

Chapter II

Literature Review

Chapter II will be divided into two parts. The first reviews previous studies related to the subject of this research and the second presents the theoretical frameworks that guide the analysis, namely A. J. Greimas's narrative theory and Karen J. Warren's ecofeminist theory, along with the operational framework that explains how the two are applied in combination throughout this study.

2.1. Previous Studies

Several previous studies have examined *The Old Man and the Sea* from various perspectives, highlighting the relationships among humans, nature, and gender. These studies open space for this research to explore more deeply the harmonization among humans, feminine gender values, and the natural world.

The first is Tanya D'Souza's (2025) study, "Nonhuman Agency and Gender: An Ecofeminist Critique of Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*." This research is the most relevant because it explicitly shares the same theoretical foundation by using an ecofeminist critique to analyze the novel. Through the concept of nonhuman agency, D'Souza argues that nonhuman beings (the sea, the marlin, the sharks) actively resist being labeled or dominated by Santiago's anthropocentric mindset. Her study successfully validates that the novel can be read as a critique of masculine impulses to dominate nature. However, its weakness lies in its highly critical conclusion that Santiago ultimately fails to overcome his patriarchal tendencies and continues to perceive

nature in a diminishing way. Moreover, the study is purely thematic and lacks a systematic structural analysis.

In this context, the present research aims to extend D'Souza's perspective by offering a different ecofeminist interpretation. While D'Souza concludes with failure, this research proposes examining whether the same actantial shifts can alternatively be read as harmony rather than failure. This study addresses the gap by examining whether the non-human agency proposed by D'Souza is structurally manifested through actantial shifts within Greimas's Actantial Model. The combination of Warren's Ecofeminism and Greimas's Actantial Theory strengthens this study because it offers a structural basis for testing whether a negative conclusion (failure) can instead be read as harmony, an interpretation to be examined through detailed structural analysis of how the sea's role narratively unfolds.

Different from this is Inger-Anne Søfting's (2024) study, "'Everything Kills Everything Else in Some Way': An Ecocritical Reading of Human Non-Human Relationships in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*." Using an ecocritical approach, Søfting highlights the contradictions within Santiago, he respects nature yet remains tied to cultural norms that justify killing, resulting in a skeptical view of the possibility of full harmony. Her greatest strength is her critical reading of the sea (*la mar*), which she concludes is a patriarchal and patronizing form of anthropomorphism. However, a major weakness is that

ecocriticism does not examine gender as deeply as ecofeminism does, and the study lacks a structural framework for analyzing narrative patterns.

This study addresses that gap by moving beyond Søvting's interpretation that centers on Santiago's failure to detach himself from patriarchal views. The present research expands the discussion by combining Karen J. Warren's Ecofeminism with Greimas's Actantial Model. The novelty of this study lies in examining whether the feminization of *la mar* can instead be understood as a narrative representation expressed through actantial roles and functions, rather than a diminishing objectification. This structural foundation is intended to address the skeptical interpretations in Søvting's study.

Another relevant work is Qian Wang's (2020) "Analysis of *The Old Man and the Sea* from the Perspective of Ecological Literature." Wang analyzes the novel from a general perspective in ecological literary criticism, focusing on Santiago's ecological awareness and critique of anthropocentrism. The strength of this study lies in its ability to highlight the contradiction between Santiago's respect for nature and his acts of conquest, leading to the conclusion that humans must live harmoniously with nature. It provides evidence that the theme of harmony is indeed present in the novel. However, the study's main weakness is its lack of attention to feminine gender dimensions and its tendency to adopt a moralistic tone.

Wang's work leaves a gap in structural and gender analysis, as he views only the marlin and the sharks as symbols. This research deepens that perspective

by examining whether the novel's natural elements function as complex, gendered actants. Using Greimas's Actantial Model, this study seeks to concretize Wang's suggestion of harmony by examining whether such harmony is spiritually achieved (as a value object) through the intervention of the sea's feminine qualities. This methodological innovation makes the present research more significant by adding structural and gender depth to ecological analysis, going beyond general ecological morality.

Another study by Kedar Bhattarai (2023) is "The Non-Human World in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*." This study uses a post-humanist framework to examine human attitudes toward the non-human world. Bhattarai's strength lies in his analysis of ontological connectedness (relationality) and the biotic (life-centered) perspective shared between Santiago and the marlin, recognizing the dignity and equality of their existence. This concept of relationality would greatly support this study's investigation of harmony. Unfortunately, post-humanism does not provide a specific gender lens and lacks the structural tools to concretize abstract relationality into systematic narrative roles in the novel.

