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Hemingway's Cante Jondo: *The Old Man and The Sea*

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Abstract

The Old Man and The Sea leads to a reading of *The Epistle of James* through Ernest Hemingway's deep understanding of Spanish Catholicism and Cuban culture; Hemingway's greatest work, it is his cante jondo, his "deep song" in homage to the suffering of his generation. Cante jondo, like *The Old Man and The Sea*, moves at a ballad tempo, speaks to life and death struggles, and embraces sorrow and joy in equal measure. Cante jondo, similarly, casts a mournful tone in its flamenco rhythms not unlike that Hemingway reveals in *The Old Man and The Sea*. What *Flamenco Sketches* is to the lexicon of Miles Davis—a highly-crafted, lyrical, deeply spiritual, and passionate expression of Davis' jazz aesthetic framed in the cante jondo of Spanish flamenco music—*The Old Man and The Sea* is to Hemingway's work: an impassioned expression of Hemingway's lyric voice evoking the soul of Spanish culture and Cuban culture, rich in spiritual and mythological connections.

Santiago is a fitting protagonist for Hemingway's greatest work. Like Hemingway all of his life as a writer, Santiago is willing to enter the seas of life with joy for the journey before him, with faith to endure any struggle and a will to survive. Cuba, as the contemporary Cuban scholar Mary Cruz relates, "is a land of Santiagos" (Cruz 204). Cuba is a land of fishermen poor in material possessions but wealthy beyond measure in spirit. It is no coincidence that Hemingway comes upon the tale of a Cuban fisherman towed out to sea by a great marlin, and after four days, rescued by other fishermen who drove off the sharks circling his small skiff, lashed the skiff to their craft, and brought him home to Havana in 1934 (Scribner xxvii).

Hemingway is in Cuba in the early 1930s because he, like Santiago, follows his calling. Hemingway's calling leads him to his greatest catch as a writer, just as Santiago's refusal to abandon his calling leads him to his greatest catch, the spiritual victory at the end of his odyssey at high sea on the Gulf Stream. Santiago's journey of the soul in *The Old Man and The Sea* is at one with his outer journey to catch the great marlin in the hurricane season in the Caribbean, when he goes to sea knowing that death may storm down upon him.

Santiago, like Hemingway and other artists of his time, does not hesitate to follow his calling in the face of death. We witness his pain, his suffering, and his survival on his four-day journey as Hemingway witnesses the pain, suffering, and survival of his comrades in desperate circumstances throughout his life: in Northern Italy in the Great War, in the mountains of the Guadarrama and the streets of Madrid in the Spanish Civil War, and in Europe in the Second World War.

Cante jondo, at its core, is a classical flamenco expression of suffering. Hemingway's generation suffers in its struggle to defeat totalitarianism like no other generation in American history. *The Old Man and The Sea* reads to me as only natural for Hemingway to write. Ultimately, it is his destiny as a writer. Everything in his life as a writer directs him to create this passionate and lyrical story of a man's struggle to fulfill his destiny. I argue *The Old Man and The Sea* is Hemingway's cante jondo, his "deep song" for the tremendous sacrifices his generation endures to sustain Western culture in the face of the oppressive forces of fascism and communism in Asia and Europe;

likewise, it is Hemingway's lyrical "deep song" inspired by a Cuban fisherman in 1934 who goes far on a journey for a great marlin on the Gulf Stream and loses his dream catch to sharks on his return to his home shores of Cuba (Scribner xxvii).

Introduction

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the seeds of *The Old Man and The Sea* are already in Hemingway's mind, as evidenced by a letter Hemingway writes to his editor, Max Perkins, on 7 Feb., 1939, from Cuba:

. . . about the old commercial fisherman who fought the swordfish all alone in his skiff for 4 days and four nights and the sharks finally eating it after he had it alongside and could not get it into the boat. That's a wonderful story of the Cuban coast.

I'm going out with old Carlos in his skiff so as to get it all right. Every thing he does and every thing he thinks in all that long fight with the boat out of sight of all the other boats all alone on the sea.

