

CHAPTER III
THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIETY
TOWARD SANTIAGO'S STRUGGLE

Santiago is the major character in The Old Man and the Sea which is presented by Hemingway as an old fisherman who has been unlucky during eighty four days without catching any fish. Therefore the other fishermen make fun of him and one of them considers him as "salao" which is the worst form of unlucky. As a fisherman who lives among other fishermen, Santiago can not avoid their judgements, view, and attitudes toward every kind of actions that he makes. It is normal in every community that everyone always makes some kinds of judgement toward other people's actions.

Nevertheless, it does not make Santiago desperate and angry because he is still confident of his own strength. Therefore, on the eighty fifth day he determines to go far out to the sea to begin his long struggle in catching fish. For three days and nights he fights to catch a marlin and after it has been killed he has to face some sharks that have attacked the marlin's flesh. He desperately defends his fish by undergoing physical agony, although eventually he can only bring home the

marlin's skeleton. Human beings as member of the social order always interact with others, they react to one another as long as they keep in touch with other human beings. Secord and Backman in Social Psychology, 1974, mentioned that "an individual's actions are partly shaped by his knowledge of the persons around him and by their expectations concerning his behaviour" (9).

Based on this statement, it is possible to discuss how the main character reacts against other fishermen's view and attitude on him. They underestimate him, consider him as useless and unlucky, an old fisherman without physical strength as any other fishermen should have. In the very beginning of the novel, this attitude is presented through the way Manolin's father views Santiago. "In the first forty days without a fish the boy's parents had told that old man was now definitely and finally "salao", which is the worst form of unlucky ..."(5). While according to Carey, most of the fishermen consider Santiago to be useless and unlucky, therefore he is driven out from the society. For them Santiago is an oddity.

As a normal human being, Santiago can not neglect this kind of judgement. He wants to prove that he is

still powerful and capable to catch fish. Therefore, he realizes that he must go far out to the sea as an effort to show to the other fishermen that he is not as useless as they used to consider him to be. Thus, he decides to go to the sea if the current is calm. He says to Manolin:

"Tomorrow is going to be a good day with this current," he said.

"Where are you going?" the boy asked

"Far out to come in when the wind shifts. I want to be out before it is light." (9)

However, unlike his parents, Manolin is presented as a young boy who sympathizes with Santiago. He even "always went down to help him carry either the coiled line or the gulf and harpoon and sail that was furled around the mast" (5). Unlike the other people in the village, he respects Santiago because he considers him as "wiser and more humane than most of the other men" as stated by Carey. While the fishermen can only judge and view Santiago from his physical appearance and strength.

Santiago himself does not care much of their judgement, he is not angry even though they have made fun of him. It is explicitly stated that "many of the fishermen made fun of the old man and he was not angry" (6). Never-

theless, Santiago's reaction toward this humiliation does not mean that he will not take any further step or does not do anything after that. So far as sociological point of view concerns, this kind of social influence has caused someone to act, "to behave according to "standard codes" which other people around him or her expect him or her to behave, as stated by Secord and Backman:

Most of our actions are directed toward them or are in concert with them. They, too, are familiar and have a meaning and a place in our daily lives. Indeed, our actions are shaped according to the nature of the people with whom we are in contact, and are further constrained by the situation we are sharing with them. We generally share a common knowledge of the meaning of the situation, which includes expectations on the part of other persons about how we should behave, as well as our own expectations concerning their reactions to our actions. (11)

In this case, the fishermen have a common knowledge about how a fisherman should behave, they have among them their own criteria of what a successful fisherman is. It

is the belief of the fishermen community that one can be called a successful fisherman if he succeeds in fishing a great fish and here, a very big fish called marlin has become a measure whether a fisherman is successful or not. Every fisherman will be satisfied if he can catch a truly big fish and there is a description in the novel about a successful fisherman which states that " the successful fisherman 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 ... (7).

Being incapable of fulfilling their criteria, Santiago is humiliated by the other fishermen. It is shown in the following quotation: "They sat on the Terrace and many of the fishermen made fun of the old man and he was not angry." (6)

Santiago himself can accept their attitude toward him since he realizes that he is not a successful fisherman and he can not catch any single fish for a long period. Therefore, he is not angry, he accepts their judgement. Realizing that he is not a successful fisherman, he suggest the boy, Manolin, not to go fishing with him but tell him to go with another lucky boat, instead.

He also understands the reason of the boy's parents to distrust him to accompany Manolin to go fishing. Here are dialogues between Santiago and Manolin which may show Santiago's attitude in accepting the other fishermen's view about him:

"Santiago," the boy said to him as they climbed the bank from where the skiff was hauled up. "I could go with you again. We've made some money. The old man had taught the boy to fish and the boy loved him.

"No," the old man said. "You're with a lucky boat. Stay with them."

