

## Hemingway's Internal Deviation from His Primary Norm in *The Old Man and the Sea*

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**Abstract:** Ernest Hemingway is well known for the use of short and simple sentences when writing his novels since he aims at '[getting] the most out of the least'. This sentence-simplicity style is Hemingway's primary norm. *The Old Man and the Sea* is the perfect example of this. However, in this novel, he sometimes uses long, complex sentences to describe certain points, and this sentence-complexity style can be said to be Hemingway's secondary norm. In this case, there is a deviation within Hemingway's own style of writing – an internal deviation. The deviation is obviously done on purpose as a kind of distraction so as to make the readers aware of the special and important 'message' that Hemingway wants to convey. In this novel, the deviation is used to build the elements of suspense and foreshadowing in much detail.

**Key words:** style of writing, primary norm, secondary norm, internal deviation, distraction, suspense, foreshadowing

The study of an author's style of writing belongs to stylistics and according to Wales (1994)

in many respects, ..., stylistics is close to literary criticism and PRACTICAL CRITICISM. By far the most common kind of material studied is LITERARY, and attention is largely TEXT-centred. .... The goal of most stylistic studies is not simply to describe the formal features of texts for their own sake, but in order to show their FUNCTIONAL significance for the INTERPRETATION of the text; or in order to relate literary effects to linguistic 'causes' where these are felt important to be relevant (pp. 437-438).

Furthermore, Wales states that we need intuition and interpretive skills in stylistics. However, "... to avoid vague and impressionistic judgments

about the way formal features are manipulated, ... stylistics draws on the models and terminology provided by whatever aspects of linguistics are felt to be relevant" (p. 438).

In studying style, which at its simplest refers to "... the manner of expression in writing or speaking" (p. 435), we may relate it to particular authors. In this respect, style can be defined as "...the choice of items, and their distribution and patterning" (p. 436).

Some authors are known to have the style of writing which makes them special and distinctive from any other author. Ernest Hemingway, one of the American greatest novelists of 'The Lost Generation', is undoubtedly an author with a consistent use of writing style. His powerful, style-forming mastery of the art of narration, in fact, made him awarded the Noble Prize for Literature in 1954.

*The Old Man and the Sea* is his masterpiece and it gave him the Pulitzer Prize in 1952. It tells about Santiago, an old fisherman, who has not caught any fish for eighty-four days. On the eighty-fifth day, however, Santiago catches a giant marlin. When sailing back home, a group of sharks attack and eat the marlin and leave only its skeleton.

Hemingway is best known for the use of sentence-simplicity style of writing. He uses short and simple sentences which are relatively easier to understand. "The simple style and careful structuring of Hemingway's fiction is famous. ...The aim of his style was "to get the most out of the least" (High, 1986, p. 147).

Hemingway's sentences are usually short and simple. "Only rarely does he use adjectives ... the language is rarely emotional. Rather, it controls emotions; it holds them in" (p. 147).

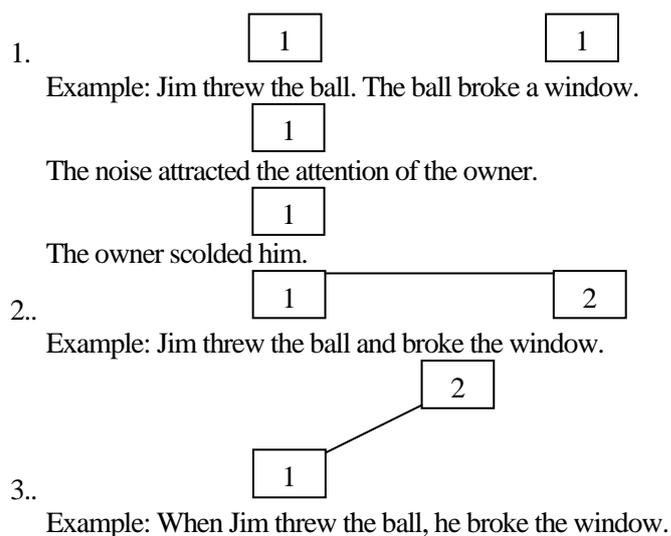
## INTERNAL DEVIATION

One approach to style is to compare one set of features with another in terms of a DEVIATION from a NORM. Of course, it does not mean that style itself is deviant in the sense of 'abnormal'. Rather, we match any text or piece of language against the linguistic norms of its genre, or its period, and the common core of the language as a whole (Wales, 1994, p. 437).