Bhattarai's work leaves a gap because relationality remains in an abstract philosophical realm. Therefore, this study will address this gap by examining whether this relationality can be made concrete using Greimas's Actantial Model. This study will explore the possibility that relationality manifests as the highest value object sought by Santiago. By combining Greimas's and Warren's

Ecofeminism, this study becomes more important because it transforms abstract philosophy (relationality) into systematic narrative evidence centered on gender dimensions that Bhattarai does not address.

Meanwhile, another study that takes a different approach is Laveena Bhagchandani and Priya Sharma's (2025) "Endurance and Ecology: An Ecomasculine Reading of *The Old Man and the Sea*." Their journal introduced ecomasculinity, which offers a useful theoretical contrast to this research. The journal's main strength is that it shows how masculinity, as seen in Santiago's endurance, can be ethical and responsible toward nature. This challenges the idea that masculinity always means domination. The writer views Santiago's relationship with the sea as spiritual and non-exploitative, aligning with the idea of harmony. However, one weakness is that the study may overlook how Santiago's respect for the sea is the real source of environmental ethics. It also does not discuss the novel's structure.

This study creates a gap in determining the source of this ethic, does harmony emerge from Santiago's masculinity, or from the feminine values he adopts? This research addresses that gap by exploring the possibility that ecofeminist harmony is achieved when masculine endurance is guided by reciprocal feminine ethics. Using Greimas's Actantial Model, this study examines whether the sea functions as the driving force that establishes the ethical direction, rather than merely as a supporter of responsible masculinity. This approach

strengthens the research by positioning feminine values as the narrative key to ecological harmony.

Overall, those previous studies tend to focus on conflict, ambivalence, and ecological ethics in human–nature relationships. However, none has specifically explored the sea as a feminine subject that nurtures and offers a balanced spiritual relationship with humans. Therefore, this study fills that gap by integrating Karen J. Warren’s Ecofeminism with A. J. Greimas’s Actantial Model. Through this combination, the analysis focuses on how narrative structure and feminine values work together to portray harmony between humans and nature in *The Old Man and the Sea*.

No	Previous Studies	Research Focus	Strengths	Limitations	Research Gap
1	Tanya D’Souza (2025) “Nonhuman Agency and Gender: An Ecofeminist Critique of Ernest Hemingway’s <i>The Old Man and the Sea</i> .”	Analyzes non-human agency, including the sea, the marlin, and the sharks, and gender through an ecofeminist critique to examine resistance to Santiago’s anthropocentric dominance.	Successfully validates the novel as a critique of the masculine drive to dominate nature	• Draws a highly critical conclusion that Santiago fails to overcome his patriarchal tendencies. • Lacks a systematic structural analysis.	This study addresses Tanya’s research gap by reframing the negative conclusion into a positive form of harmony, supported by a structural analysis using Greimas’s Actantial Model.
2	Inger-Anne	Examines human and non-human relationships	Provides a critical reading of the sea (La Mar) as a form of	• Uses an ecocritical lens that emphasize	This study responds to Inger-Anne’s gap by

	Softing (2024) ““Everything Kills Everything Else in Some Way’: An Ecocritical Reading of Human–Non-Human Relationships in Ernest Hemingway’s <i>The Old Man and the Sea</i> .”	through an ecocritical approach, particularly Santiago’s contradiction between respecting nature and participating in a culture of killing.	patriarchal anthropomorphism.	s contradictions without exploring the gender dimension as deeply as ecofeminism. Does not offer a structural framework for narrative patterns.	arguing that the feminization of <i>la mar</i> represents a narrative actantial role rather than a degrading objectification of the sea through Santiago’s perspective.
3	Qian Wang (2020) “Analysis of <i>The Old Man and the Sea</i> from the Perspective of Ecological Literature.”	Highlights Santiago’s ecological awareness and critiques anthropocentrism through a general ecological literary perspective.	Demonstrates the presence of harmony between humans and nature in the novel.	- Pays limited attention to the feminine gender dimension. - Tends to be moralistic and treats nature mainly as a symbol.	This study deepens the perspective by showing that natural elements function as complex gendered actants that carry spiritual harmony within the narrative.
4	Kedar Bhattarai (2023) "The Non-Human World in Ernest Hemingway's <i>The Old</i>	Uses a posthumanist framework to examine human attitudes toward the non-human world and the ontological	Identifies relationality and recognizes the dignity and existential equality of living beings.	- Does not provide a specific gender lens. - Relationality remains abstract and philosophical	This study fills the gap by making relationality concrete through systematic narrative evidence centered on