(Hemingway, from Brucoli 273)

Twelve years later, Hemingway writes *The Old Man and The Sea*. *The Old Man and The Sea* reveals his excellence as a lyrical storyteller like none of his other works, and at the same time, reflects on themes of courage and love evident in previous works, such as *For Whom The Bell Tolls*. What is primary in Hemingway is a love for courage, and that is as true of Santiago's bravery in *The Old Man and The Sea* as it is of Robert Jordan's courage in *For Whom The Bell Tolls*. What is crucial in Hemingway is a love for life, and that is as true of Santiago's cheerfulness in the face of poverty as it is of the ancient warrior Anselmo's humble, joyful zest for being alive in *For Whom The Bell Tolls*. What is vital in Hemingway is a love for love itself: witness Catherine Barkley and Frederic Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*, Robert Jordan and Maria in *For Whom the Bell*

Tolls, and the love Santiago shows Manolin in *The Old Man and The Sea* by teaching him by example that to follow one's dream frees one's soul.

The substance of Hemingway's work is what echoes beyond the song of his style: men and women in and out of love, men fighting in seemingly lost causes, men accepting their destiny in the face of death for the sake of a greater good. *The Old Man and The Sea* reaches heights Hemingway never previously attains, nor does he reach again, because Hemingway is not looking at the bull's eye of his art when he writes *The Old Man and The Sea*.

The Japanese have a proverb: the Zen master strikes the bullseye because he is not looking at the center of the target. With *The Old Man and The Sea*, a story Hemingway waits nearly twenty years to strike at—not by looking at the center of the target, not by taking the bull by the horns—Hemingway is able to go beyond all previous aesthetic achievements because he waits for the story to flow in him. Like cante jondo master guitarists, like the magnificent ancient Greek poet Homer, and like Miles Davis at his best, Hemingway does not force the rhythm when he writes *The Old Man and The Sea* in the winter of 1950-51 in Cuba. Like Hemingway in his writing of *The Old Man and The Sea*, Miles Davis captures the soul of cante jondo with his landmark jazz ballad *Flamenco Sketches* on April 22, 1959 in New York City, United States of America. Hemingway's greatness is his portrayal of the hero's adventure in Santiago's journey at high sea, a quest story as old as Homer told with all the classic tragic tones of cante jondo and completely convincing in the twentieth century.

Hemingway's true greatness is not his innovation as a stylist; the jewel-like

precision of his understated prose is not his greatest gift to literature. Hemingway's greatness is that he sees Greek tragedy in the Spanish bullfights; Hemingway's greatness is that he re-casts Don Quixote as Santiago in *The Old Man and The Sea*; Hemingway's greatness is that he finds a way at the end of *The Old Man and The Sea* for Manolin, the young fisherman and apprentice to Santiago, to convince his seemingly-defeated mentor that life is more beautiful when we embrace and again enter the seas of our dreams—a lesson from a work Hemingway is familiar with since his youth: Homer's *The Odyssey*.

The lesson of Homer's *The Odyssey*—that a journey to sea will reward a man with a spiritual journey in the currents of his soul beyond all calculation—rises in *The Old Man and The Sea* like a wave to a beach in Cuba, and sings in Hemingway's greatest work like a cante jondo ballad. Like Miles Davis on *Flamenco Sketches*, Hemingway is beyond categories in his craftsmanship of *The Old Man and The Sea*. His art in *The Old Man and The Sea* transcends cultures, languages, and time itself. Hemingway is a searcher, and in *The Old Man and The Sea*, he gives us a searcher, Santiago, whose search is the same as Hemingway's, Miles Davis', and Homer's: the journey to achieve, and sustain, a man's calling.

Hemingway's Cante Jondo

Cante jondo is the “deep song” of Spanish flamenco music (Niles 10). Cante jondo “has been called the song of the tragic sense of life” by flamenco scholar and dancer Doris Niles (Niles 10). In *The Art of Flamenco*, the writer and flamenco guitarist Donn E. Pohren identifies cante jondo as being paramount in flamenco, noting that another name for cante jondo is cante grande, which is Spanish for “great, full-blooded, grand song” (Pohren 48). Pohren distinguishes cante jondo from other forms of flamenco for its somber, rich, classical essence and calls it “pure cante, the trunk from which all other cantes branch” (Pohren 48). Cante jondo, like *The Old Man and The Sea*, bears a spiritual heart within it: “in its oldest form it was derived from ancient religious chants and songs, which later developed into a more generalized lament of life” (Pohren 48).