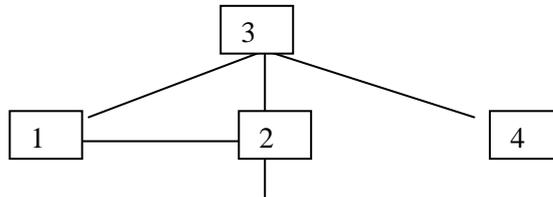
Internal deviation is generally presented in poetry, but it can also be found in a novel. "Internal deviation explains the prominence, not uncommon in prose fiction, of an ordinary, even banal piece of language which seems to gain its impact from the context in which it is found"

(Leech and Short, 1994, p. 55). Internal deviation happens because there is a change in the language used and it is something different from what the readers have expected or believed before. 'Features of language within that text, which depart from the norm of the text itself: that is, they may 'stand out' against the background of what the text has led us to expect" (p. 55). In other words, internal deviation happens because there is a secondary norm in the text. "The norm which is 'attained' by stylistic consistency in a text might be called a SECONDARY NORM, since it is established by deviance from the PRIMARY (relative) NORM which determines our more general expectations of language" (p. 55). In this case, Ernest Hemingway's primary norm is sentence-simplicity style; yet, he intentionally uses a secondary norm, namely sentence-complexity style.

From the reference books that I have read so far, there are no clear definitions of simplicity and complexity styles of writing. Thus, in this article I think it is necessary to make some limitation of what are defined as simplicity and complexity styles of writing. Based on Leech and Short's opinion, sentence-simplicity style can be represented by three diagrams. Each box represents one simple sentence. A horizontal linking line as that in number 2 represents coordination, while an oblique line as that in number 3 represents subordination.



Other than the three diagrams above, the sentence will be regarded as sentence-complexity style. One example of a sentence with a complexity style is as follows:



Example: When Jim threw the ball and broke the window, he was scolded by the owner, whose attention was attracted by the noise.

According to Crystal (1987, p. 94), a subject (the topic) plus a predicate (what is being said about the topic), which are begun by a capital letter and ended by a full stop, are enough to be called a sentence. But whether a sentence is called a simple or complex sentence, will be decided by its structure.

A simple sentence consists of one clause only (Leech and Short, 1994, p. 217). A simple sentence "... represents a naïve narrative style in which there is no indication of the relationship between events, or of their relative importance" (p.219). In other words, each clause stands on its own feet, and is considered to have the equal importance with the others. A writer may write his sentences in sentence-simplicity style and the effect on the readers is that they will experience the events one by one (p. 220).

"A complex sentence consists of more than one clause. In a complex sentence, the clauses are related to one another by subordination or by coordination" (p.217). According to Crystal (1987),

coordination is one of the two main ways of making sentences more complex. The other way is known as subordination, or 'embedding'.

The essential difference is that in the former the clauses that are linked are of equal grammatical status, whereas in the latter, one clause functions as part of another (the main clause) (p.95).

Examples of coordinating conjunctions are *and*, *but*, *or*; and those of subordinating conjunctions are *when*, *if*, *why*, *whether*, *because*, *since*, *etc.* (Jackson, 1980, p. 65).

A complex sentence "... gives and withholds information, subordinates some ideas to others more important, coordinates those of

equal weight, and ties into a neat package as many suggestions, modifiers, and asides as the mind can attend to in one stretch” (Leech and Short, 1994, p. 219).

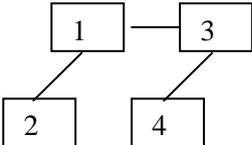
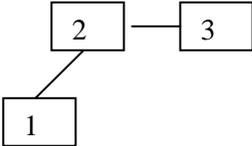
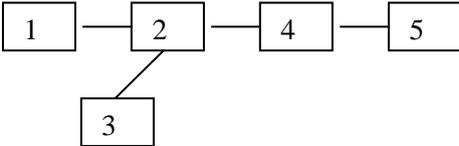
The aim of the writer in using sentence-complexity style is to present the readers with a complex structure of ideas, so as to make the readers feel a complex reading experience. By reading sentences that have sentence-complexity style, the readers will experience the events as an articulate and complex whole (pp. 219-220).