	<i>Man and the Sea.</i> "	connection between Santiago and the marlin.		cal without a narrative structural tool.	the gender dimension using the Actantial Model.
5	Laveena Bhagchandani & P. Sharma (2025) "Endurance and Ecology: An Ecomasculine Reading of <i>The Old Man and the Sea.</i> "	Introduces the concept of ecomasculinity to explore how Santiago's endurance can be ethical and environmentally responsible.	Successfully challenges the assumption that masculinity always implies domination and views Santiago's relationship with the sea as spiritual.	• Risks overlooking the sea as a primary source of agency. • Environmental ethics are not linked to the novel's structural dimension.	This study addresses the gap by arguing that ecofeminist harmony is achieved when masculine endurance is guided by reciprocal feminine ethics.

Table 2.1 Previous Studies

2.2. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is the conceptual lens through which a study approaches its subject matter, grounded in a relevant theory. It supplies the analytical tools and interpretive principles that guide the writer in examining, organizing, and making sense of the data drawn from the primary text to address its subject. Moreover, this study builds its framework on two interconnected perspectives, addressing both the structural and ethical dimensions of *The Old Man and the Sea*.

2.2.1. Algirdas Julien Greimas's Narrative Theory (1966)

A. J. Greimas's narrative theory represents a structural approach that emphasizes the relational functions that govern a story. Rather than focusing on characters as individual personalities, Greimas (1983, pp. 5-8) views narrative as a system of functions performed by actors. An actor is an abstract structural role that shapes the development of events and the relationships among elements in a narrative, emerging from interactions among roles such as subject, object, helper, opponent, sender, and receiver.

This approach is useful for looking at how both human and non-human elements shape a story. In Greimas's framework, natural elements can act as characters if they affect the main character's journey or change the plot. By looking at the roles and relationships between these elements, Greimas's theory helps explain how stories gain meaning through interaction, conflict, and change.

2.2.1.1. A.J. Greimas Actantial Model

The actantial model formulated by A.J. Greimas holds an important position in the study of narrative structuralism. This approach aims to reveal the basic patterns that shape a story by viewing narrative as a system of functional relations rather than simply a sequence of characters and events. Greimas argues that narrative meaning does not arise from individual figures alone, but from structural roles known as actants, which organize how desire, power relations and the

transmission of values operate within the story system (Greimas, 1983, pp. 5-6).

The use of the actantial model has also expanded beyond literary narratives. (Wang and Roberts, 2005, pp. 51-52) show that Greimas's framework can be applied to individual and social narratives to reveal power relations and processes of identity formation embedded in acts of self-expression. Their study demonstrates that by reconstructing the actantial structure, the writer can trace how narrators position themselves as subjects, helpers or opponents within their own life stories, thereby uncovering implicit hierarchies of value and agency. This finding confirms that the actantial model functions as a flexible analytical tool that bridges the study of fictional and non-fictional narratives.

Several literary studies have shown that this model helps clarify narrative ambiguity, especially in stories where roles overlap or change (Malik, Shoukat, and Kharal, 2022, pp. 443-444). In their analysis of O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*, they argue that the actantial model helps explain the dual roles of subject and object between the two main characters. Their research shows that the model can identify both character and non-character actants, like abstract values and social conditions, which act as senders, helpers, or opponents in shaping the story. This shows that the model highlights not only what characters do, but also how context and symbols influence the narrative.

On this basis, the actantial model is not merely a tool for labeling narrative roles, but a method for tracing how values circulate, conflicts emerge and goals are negotiated within a story. By mapping the relations among the six actants, the writer can examine how narrative tension arises from the interaction between desire, communication and power. In this way, meaning is produced through relational dynamics rather than isolated actions, allowing the writer to uncover a deeper grammar of storytelling, namely how motivation, conflict and resolution are structured.