Santiago’s journey in *The Old Man and The Sea* begins with a lamentation for not having caught a fish for eighty-four days (OMAS 1). As a professional fisherman, Santiago suffers in his gut and in his hut for enduring his struggle to sustain his calling. We meet Hemingway’s ancient hero in the first sentence of *The Old Man and The Sea*: “He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish” (OMAS 1).

In Spanish and Cuban culture, Santiago means St. James of Zebedee, one of Christ’s Apostles and author of *The Epistle of James* in *The New Testament*. St. James of Zebedee (Santiago del Zebedeo in Spanish) is, like Hemingway’s Santiago, a fisherman. Like *The Epistle of James*, *The Old Man and The Sea* speaks to man’s struggle to maintain his dignity against all odds: Santiago sails in hurricane season, he teaches the

young fisherman Manolin to be tenacious in the face of poverty and hunger. Santiago goes far for the sake of his dream, and his return to his village gains him a spiritual victory beyond all reckoning.

Hemingway's passion for Spain and Cuba is such that all but one of his major works are set largely in Spain and Cuba: *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), *For Whom The Bell Tolls* (1940), and *The Old Man and The Sea* (1952). The only exception is his World War I-era novel set in Italy and Switzerland, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). Santiago's name in itself reveals Hemingway's passion for Spanish culture, a passion that the Spanish novelist Salvador de Madariaga addresses from Madrid in a eulogy for Hemingway in 1961:

Without his meaning it, Hemingway [unveils] to his country and to the world many Iberian aspects until then badly misunderstood, which he is able to do possibly because of his familiarity and almost obsession with those essentials of the Spanish ethos: love, death and eternity . . .

(Castillo-Puche 332)

One aspect of *The Old Man and The Sea* and its relationship to Cuban culture that has seen little scrutiny is that there are only four ways to translate the name James into Spanish: Diego, Jacobo, Jaime, and Santiago.

As noted, Santiago is the Spanish translation for the Apostle James. Hemingway writes *The Old Man and The Sea* in Cuba from late December of 1950 to mid-February of 1951 (Baker 489). He keeps a home—the Finca Vigia, overlooking the village of San Francisco de Paula roughly six miles from Havana—in Cuba from the 26th of December,

1939 until 1959. Hemingway “comes to know San Francisco de Paula and the fishermen and farmers and their families very well, indeed, the great panorama of Cuban culture, all of Cuba” (Barroso 29.9.97).

Hemingway converts to Catholicism in 1927 and begins fishing in Cuba and the Caribbean in the late 1920s (Brian 74-77). He makes a port call in 1919 in Valencia, Spain, on his way back to America from World War I. He returns to Spain in the early 1920s. Spain is the last foreign country he journeys in before his death in 1961. He writes what is still regarded as the most thorough and compelling book on bullfighting by a writer born outside of Spain, *Death in the Afternoon*, in 1932. *The Sun Also Rises*, his first novel, is set largely in Spain, as are many of his short stories in the 1920s.

He finishes *For Whom The Bell Tolls*, a novel of the Spanish Civil War, in Cuba in 1940. *The Old Man and The Sea* reads in certain respects as an epilogue to *For Whom The Bell Tolls*. *The Old Man and The Sea*—perhaps Hemingway’s letter to his comrades in Spain not to give up their struggles for freedom—receives both the Pulitzer Prize for Literature in 1952 and singular note among Hemingway’s works in his Nobel Prize Award for Literature citation in 1954. Hemingway swears he will never return to Spain while Franco rules, yet Hemingway journeys to Spain in 1953 in the wake of Santiago’s return to shore in *The Old Man and The Sea*.

