

Ernest Hemingway's novella, "The Old Man and the Sea" has one of the most simplistic plot structures of the literary world. But does this fact eliminate its eligibility as a piece of good literature? Quite the contrary, this novella is one of the most respected literary pieces ever written. This novel is written in a simple style which has a straightforward plot, very distinct descriptions, and few but delineated characters. This style actually enhances the reader's understanding of the story in terms of the setting, characterization, and parts of plot structure.

A good example of how this style of writing can benefit the reader is the limited setting of the piece. A limited setting is a setting that does not jump variably within the piece. The whole plot of the story is fixed upon one specific place. In this case, it is Santiago, the main character, who the setting revolves around. In the whole story, every scene contains Santiago in a physical state. For example, on the first day, the storyline follows Santiago around the village. In this section of the story, we see Santiago conversing with the boy, and then we follow him to his home, where Hemingway leads us into Santiago's dreams. This novel should be a tour through Santiago led by Hemingway. Throughout the rest of the book, we follow Santiago in his journey, and only he is involved. After the first day, throughout the voyage, it is Santiago's thoughts and feelings that are emphasized. On the final day after his voyage, again we are led through all of Santiago's actions. The limited setting is an important part of this simplistic Hemingway style as it eliminates unnecessary confusion in the reader's mind. With this limited setting, Hemingway produces more ways to simplify this novel.

The delineate characterization in this novel creates well defined and well described characters. Good characterization is an aspect of a simple piece that can be easily derived from a limited setting. Since the plot focuses among one character only, Hemingway has many great opportunities to define the character in specific details through thought, and actions. For example, "If the others heard me talking out loud, they would think I am crazy. Since I am not crazy, I do not care." (39) Another way Hemingway adds detail is by making Santiago talk with himself. On many occasions, Hemingway uses Santiago's self dialogue to create an emotional mood for his situation. Santiago said, "Fish, I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends, (54)" the reader is able to feel Santiago's determination coming from himself rather than the narrator.

Another way the style enhances the novella is the clearly defined five different parts of plot structure are clearly defined. In this case, the plot structure is again very well delineated and the reader is able to identify the different parts of plot structure with certain ease. This aspect of a simple plot structure can further enhance the simplicity of this novella. The idea here is that distinguishable sections of plot structure, such as the exposition and climax, differ as much as possible, once again eliminating confusion. For example, in this novel, the exposition is the day before his voyage, the rising action is the days leading up to his catch, the climax, the falling action is his voyage home and the shark attacks and finally, the resolution would be the day after he came back. When a section of the plot is over, the reader is brought into the next section with a quick transition. For example, Hemingway narrates, "The old man looked at the fish constantly to make sure it was true. It was an hour before the first shark hit him. (99)" This sentence quickly transitions from the climax to the start of the falling action. Again, this is another great aspect of Hemingway's simplistic style.

Although "The Old Man and the Sea" has a simple plot structure, it still has the components of good literature, as well as being easier to understand. The setting, characterization and the parts of plot structure help Hemingway to achieve that goal. He uses the limited setting effectively, giving a nice clear and crisp picture of the setting to the reader. His delineate characterization brings Santiago to life, and when reading this book, the reader can feel like one of Santiago's friends. The plot structure is again well delineated, making the parts of the story well distinguishable, and transitions from section to section well defined.