2.2.1.1.1. The Six Actants

In Greimas's theory, actants are classified into six categories arranged along three main relational axes there are, the axis of desire (This axis serves as the main foundation of the narrative. Without this axis, the plot cannot exist, as there is no will or motivation to drive the story forward), the axis of communication (This axis is referred to as the axis of knowledge or the axis of values, as it explains why the mission exists and who ultimately benefits from it) and the axis of power (This axis governs the course of the Subject's journey. It is within this axis that conflict, action and dramatic tension emerge). Together, these six actants form a structural network that enables narrative movement and the production of meaning (Greimas, 1966, pp. 172-191)

Subject and Object, the primary axis in Greimas's model is the axis of desire, which centers on the relationship between the Subject and the Object. This relationship serves as the main motivation of the narrative and determines the basic direction of the story's development.

- The Subject is the entity driven by desire or motivation to pursue something.

- The Object is the value or goal that becomes the target of that quest.

Hébert (2011, p. 49) calls this relationship the central narrative contract because it explains how a story moves forward. The object a character seeks can be a material goal, emotional fulfillment, a moral value, or a symbolic ideal. This view suggests that a character's desire comes from both personal motivation and outside influences. For example, in *The Gift of the Magi*, Della's wish to give a meaningful gift makes her the subject, while love and sacrifice are the values that give her actions meaning (Malik et al., 2022, pp. 448-449). So, the subject-object relationship shows not only what a character wants but also the deeper values in the story.

Sender and Receiver, the second axis, known as the axis of communication or transmission, involves the Sender and the Receiver.

- The Sender is the force or entity that motivates the Subject to pursue the Object (the source of value). The Sender provides the value the Subject seeks. The Sender is the source of motivation that initiates the Subject's journey. It can be a figure, an institution, a situation, or an abstract value.

- The Receiver is the entity that ultimately benefits from the successful attainment of the object.

In many cases, the subject and the receiver may refer to the same entity, yet structurally they perform different functions. (Wang and Roberts, 2005) note that in self-narratives, the sender often appears as internalized social values or ideological expectations, while the receiver represents the projected identity or social recognition sought by the narrator. This shows how the sender–receiver axis reveals the flow of value and meaning in both fictional and personal narratives. In literary analysis, this axis helps identify whose interests are served by the story's outcome and which value systems are reinforced or questioned.

The third axis, **Helper and Opponent**, is often referred to as the axis of power or conflict. These actants represent forces that either support or hinder the subject's attempt to reach the object. These roles are not limited to human characters but can also be filled by objects, social conditions, natural elements or psychological states.

- The Helper is an entity that facilitates or supports the subject in the quest.

- The Opponent is an entity that obstructs or resists the subject.

According to Hébert (2011, p. 49), helpers and opponents are not tied to the subject as a character, but to whether the subject succeeds or fails in relation to the object. This helps explain why the same character can act as both a helper and an opponent at different points in the story. For example, Umami (2023, pp. 136-137) describes how a figure such as “ular yang licik” can both block and support the subject’s actions, depending on the part of the narrative. The helper–opponent axis shows the ongoing tension that drives narrative conflict and makes it clear that support and resistance are not fixed qualities, but roles that can change within the larger system of the story.