Santiago’s struggle at high sea begins with Hemingway’s knowledge of the odyssey of a Cuban fisherman’s fight for survival on the Gulf Stream in 1934. His editor for *The Old Man and The Sea*, Charles Scribner, Jr., tells in *The Enduring Hemingway* the evolution of *The Old Man and The Sea* from anecdote to short story to novel, and

how Santiago's story emerges from Hemingway's knowledge of a similar tale (Scribner xxvii). Mary Cruz, author of *Hemingway y El Gran Rio Azul/Hemingway and the Great Blue River*, reinforces Scribner's assertion with her own scholarship detailing how Hemingway's good friend, fisherman and mate on Hemingway's cruiser *Pilar*, Carlos Guterrez, tells Hemingway in 1934 of a Cuban fisherman's four-day voyage that ends with a marlin lashed to the side of a small skiff while sharks circle the boat (Cruz 204).

The fact that Hemingway let Santiago's journey rest in his subconscious from 1934 until 1951 leads me to believe that the wandering journey of Hemingway in that same time, a journey propelled by his passion and professionalism as a writer, fuels the "wandering journey" nature of Santiago's odyssey. Santiago's journey in *The Old Man and The Sea* mirrors Hemingway's journey as a writer all his life. Santiago carries a dream in the face of death, for September is hurricane season in Cuba, and he knowingly sails in harm's way; Hemingway willingly goes in harm's way for the sake of his dreams as a writer all his life, in Turkey, Greece, Spain, China, the Caribbean, and Europe.

Likewise, Hemingway ends Santiago's journey with a dream, showing that to dream is to journey within one's soul, and to journey is to live a dream born in one's soul. Santiago returns with nothing but a shard of his victory, a marlin's skeleton fit for the pity of his fellow fishermen and the commentary of tourists, and the last image of Santiago within *The Old Man and The Sea* is of him dreaming of lions on the coast of West Africa from his youth at sea (OMAS 127).

Hemingway is able to convincingly tell the story of Santiago's journeys and

dreams in *The Old Man and The Sea* because Hemingway, like Santiago, lives his dreams all his life; his entire life is testament to the truth that to dream is to journey, and to journey is to dream. His art expresses the dreams he lives in Europe, Africa, Spain, Cuba and America. His life as a writer affirms in a central way his understanding of classical mythology, and bears on my review of the connection between mythology and *The Old Man and The Sea*.

Perhaps for Hemingway in January of 1951, his subconscious emerges from “the deep,” from the depths of his experiences and visions and dreams and journeys and aesthetic values, and cuts a trail for Santiago to journey in his writing of *The Old Man and The Sea*. There is a poetic intensity and depth of feeling in *The Old Man and The Sea* unlike anything Hemingway ever writes. Perhaps all the mythology he ever learns—the Greek myths he studies in his youth, the African legends he hears from the Masai in the 1920s and 1930s, the folklore of Spain and Cuba, and his deep immersion in the Bible from an early age—bears witness in his tale of Santiago’s struggle on the Gulf Stream, *The Old Man and The Sea*.

I argue that by choosing to name his fisherman Santiago, Hemingway weaves a narrative in *The Old Man and The Sea* that reflects deeply on three themes evident in *La Epistola del Santiago/The Epistle of James*: patience in the face of adversity, love and commitment, and faith and works. Mary Cruz, a contemporary Cuban literary scholar and one of the world’s most-respected Hemingway scholars, notes that Hemingway “[chooses] Santiago, a protagonist with eyes the color of the sea, who is Cuban with a name of the Eastern Province of the same name, Santiago, where there is a small village

named Santiago del Cobre, in which there is a shrine dedicated to La Patronessa del Cobre, patron saint of the fishermen of Cuba. Hemingway did not forget this legend of Cuban fisherman” (Cruz 171). Santiago faces the verities Salvador de Madariaga finds in Hemingway’s work—“love, death and eternity”—in large part, according to Cruz, because Hemingway knows “men like Santiago, [men who are] valiant, self-reliant, professional in their work and who live in all the villages of the world, men who live without doubt, and moreover, act as Santiago, with unfailing heroism” (Cruz 204). Cruz believes “the significance of the Cuban world to this work of art is considerable, and this work of art signifies Hemingway’s tribute to those he lived among in Cuba for many years, and how fitting that it occurs in Cuba, a land of Santiagos” (Cruz 204).