"But remember how you went eighty-seven days without fish and then we catch big ones every day for three weeks."

"I remember," the old man said. "I know you did not leave me because you doubted."

"It was papa made me leave. I am a boy and I must obey him."

"I know," the old man said. "It is quite normal."

"He hasn't much faith."

"No," the old man said. "But we have."

Haven't we?" (6)

In fact, Santiago tries to make effort to prove that he is not as weak as what most of the fishermen think him to be. It is quite normal and very natural as a human being to reject other people's judgement underestimating his or her ability. Naturally, he or she will defend this or at least try to prove that he or she is not as bad as that. Santiago does not give direct reaction but makes a long struggle for three days and nights to catch a huge marlin, as an obvious evidence of his ability.

In order to be approved as a member of the fishermen's community, Santiago must do what the other fishermen usually do, he must catch fish. By doing so the other members of the community where he lives in will accept him. Such conformity is like a kind of exchange about which Robert A. Nisbet stated in The Social Bond, 1970, that "other might see in conformity a mode of interaction governed primarily by considerations of exchange. By conforming we receive a reward: approval, esteem, success". (71) Santiago also follows the rule of society concerning fishing; since he refuses to be viewed differently, So he determines to go far out to the sea to catch fish. He experiences hurt and agony for three days

and nights. Unfortunately, he can only bring the marlin's skeleton home.

However, the skeleton which Santiago brings home has become the symbol of his success. When he reaches the harbor, the people there are very surprised with the extraordinary size of the skeleton. It is shown by a female tourist at the terrace:

"What's that?" she asked a waiter and pointed to the long backbone of the great fish that was now just garbage waiting to go out with the tide.

"Tiburón," the waiter said, "Eshark." He was meaning to explain what had happened.

"I didn't know sharks had such handsome, beautifully formed tails." (109)

Therefore, the other fishermen give him attention and do not underestimate him anymore. The quotation below may show their appreciation toward him:

Many fishermen were around the skiff looking at what was lashed beside it and one was in the water, his trousers rolled up, measuring the skeleton with a length of line.

The boy did not go down. He had been there

before and one of the fishermen was looking after the skiff for him.

"How is he?" one of the fishermen shouted.

"Sleeping," the boy called. He did not care that they saw him crying. "Let no one disturb him." (105-106)

In order to conform with the "code of society", Santiago is trying hard to bring home the marlin by experiencing physical pains for three days and nights. Such long struggle is a form of conformity to show that he is still capable to meet the requirement of being a fisherman.

Conformity here does not have to do with something right or wrong, it deals with what is called "social role". Each individual living in the universe has certain roles and the person playing these roles is required to fulfil his duties. For example, a teacher has to teach his or her students, a doctor must examine his patient, and a fisherman, of course, is supposed to catch fish. In his explanation about social role, Nisbet stated that in every social role there is the strong element of duty in the role of mother quite as much as, more often than, the sense of continuing love of children that will pro-

duce extraordinary acts of self-sacrifice and dedication.

It is important to emphasize the word self-sacrifice since Santiago also makes such sacrifice in order to fulfil his duty as a fisherman. The humiliation of the other fishermen towards him reminds him of his duty: his role as a fisherman calls him to go far out to the sea, fighting against nature regardless of his physical condition. Therefore, he keeps on fighting, overcoming every kind of challenges on the sea until he could bring home a huge marlin. In spite of the skeleton, Santiago still brings it home as a sign that he is successful in fulfilling his duty as a fisherman. His pride as a real fisherman has returned.

He has tried as best as he can, he is willing to sacrifice his life to defend the remaining flesh of the fish from the sharks' attack. The following quotation may show his willingness to die if some more sharks come in the night:

"But if I had, and could have lashed it to an oar butt, what a weapon. Then we might have fought them together. What will you do know if they come in the night? What can you do?"

"Fight them," he said. "I'll fight them

until I die." (100)

He has also exerted his potentiality and strength as maximum as he can until he feels that he is dead and can not say his prayers anymore, as stated in the following quotation:

"But in the dark now and no glo showing and no lights and only the wind and the steady pull of the sail he felt that perhaps he was already dead. He put his two hands together and felt the palms. They were not dead and he could bring the pain of life by simply opening and closing them. He learned his back against the stern and he knew he was not dead. His shoulders told him.

I have all those prayers I promised if I catch the fish, he thought. But I am too tired to say them now. I better get the sack and put it over my shoulders. (100)

He does not have any feeling of disappointment concerning the skeleton which he could bring home. He has achieved his purpose. Now he may go home confidently although his physical condition is bad. It is shown by the statement in the novel that "he sailed lightly now

and he had no thoughts nor any feelings of any kind. He was past everything now and he sailed the skiff to make his home port as well and as intelligently as he could".

(103)