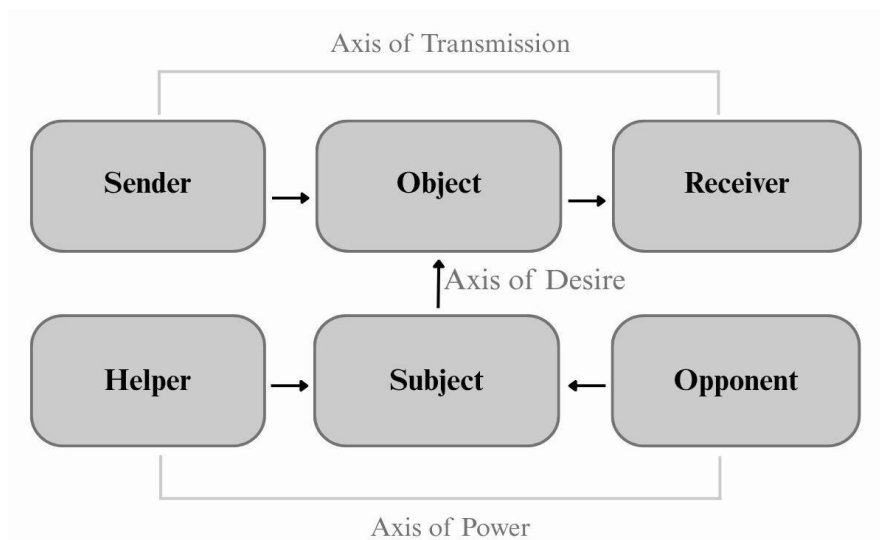


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Taken together, the six actants and their three relational axes form a cohesive structural system that generates narrative meaning. Rather than functioning as isolated roles, each actant derives its significance from its dynamic interaction with the others which is the Subject pursues the Object, the Sender initiates and motivates that pursuit, the Receiver benefits from its outcome, while the Helper and Opponent shape the conditions under which the quest takes place. As (Hébert, 2011, p. 51) points out, these roles are not fixed attributes of characters, but functional positions that can shift as the narrative progresses. This flexibility makes the actantial model especially useful for meaning texts in which human and non-human elements interact in fluid and evolving ways, as seen in this study. Within this structural map of actantial relations, the following section will explore how these roles are activated and transformed across the sequential phases of Greimas's functional structure.

2.2.1.2. Greimas's Functional Structure

In addition to the actantial model, Greimas also proposes a functional structure that explains how a narrative develops through a sequence of meaningful stages. This structure emphasizes the transformation of values and the progression of the subject's quest, based on the idea that a story advances not through isolated events, but through a logic of initial balance, disruption, and the re-establishment of order. (Hébert, 2011, pp. 91-94) views this scheme as a dynamic

process in which narrative meaning emerges through functional relations and a series of “tests” that connect the actants across different phases of the story.

2.2.1.2.1. Initial Situation

The initial situation represents a relatively balanced state in which the narrative world and its dominant values are introduced. At this stage, the positions of the subject, the value object, and the basic social or symbolic conditions of the story are established.

From a functional perspective, this stage also shows how identity and agency are framed within a particular value system. (Wang and Roberts, 2005, p. 60) note that narrators often place themselves in socially recognized roles at the beginning of a story, embedding implicit norms that will later be tested or reaffirmed during the phase of transformation. This suggests that the initial situation is not merely descriptive but a space in which ideological and cultural assumptions begin to take symbolic form.

2.2.1.2.2. Transformation

The transformation phase includes a series of tests experienced by the subject. Greimas divides this phase into three stages:

Proficiency Test, this test evaluates whether the subject has the capacity and legitimacy to begin the quest. This stage acts as a threshold between the stable world of the initial situation and the uncertain domain of conflict.

The **Main Test** is at the heart of the conflict of the story. In this phase, the main character faces their biggest challenges and strongest opposition. This is when the story's tension is highest, and its core values of the subject are challenged. According to Umami (2023, pp. 131-132), the way the main character, helpers, and opponents interact throughout this stage often changes their moral outlook, because decisions made under pressure show what they truly care about.

Glory Test, this test determines the outcome of the quest and evaluates the subject's performance. This stage gives meaning to the result by linking success or failure to a broader moral, social, or ideological framework. A similar application can be found in (Rezkiany et al, 2022, p. 85) who describe the Glorifying Test as the phase in which the subject, having obtained the object, still encounters further obstacles. In their analysis of *Midah, Simanis Bergigi Emas*, Midah achieves her goal of becoming a radio ringer, yet faces betrayal from Ahmad, illustrating how new conflicts may emerge even after the apparent achievement of the object.

2.2.1.2.3. Final Situation

The final situation marks the restoration of balance after the process of transformation. Although stability is re-established, this condition is structurally and ideologically different from the initial situation. Values, relationships and the subject's position in the

narrative world are redefined based on the outcomes of the previous tests.

Muttaqin et al, (2024, pp. 196-197) also note that the final situation usually settles earlier conflicts by confirming or slightly changing the value system established at the start of the story. This phase gives both closure and guidance, showing that stories move from stability to disorder and then to a new order.