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the following part I present the analysis of Hemingway's sentences in *The Old Man and the Sea* which use sentence-complexity style which is used to support the literary aspects such as to support the plot, namely suspense and foreshadowing.

**Table 1. Data 1 of Sentence-Complexity Style to Support Foreshadowing:**

|   |                              |   |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| a | Sentence of Complexity Style | 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 the great brown mountains. |
|   | Form                         | <pre> graph LR     1[1] --- 2[2]     2 --- 4[4]     2 --- 3[3]             </pre>   |
|   | Main Idea                    | dreaming of Africa with its beautiful beaches   |
| b | Sentence of Complexity Style | He lived along that coast now every night and in his dreams he heard the surf roar and saw the native boats come riding through it.   |
|   | Form                         | <pre> graph LR     1[1] --- 2[2]     2 --- 3[3]             </pre>  |
|   | Main Idea                    | dreaming of living near the beautiful beach   |
| c | Sentence of Complexity Style | He smelled the tar and oakum of the deck as he slept and he smelled the smell of Africa that the land breeze brought at morning.  |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Form                           |    |
| Main Idea                      | smelling the smell of the boat and of Africa  |
| d Sentence of Complexity Style | Usually when he smelled the land breeze he woke up and dressed to go and wake the boy.  |
| Form                           |    |
| Main Idea                      | not awakened but going on dreaming the beautiful dream  |
| e Sentence of Complexity Style | But tonight the smell of the land breeze came very early and he knew it was too early in his dream and went on dreaming to see the white peaks of the Islands rising from the sea and then he dreamed of the different harbours and roadsteads of the Canary Islands. |
| Form                           |    |
| Main Idea                      | In the dream he sees different harbours and roadsteads of Canary Islands. (Hemingway, 1952, p. 22)  |

This part of the story refers to the old man's unusual dream. He dreams about something beautiful and it pleases him. He also dreams about the new harbours which the boats step on. This serves as a foreshadowing that something different and unusual will happen the next day, the day when he is determined to go to the sea to fish again, the day when something extraordinary will take place.

**Table 2. Data 2 of Sentence-Complexity Style to Support Suspense**

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Sentence of Complexity Style | 'Now!' he said aloud and struck hard with both hands, gained a yard of line and then struck again and again, swinging with each arm alternately on the cord with all the strength of his arms and the pivoted weight of his body. |
| Form                         |   |
| Main Idea (p. 42)            | Screaming, striking hard, gaining a yard of line, striking again and again, swinging with each arm using all his strength   |

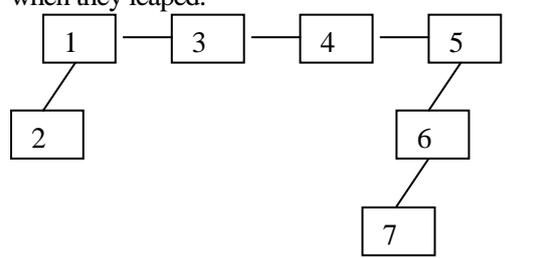
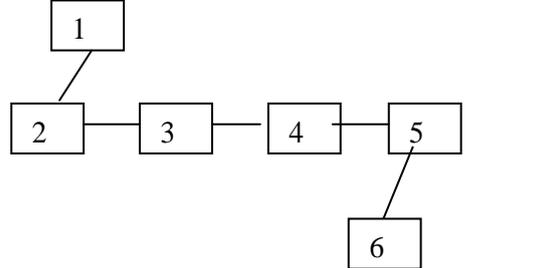
Hemingway's idea here is to describe vividly the old man's great effort in trying to catch the big fish. All the verbs in this part, struck, gained, struck, swinging, are used to strengthen the writer's aim, namely to build the readers' suspense. He also makes the readers convinced and able to visualize that the old man's effort is really great, especially with the use of such adverbs as aloud, hard, again and again, alternately, with the strength of his arms and the pivoted weight of his body.