Cruz argues, essentially, that Hemingway’s deep understanding of Cuban culture stems from his constant interaction with Cubans from all walks of life. Underlying her extensive research and writing on *The Old Man and The Sea* is the conviction that Hemingway meets many “Santiagos” throughout his twenty-year residence in Cuba. For Cruz, Hemingway’s epic portrayal of Santiago’s journey in *The Old Man and The Sea* reflects the fact that Cuba is “a land of Santiagos,” a land of men who, like Santiago in *The Old Man and The Sea*, suffer, endure, and overcome the misfortunes of life without pity and without complaint and with compassion, with love in their hearts for others” (Cruz 204-7).

Before Santiago begins his journey, we know that he’s the sort of man who teaches another how to sustain himself and provide for others, “for the old man had taught the boy to fish and the boy loved him” (OMAS 10). Edward Strauch, writing in

1995 from India in *The Aligarh Journal of English Studies*, sees Santiago's quest as a fisherman's journey of sacrifice for a greater good, the good of his village and the good of Manolin, who is to Santiago as apprentice to master (Strauch 77-81). The return of Santiago to Manolin and the village at the end of *The Old Man and The Sea* is, to Strauch, Hemingway's wording of Santiago's destiny in a manner that reflects both the West and the Orient:

The Occidental mind still believes in destiny, and Santiago's transcendental vision offers us the timeless karmic faith of the Oriental. Indeed, in compensation for the perpetual disappearance of the single life, the old man and the boy—as end point and beginning—join together to reassure us of the eternal power of love. (Strauch 80)

Strauch notes that “on the sea in his boat, Santiago appears the radiating point of the four directions of the world, the four winds, and the four Gospels,” taking care to stress that Hemingway makes Santiago's journey last four days (Strauch 79). Christ's last days—the Passion, Death and Resurrection—as related in the Gospels of the *New Testament* also last four days. Santiago del Zebedeo/James of Zebedee walks with Christ from the shores of Galilee to all Palestine, and is also a fisherman. Images of circles in *The Old Man and The Sea* may also bear a spiritual essence, in Strauch's view.

Circles, images of unity and transcendence found in ancient times in nearly every culture, abound in *The Old Man and The Sea* (Strauch 79). Santiago's lines are coiled in circles. Santiago “stands alone at the center of the marlin's ellipse about him” (Strauch 79). In the nights at sea, phosphorescent particles circle like a halo around Santiago's

skiff (Strauch 79). Santiago's journey itself is a circle, a mandala of time not indistinct from the Buddhist wheel of time—a transcendent figure in Buddhism—and the Christian circle within the crossing beams of a Celtic crucifix.

Like Strauch, Dr. John Murphy of Bucknell University believes Hemingway's circles possess a spiritual meaning in *The Old Man and The Sea*. Murphy sees Hemingway laying a melody of counter-point to the core melody of Santiago's journey, in that Hemingway "imposes an ongoing conversation stretching over time and distance between the shore and the Gulf Stream, between master and disciple [Santiago and Manolin], between self and the world, which ties together in the reader's mind the continuity of a full circle" (Murphy 19).

Murphy does not see Santiago's journey as lacking in purpose for his Cuban village. To the contrary, he believes the scenes and conversations in Santiago's village at the beginning and the end of *The Old Man and The Sea* "produce a double point of reference for the old man: first, the shore provides the navigational point from which he must leave and to which he must return, and second, he must bring back to the boy and the community the outward signs of great bodily struggle and tremendous inner strength" (Murphy 19).

Santiago sets out from shore knowing full well that September is hurricane season in Cuba and the Caribbean. Hurricanes kill fishermen, cast their boats asunder, and often wreak all manner of havoc and destruction on shores that meet their fury. Santiago, then, sets out to sea in the face of death. He never compromises his integrity throughout his four-day struggle on the Gulf Stream, and keeps his word to the young boy Manolin to

return. And despite the loss of his great marlin to mako sharks and hammerhead sharks, Santiago agrees to take Manolin out to sea again once his wounds heal, a lesson in tenacity that proves charity is a coat woven of varied threads:

“The hell with luck,” the boy said. “I’ll bring the luck with me.”

