scene or summary. This element established that the timeline of the story and the timeline of the narrator were mostly synchronized, except for certain sections where there were omissions or accelerated events in the text. These variations in pacing allowed the narrative to either progress swiftly or proceed at a slower tempo.

The novel employs multiple focalizations, allowing for the perception of its universe through more than two focalizers. The novel's focalisers offer both restricted and expansive perspectives. Regarding the temporal aspect of focalization, it is both retrospective and synchronic. However, it is important to note that the cognitive abilities of the focalizers are constrained.

In conclusion, Ernest Hemingway adeptly employs narrative tactics of time and focalization in his work, *The Old Man, and the Sea*. The narrative is enhanced and imbued with significance through the utilization of literary techniques such as flashbacks, flashforwards, ellipsis, acceleration, various focalizers, and the implementation of both panoramic and limited perspectives. These ingredients collectively transform the story into a prime illustration of creative brilliance and

a literary masterpiece.

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