**Table 3. Data 3 of Sentence-Complexity Style to Support Suspense**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Sentence of Complexity Style | The clouds were building up now for the trade wind and he looked ahead and saw a flight of wild ducks etching themselves against the sky over the water, then blurring, then etching again and he knew no man was ever alone on the sea. |
| Form                         |  |
| Main Idea (p. 57)            | the old man's being alone in the middle of the sea   |

In this part, the old man realizes that he is completely alone in the middle of the sea. He is just accompanied by the targeted fish and the ducks that he sees etching and blurring in the sky. This condition is clearly portrayed and this adds to the readers' suspense whether or not the old man is able to catch the fish and come back safe to the shore.

**Table 4. Data 4 of Sentence-Complexity Style to Support Foreshadowing**

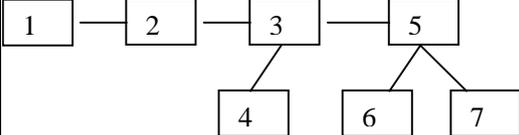
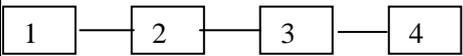
|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| a Sentence of Complexity Style | He did not dream of the lions but instead of a vast school of porpoise that stretched for eight or ten miles and it was in the time of their mating and they would leap high into the air and return into the same hole they had made in the water when they leaped. |
| Form                           |    |
| Main Idea                      | dreaming of a vast school of porpoise which jump high into the air   |
| b Sentence of Complexity Style | Then he dreamed that he was in the village on his bed and there was a norther and he was very cold and his right arm was asleep because his head had rested on it instead of a pillow.   |
| Form                           |    |
| Main Idea                      | dreaming of sleeping on his bed in the village   |

|   |                              |   |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| c | Sentence of Complexity Style | After that he began to dream of the long yellow beach and he saw the first of the lions come down on to it in the early dark and then the other lions came and he rested his chin on the wood of the bows where the ship lay anchored with the evening off-shore breeze and he waited to see if there would be more lions and he was happy. |
|   | Form                         | <pre> graph LR     1[1] --- 2[2] --- 3[3] --- 4[4] --- 6[6] --- 8[8]     4 --- 5[5]     6 --- 7[7]             </pre>   |
|   | Main Idea (p. 75)            | dreaming of seeing lions coming   |

The old man usually dreams about lions. This time, however, he has the strange dream of seeing a vast school of porpoise first and then some lions at the end of his dream. With this strange and different dream, I am of the opinion that a different condition will happen to the old man, that is, he will get the fish. Therefore, this is a brilliant foreshadowing for the readers.

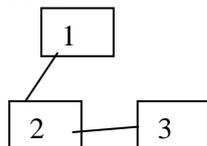
**Table 5. Data 5 of Sentence-Complexity Style to Support Suspense**

|   |                              |   |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| a | Sentence of Complexity Style | He took all his pain and what was left of his strength and his long-gone pride and he put it against the fish's agony and the fish came over onto his side and swam gently on his side, his bill almost touching the planking of the skiff, and started to pass the boat, long deep, wide, silver and barred with purple and interminable in the water. |
|   | Form                         | <pre> graph LR     3[3] --- 4[4] --- 5[5] --- 6[6] --- 7[7]     3 --- 1[1]     3 --- 2[2]             </pre>  |
|   | Main Idea                    | taking all his strength and putting it to the fish's agony  |

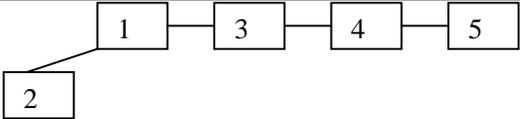
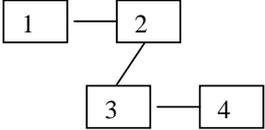
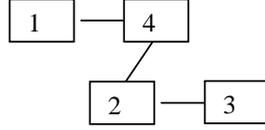
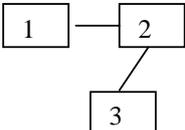
|   |                              |   |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| b | Sentence of Complexity Style | The old man dropped the line and put his foot on it and lifted the harpoon as high as he could and drove it down with all his strength he had just summoned, into the fish's side just behind the great chest fin that rose high in the air to the altitude of the man's chest. |
|   | Form                         |   |
|   | Main Idea                    | dropping the line, putting his foot on it, lifting the harpoon, driving it down with all his strength   |
| c | Sentence of Complexity Style | He felt the iron go in and he leaned on it and drove it further and then pushed all his weight after it.  |
|   | Form                         |   |
|   | Main Idea (pp. 85-87)        | feeling the iron go in, leaning on it, driving it further, pushing all his weight after it  |

In these sentences, Hemingway describes the old man's battle with the fish. The readers are made to feel the suspense and also to realize that the old man's struggle is as long and complex as shown by the use of the complex sentences above.