“What will your family say?”

“I do not care. I caught two yesterday. But we will fish together now for I still have much to learn.”

“We must get a good killing lance and always have it on board. You can make the blade from a spring leaf from an old Ford. We can grind it in Guanabacoa. It should be sharp and not tempered so it will break. My knife broke.” (OMAS 125)

Santiago’s knife shatters at sea but his spirit is unbroken upon his return to shore. His fish, his dream catch, is gone but in the Christian tradition, his greatest possession is the friendship and charity of his friends, not any material possessions, at the end of his journey.

Santiago is charitable enough to offer Manolin and Pedrico, another friend of Santiago’s, what few possessions he has at the end of his odyssey at high sea: the mutilated head of the great marlin—all that remains of the fish other than its skeleton—his spear, and the promise of more fishing lessons for Manolin (OMAS 124-5). Not only Christian principles of giving to the poor and showing compassion are evident here at the end of Hemingway’s masterpiece: the Buddhist doctrine of showing loving-kindness with right actions, actions of selflessness, is another spiritual river flowing in

Hemingway's prose at the end of Santiago's journey.

Poor as Santiago is in his shack and hungry as he is after eighty-four days without a catch, he is still fearless, witty and wise in the evening before he goes to sea. Witness his dialogue with Manolin the night before his journey:

"We can do that," the boy said. "But what about the eighty-seven of your great record?"

"It could not happen twice. Do you think you can find an eighty-five?"

"One sheet. That's two dollars and a half. Who can we borrow that from?"

"That's easy. I can always borrow two dollars and a half."

"I think perhaps I can too. But I try not to borrow. First you borrow. Then you beg."

"Keep warm old man," the boy said. "Remember we are in September."

"The month when the great fish come," the old man said. "Anyone can be a fisherman in May."

"I go now for the sardines," the boy said. (OMAS 18)

Eighty-seven is the number of days Santiago previously endures without a catch; Hemingway does not give an exact date for Santiago's prior drought most likely because there is no need to date the storms one weathers in life if one has the love, courage, and will to endure them. Perhaps Santiago's cheerfulness in the face of adversity and poverty reflects on lines from *The Epistle of James*, from 1:12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath

promised to them that love him.”

Like his namesake Santiago del Zebedeo, Santiago possesses a spirit to endure hardship and suffering. We are among the poor of Santiago’s village in *The Old Man and The Sea*. We are among people who are never poor in spirit, never poor in heart, and never poor in charity. The Apostle James urges us to never abandon the poor in his *Epistle of James* which, like Hemingway’s novel, is brief but possesses seemingly endless depths of interpretation.

Hemingway’s Catholic faith and his understanding of Cuban culture appear to inform his subconscious profoundly in *The Old Man and The Sea*. The month of Santiago’s four-day journey, September, “the month when the great fish come,” is a month profoundly important to the Catholic liturgical calendar in its B cycle year, when readings from *The Epistle of James* occur in each September Mass (OMAS 18). Hemingway informs us that Santiago’s journey in *The Old Man and The Sea* is in September on pages eighteen, sixty-one, and seventy-four. In the Catholic liturgical calendar, or cycle, there are four readings from *The Epistle of James* in September of the “B” year. Ironically, the publication of *The Old Man and The Sea* in the September 8, 1952 issue of LIFE magazine falls in a “B” year for Catholics around the world, who hear the four readings from *The Epistle of James* throughout September of 1952. Spanish Catholics hear the same readings during September, 1952, but they hear the readings in Spanish from *La Epistola del Santiago*.