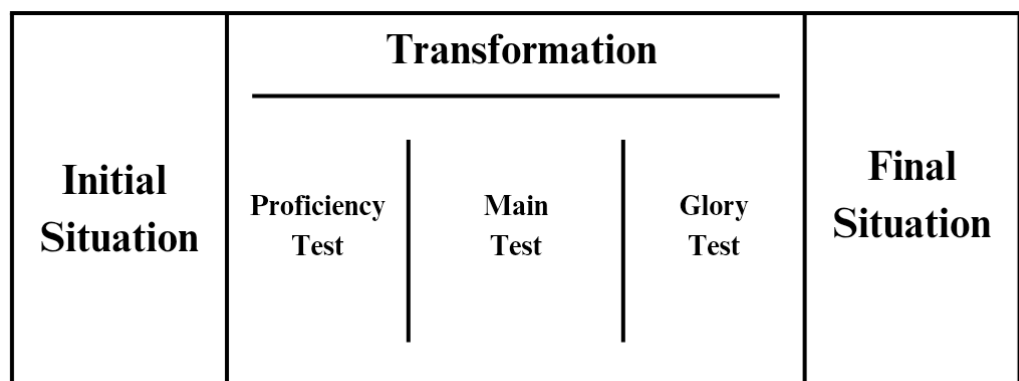


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Altogether, the initial situation, the transformation phase and the final situation form a sequential framework that traces how narrative meaning develops and shifts across the course of the story. Rather than describing isolated events, each stage marks a functional moment in which values, relationships and the subject’s position are tested and redefined. This progression from balance to disruption and toward a reconfigured order provides the temporal basis through

which the actantial roles identified in the previous section can be observed in motion across the narrative.

2.2.1.3. The Relation Between Actantial Model and Functional Structure

The actantial model and the functional structure in Greimas's framework operate in a complementary and inseparable way. The actantial model maps the distribution of roles and relational positions among actants. At the same time, the functional structure explains how these roles are activated, tested and transformed across the stages of the narrative. Together, they provide a structural account of who occupies particular functions in the story and how those functions develop as the narrative progresses.

(Hébert, 2011, p. 74) emphasizes that actantial positions gain full analytical meaning only when understood within the sequence of functional phases. Actants such as the subject or the helper should not be treated as fixed roles, but as positions whose value and influence change according to the success or failure of the subject–object relationship in the initial situation, the transformation phase, and the final situation.

Empirical study support this dynamic perspective. (Wang and Roberts, 2005, pp. 59-66) show that in narratives of personal experience, actantial roles often shift as the story moves through

different functional stages, reflecting changes in identity, authority and social values.

Taken together, the actantial model and the functional structure offer a comprehensive and active for reading narrative not as a sequence of events, but as a system of roles and transformations through which meaning is produced. By identifying who acts, what they pursue and how their roles evolve across the stages, Greimas's framework provides the structural foundation upon which the present study builds its analysis of *The Old Man and The Sea*.

Hence, structural analysis alone does not fully account for the ethical and relational dimensions embedded within the text, particularly those concerning the representation of nature as a living, feminine presence. It is at this point that the framework of ecofeminism becomes necessary, offering interpretive lens through which the structural findings can be read not only as narrative patterns, yet as expressions of a broader ethical vision concerning the relationship between human beings and the natural world.

2.2.2. Karen Joyce Warren Ecofeminism (2000)

Karen J. Warren's ecofeminism is a major approach in feminist environmental ethics that examines the conceptual and ethical connections between the domination of women and the exploitation of nature. This study draws primarily on Warren's (2000) book, *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, supplemented where relevant by her earlier formulation of the logic

domination in Warren (1990). Rather than separating ecological problems as purely environmental issues and gender injustice as purely social concerns, Warren understands both as products of the same structured patterns of thinking. These patterns are sustained by value systems that prioritize separation, control, and superiority, which in turn provide moral justification for various forms of domination in both social and ecological contexts (Warren, 2000, p. 46-49).

Warren further argues that ecofeminism should be understood not only as a form of activism or political advocacy, but as a philosophical framework grounded in ethical reasoning and feminist critique. In this view, moral inquiry does not aim to establish abstract and universal principles. Instead, it focuses on the conceptual patterns that shape how humans interpret, evaluate, and relate to other people and to the natural world (Warren, 2000, p. 43-46). As a result, ecofeminist analysis shifts attention from isolated ethical problems to broader cultural and philosophical assumptions, where domination is often normalized and rarely questioned.

In environmental philosophy, Warren questions traditional ethical models that give moral value to non-human beings only if they have traits like rationality, consciousness, or intelligence. She suggests that moral worth should come from the relationships and responsibilities we have in specific contexts, not from how much something is like a human (Warren, 2000, pp. 74-76; King, 1991, pp. 76-78). This view encourages us to move away from a human-centered approach and instead focus on ethics that

highlight connection, mutual dependence, and responsibility in relationships.