**Table 6. Data 6 of Sentence-Complexity Style to Support Suspense**

|   |                              |   |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| a | Sentence of Complexity Style | They were hateful sharks, bad-smelling, scavengers as well as killers, and when they were hungry they would bite at an oar or the rudder of a boat. |
|   | Form                         |    |
|   | Main Idea                    | <u>hateful, bad-smelling deadly sharks</u>  |
| b | Sentence of                  | It was these sharks that would cut the turtles' legs  |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Complexity Style               | and flippers off when the turtles were asleep on the surface, and they would hit a man in the water, if they were hungry, even if the man had no smell of fish blood nor of fish slime on him.   |
| Form                           | <pre> graph TD     1[1] --- 4[4]     1 --&gt; 2[2]     2 --&gt; 3[3]     4 --&gt; 5[5]     5 --&gt; 6[6]     </pre>  |
| Main Idea                      | killing anything if they are hungry  |
| c Sentence of Complexity Style | One turned and went out of sight under the skiff and the old man could feel the skiff shake as he jerked and pulled on the fish.   |
| Form                           | <pre> graph TD     1[1] --- 2[2]     2 --- 3[3]     3 --&gt; 4[4]     4 --- 5[5]     </pre>  |
| Main Idea                      | one of the fish switches the old man's interests   |
| d Sentence of Complexity Style | The other watched the old man with his slitted yellow eyes and then came in fast with his half circle of jaws wide to hit the fish where he had already been bitten.   |
| Form                           | <pre> graph TD     1[1] --- 2[2]     2 --&gt; 3[3]     </pre>  |
| Main Idea                      | the other shark bites the marlin   |
| e Sentence of Complexity Style | The line showed clearly on the top of his brown head and back where the brain joined the spiral cord and the old man drove the knife on the oar into the juncture, withdrew it, and drove it in again into the shark's yellow cat-like eyes. |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Form                           |    |
| Main Idea                      | stabbing a knife into the shark's eyes   |
| f Sentence of Complexity Style | But the shark came out fast with his head out and the old man hit him squarely in the centre of his flat-topped head as his nose came out of water and lay against the fish.   |
| Form                           |   |
| Main Idea                      | hitting the shark  |
| g Sentence of Complexity Style | The two sharks closed together and as he saw the one nearest him open his jaws and sink them into the silver side of the fish, he raised the club high and brought it down heavy and slamming on to the top of the shark's broad head. |
| Form                           |    |
| Main Idea                      | The shark tries to bite the marlin   |
| h Sentence of Complexity Style | of But he felt the rigidity of bone too and he struck the shark once more hard across the point of the nose as he slid down from the fish.   |
| Form                           |   |
| Main Idea                      | the old man slams the shark's head<br>(pp. 100,101,105)  |

The eight sentences above show the battle between the old man and the deadly sharks. Hemingway's use of complexity style gives great details

of the battle so that the readers are able to imagine the event clearly and this, in effect, builds the readers' suspense.

## CONCLUSION

Having analysed the internal deviation in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and how it is used to support the suspense and foreshadowing, I think Hemingway has succeeded in making the story more interesting and enjoyable as well as less monotonous because the readers will always be kept in suspense and curiosity to know how the story is developed.

As for the use of the writing style, Hemingway has deviated from his own principle, and it is intentionally done to support the elements of plot in the novel. This is not something simple for an author to do for it needs high skill and creativity. However, this skill and creativity of the author has to be responded with the same skill and creativity of the readers. Otherwise, there will be no appreciation for the author's extraordinary writing style, not to mention that the readers will not be able to get the author's implicit meanings, which, in my opinion, is more important than getting the explicit meanings.

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