The other named characters in *The Old Man and The Sea*—Manolin, Perico, and Martin—also have names found in *The Bible*, and among Catholic saints. Manolin is the

Spanish diminutive for Manuel. Manolin in *The Old Man and The Sea* is the boy who brings Santiago coffee in condensed milk cans, gathers his lines and gear and tackle, and who, at the end of Santiago's journey, weeps when the great marlin lies adrift by Santiago's eighteen-foot fishing boat (OMAS 126). To name a Spanish male child "Manuel" is to name that child specifically for Emmanuel of the *Book of Isaiah*.

With Manolin—as he does for the other characters close to Santiago—Hemingway uses the Spanish diminutive. In the culture of Spanish-speaking countries, to refer to someone by their diminutive name indicates a deep level of trust and camaraderie. The other character Santiago refers to in the diminutive, "forma del diminutivo," is Perico. Perico is a friend of both Santiago and Manolin. Perico works at a bodega, the Terrace, owned by Martin (a bodega is a tavern).

Manolin and Santiago also refer to as Perico as Pedrico. In Spain and Latin America, it is common for men and women to have two nicknames that reflect their given name, for example, a young woman named Carmen may be called "Carmita" and also "Carmencita." What we know of Santiago is that his friends, like James of Zebedee's fellow Apostles in Palestine, are generous to the poor. Hemingway's usage of two Spanish diminutives for the name Pedro—Perico and Pedrico—reveals a keen understanding of Cuban culture and may indicate that he is laying down a deep current of *New Testament* connections within Santiago's odyssey at high sea.

Peter is the only other Apostle whose name is found in *The Old Man and The Sea*. I find it intriguing that in the *New Testament*, Peter follows James of Zebedee (*The First Epistle of Peter* follows *The Epistle of James*). Perhaps Hemingway is leading us not only

to *The Epistle of James* in *The Old Man and The Sea*, but to and through *The New Testament* and all of the Bible, as Catholics believe that *The New Testament* is both a reflection and an amplification of *The Old Testament*.

Again, as with Santiago's Biblical naming, to name a male child Pedro in a Spanish-speaking nation is to name that child after St. Peter of *The New Testament*. Hemingway makes direct reference to St. Peter after the first shark attacks Santiago's skiff, in Santiago's interior monologue on destiny:

Perhaps it was a sin to kill the fish. I suppose it was even though I did it to keep me alive and feed many people. But then everything is a sin. Do not think about sin. It is much too late for that and there are people who are paid to do it. Let them think about it. You were born to be a fisherman as the fish was born to be a fish. San Pedro was a fisherman as was the father of the great Dimaggio. (OMAS 105)

In *The Old Man and The Sea*, we have a protagonist, a fisherman, with the same name in Spanish as James of Zebedee in *The Bible*, Santiago. His apprentice, the young fisherman Manolin, has the nickname in Spanish derived from Emmanuel, prophesied as the Christ child in *The Book of Isaiah* in *The Old Testament* of *The Bible*. Their friend, Perico, also referred to as Pedrico, is also a fisherman and his nickname is derived from Pedro, which is the name in Spanish for St. Peter of *The New Testament*.

St. Peter fishes with James of Zebedee before they make their journeys with Christ. San Pedro Claver, a Jesuit who nurses diseased African slaves in mines and on plantations in Colombia from 1610 until his death in 1654, certainly lives to help the poor

in the tradition of Santiago del Zebedeo (Atwater 211). San Pedro Claver's name translated into English is St. Peter Claver. As Atwater notes in his work on Catholic saints, San Pedro Claver is revered throughout Latin America, and Cuba, of course, is part of Latin America.

The church Hemingway attends Mass at in the farming village of San Francisco de Paula has a large Afro-Cuban congregation, people who no doubt know of their official patron saint, San Pedro Claver, "declared patron of all enterprises in favour of the Negroes in 1896" (Atwater 211). The feast day for San Pedro Claver, a day all Catholics honor, and especially Catholics of African descent in Latin America, is 9 September. As noted, September for Santiago in *The Old Man and The Sea* is the month of his great journey.