From a phenomenological perspective, this focus on relationships shows that humans are always part of the world around them. People are not just observers of nature, yet they are active participants in ecological systems. Because of this, ethical responsibility comes from real-life experience and direct involvement with the environment, not just from rules that are separate from daily life (Burns, 2008, pp. 115-116). Furthermore, environmental damage is not only a physical or even a political problem, but also a sign that the ethical relationship between humans and the wider world has broken down (Warren, 2000, p. 87-90).

In conclusion, Warren's ecofeminism provides a conceptual foundation for understanding social and ecological injustice as interconnected, inseparable phenomena which shaped by similar hierarchical value structures. By exposing the moral assumptions that support domination, this framework offers an alternative way of interpreting human-nature relations through care, responsibility, and ethical accountability rather than through control and exploitation (Gaard, 2002, pp. 130-132).

2.2.2.1. The Logic of Domination

A central concept in Warren's ecofeminism is the logic of domination, which refers to a pattern of reasoning used to justify the

subordinate position of certain groups by linking difference to claims of lower moral value (Warren, 1990, p. 1). Warren emphasizes that difference itself does not automatically lead to oppression. Domination emerges when differences are organized into hierarchical dualisms that place one group as superior and another as inferior (Warren, 1990, p. 2).

In these dualistic systems, pairs like man/woman, culture/nature, reason/emotion, and human/non-human are set up so the first is seen as powerful, active, and rational, while the second is viewed as passive, dependent, or less valuable. These patterns make domination seem normal or even needed, instead of something that should be questioned (Warren, 2000, p. 46-48).

This way of thinking also appears in cultural stories and symbols. Many cultural and literary works show nature as a feminine, passive figure that can be used or taken advantage of. This reflects patriarchal ideas about women's bodies and roles in society. These images weaken the moral value of both women and nature by making exploitation seem normal or unavoidable. In this way, the logic of domination helps us analyze how stories and metaphors can support environmental harm.

2.2.2.2. Interconnected Forms of Oppression

Another key principle in Warren's framework is the idea that different forms of injustice are interconnected rather than separate. She

argues that sexism, racism, class inequality, colonialism, speciesism, and environmental destruction arise from similar hierarchical patterns of thinking and from the exclusion of certain groups from moral consideration (Warren, 2000, pp. 1-2, 46-49).

Through this perspective, environmental ethics cannot be separated from the issues of social justice. Both are shaped by value systems that prioritize control over coexistence and domination over mutual respect. At the same time, ecofeminism warns against reducing these connections to fixed and strict moral rules. Ethical frameworks that overlook cultural, historical, and economic contexts risk reproducing a new forms of domination under the guise of moral progress (Gaard, 2002, pp. 134-135). As a result, Warren promotes a contextual and plural approach to ethics, where moral responsibility is shaped by specific relationships and situations rather than imposed as a single universal standard (Warren, 2000, p. 67-73).

2.2.2.3. Nature as a Moral Subject

In Warren's ecofeminism, human-centered ethical models are questioned by recognizing nature as a moral subject rather than merely an object of moral judgment. This does not mean assigning human qualities to non-human entities, but rather rejecting the assumption that moral value depends on similarity to human rationality or independence (Warren, 2000, p. 86- 92).

Traditional environmental ethics often base moral status on rational or physical capacities, such as the ability to reason or to feel pain. Warren criticizes this approach because it favors traits that suggest humans are superior to nature. She offers a different model, where moral standing is based on connection, shared vulnerability, and being part of interdependent ecological relationships (Warren, 2000, pp. 74-76).

This view is further supported by an approach that focuses on lived experience, which emphasizes that humans exist as part of the ecological world, rather than as observers outside it. From this viewpoint, moral concern for the environment grows out of the recognition that damage to nature ultimately affects the very conditions of human life (Burns, 2008, p. 115)

2.2.2.4. Feminine Values and an Ethics of Care

An important dimension of Warren's ecofeminism is her focus on values culturally associated with femininity and the development of an ethics of care. She argues that qualities such as empathy, attentiveness, responsibility, and compassion are often marginalized within patriarchal moral systems that prioritize abstract reasoning, universal claims, and rule-based ethics. Ecofeminism therefore emphasizes relational ethics grounded in care, contextual understanding, and mutual responsibility between humans and the natural world (Warren, 2000, pp. 70-75).

