Animals As Symbols Essay, Research Paper

Animals as Symbols

In both of Ernest Hemingway s short stories, The Snows of Kilimanjaro and The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber, he uses animals as symbols to the character’s death. In each of the stories the animals are used differently to symbolize the death. In The Snows of Kilimanjaro the animal is a hyena. The hyena moves closer and closer to him as death approaches.

It moved up closer to him and now he could not speak to it, and when it saw he could not speak it came a little closer, and now he tried to send it away without speaking, but it moved in on him so its weight was all upon his chest, and while it crouched there he could not move, or speak, he heard the woman say, Bwana is asleep now. Take the cot up very gently and carry it into the tent. (25)

Then shortly after the hyena is used to show his death as the pressure is lifted from his chest as he dies. He could not speak to tell her to make it go away and it crouched now, heavier, so he could not breath. And then, while they lifted the cot, suddenly it was all right and the weight went from his chest (25). In the story The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber the lion is not used in Macomber s death. It is used as a symbol that scares him at night.

It had started had started the night before when he had wakened ad heard the lion roaring somewhere up along the river. It was a deep sound and at the end there were sort of coughing grunts that made him seem just outside the tent, and when Francis Macomber woke in the night to hear it he was afraid. (129)

The next night after Macomber had witnessed the lion s death; the lion appears in his dream the night before his death. woke suddenly, frightened in a dream of the bloody-headed lion standing over him, and listening while his heart pounded (141). In both of Hemmingway s stories he uses animals to symbolize the character’s death, without saying in the story that the animal symbolizes the death.