Warren disagrees with the idea that women are naturally close to nature. She says that what are called “feminine” values are usually shaped by society and later rejected because they do not fit with ideals like control, independence, and mastery (Warren, 2000, pp. 50-56). Afterward, ecofeminist writers add that care is not just a passive feeling, but an active ethical stance that involves responsibility and real action toward both humans and non-humans (Gaard, 2002, pp. 134-135; King, 1991, pp. 76-80).

2.2.2.5. Ecofeminism as an Ethical Framework

Taken as a whole, Karen J. Warren’s ecofeminism can be understood as a contextual and plural ethical framework that not only critiques domination, but also offers an alternative moral orientation based on relationality, interconnection, and ethical care (Warren, 2000, pp. 46-49, 67-75).

Instead of supporting moral principles that claim universal validity, Warren stresses the importance of ethical reasoning that pays attention to cultural, historical, and ecological contexts. Ecofeminist theorists also point out that ethical models forcing a single answer, without considering real social and material situations, can end up repeating the same hierarchies they want to challenge (Gaard, 2002, pp. 134-135). Warren’s focus on moral pluralism helps prevent the logic of domination from returning in ethical theory (Warren, 2000, pp. 126-135).

In the context of this study, Warren's ecofeminist framework provides the ethical and conceptual basis for examining how relationships between human and non-human elements in *The Old Man and the Sea* are structured through patterns of domination, care, and interdependence. To move beyond a purely thematic reading, this research employs Greimas's actantial model and functional structure as analytical tools to trace how natural elements, such as the sea and the marlin, function as actants within the narrative. By integrating ecofeminist ethics with a structural narrative approach, the study seeks to address the research questions by revealing how gendered values and moral relations are organized and negotiated across the roles of subject, object, helper, and opponent in Santiago's journey.

2.2.3. The Operational Framework of Greimas's Narrative Theory and Karen J. Warren's Ecofeminism in This Study

This study applies A. J. Greimas's narrative theory and Karen J. Warren's ecofeminist theory in a gradual and complementary manner. Each theoretical framework plays a distinct role in the analytical process. Greimas's theory functions as a structural analytical tool, while Warren's ecofeminism operates as an ethical interpretive framework.

The first stage of the analysis employs Greimas's narrative theory, particularly the actantial model and functional structure, to map narrative roles in this study. This analysis focuses on how human characters and

non-human elements operate within the narrative system. In line with Greimas's view that actants are abstract narrative functions rather than fixed characters, natural elements such as the sea are examined for their roles in shaping the story's movement. Through this structural mapping, the sea is understood not merely as a background setting but as an entity that actively shapes the protagonist's journey, conflicts, and experiences.

After the narrative positions and functions are identified, the analysis proceeds to the next stage by applying Karen J. Warren's ecofeminist theory. At this stage, ecofeminism is used to interpret the ethical and symbolic meanings of the roles identified through Greimas's framework. This study specifically focuses on three central ideas in Warren's ecofeminism, there are, the logic of domination, interconnected oppression and feminine values and care of ethics.

Warren's concept of the logic of domination explains how hierarchical thinking legitimizes control over women and nature within patriarchal systems. The second concept, the interconnected oppression, helps explain the symbolic feminization of the sea as *la mar*. From this perspective, the sea's presence in the narrative can be interpreted as a feminine subject that participates in the protagonist's spiritual and existential journey. The third concept, the feminine values and care of ethics, becomes central in interpreting Santiago's emotional and ethical attitude toward the sea and other natural elements.

Within this operational framework, the sea's position as a narrative actant becomes the foundation for ecofeminist interpretation. When the sea functions as a helper, an opponent or an existential space within the actantial structure, these roles are interpreted through ecofeminist ethics to reveal a human nature relationship grounded in interdependence rather than control. The narrative, therefore, reflects not the conquest of nature but an ethical encounter between human endurance and the living presence of the natural world.

This study does not attempt to apply Karen J. Warren's ecofeminist philosophy in its entirety. Instead, the analysis selectively employs concepts most relevant to the novella's narrative structure and thematic focus to maintain theoretical clarity and a close connection between structural analysis and textual interpretation. Through this two stage analytical approach, the two frameworks complement one another. Greimas provides the structural foundation for understanding how the sea operates within the narrative system, while Warren's ecofeminism offers an ethical perspective on interpreting the sea's feminine representation. Together, these frameworks enable the study to trace ecofeminist harmony through the narrative structure of *The Old Man and the Sea*.