I find it extremely intriguing that the names of all the characters in *The Old Man and The Sea* can be found in the Spanish *Bible*, except for Martin, the bar owner who gives a meal to Santiago of black beans, rice, fried bananas, stew and beer. It is not the first time Martin has given Santiago a meal and thus helped him sustain his calling as a fisherman in the face of his eighty-four day drought, as Hemingway relates in the evening before Santiago's journey begins:

The boy had brought them in a two-decker metal container from the Terrace. The two sets of knives and forks and spoons were in his pocket with a paper napkin wrapped around each set.

"Who gave this to you?"

"Martin. The owner."

“I must thank him.”

“I thanked him already,” the boy said. “You don’t need to thank him.”

“I’ll give him the belly meat of a big fish,” the old man said. “Has he done this for us more than once?”

“I think so.” (OMAS 20)

True, Martin’s name cannot be found among the apostles nor, as with Manolin, within a prophecy by Isaiah. Yet, like two key Catholic saints, St. Martin of Tours of France in the 1200s and San Martin de Poores of Peru in the 1600s, he is generous to the poor. Martin gives food and drink to Santiago, without reservation and at no charge, at the beginning and end of *The Old Man and The Sea*. Cruz argues that Cojimar is the model for Santiago’s village (Cruz 171). Cojimar is near Hemingway’s home, the Finca Vigia, which is close to the small farming village of San Francisco de Paula. Hemingway attends the Catholic church in San Francisco de Paula with a large congregation of Cubans of African descent (Barroso 29.9.97).

The *unofficial* patron saint of Afro-Cuban Catholics, and all Catholics of African descent, is St. Martin of Porres of Peru, who is known to Spanish speakers as San Martin del Porres de Peru. Hemingway could not have possibly *not* known this. Quite possibly, Hemingway’s immersion in Cuban culture and Catholicism influences Hemingway to the extent that he names Martin, a character in *The Old Man and The Sea* who is kind to the poor, with the name of two saints who spend their lives helping poor people in Europe and South America, St. Martin of Tours of France and St. Martin of Porres of Peru.

Hemingway, moreover, never uses the word “nigger” in *The Old Man and The Sea*, as opposed to his earlier writing. Most likely, Hemingway’s communion with Afro-Cuban Catholics informs his language and his choice of names for his characters. It is highly likely Afro-Cuban Catholic farmers and fishermen and their families influence Hemingway’s writing of *The Old Man and The Sea*. Hemingway listens to and learns from people from all walks of life in all his life as a writer, and nothing recorded of his life in Cuba by Carlos Baker, pre-eminent Hemingway scholar, or other Hemingway scholars disputes the fact that he is fluent in Cuban culture. It is quite possible that Hemingway bears up under the weight of critical contempt and disdain for him as a writer in the aftermath of the publication of *Across the River and Into the Trees* by digging deeper into his understanding of Catholicism and Cuban culture, indeed, “of all Hispanic culture” (Barroso 29.9.97). Hemingway, in his writing of *The Old Man and The Sea*, reveals just how knowledgeable he is of Cuban culture when Santiago prays to Our Virgin of Cobre, La Patronessa de Cobre in Spanish, while taking “his suffering as it came” on the second day of his journey (OMAS 64).

Cuban fishermen centuries ago claim to have seen the Virgin Mary at sea, rising from the Caribbean’s waters and warning them of a hurricane approaching (Barroso 29.9.97). Ever since, “Cuban fishermen have prayed at the Shrine of Our Virgin of Cobre and left alms in the name of the Virgin Mary at the shrine, which looks out to sea from Cuba towards the Gulf Stream. Our Virgin of Cobre possesses a sacred meaning to all Cuban Catholics but especially for Cuban fishermen” (Cruz 171). In 1954, Hemingway makes a pilgrimage to Our Virgin of Cobre, La Patronessa del Cobre, a pilgrimage which

Santiago himself swears he will carry out within *The Old Man and The Sea*:

“I am not religious,” he said. “But I will say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys that I should catch this fish, and I promise to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Cobre if I catch him. That is a promise.”

(OMAS 64-65)

Hemingway keeps Santiago’s promise after he catches his own big fish, the Nobel Prize for Literature. Hemingway gives “[his Medal for his Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954] to the Virgin of Cobre, Cuba’s National Patroness, to be kept in the shrine of Our Lady of El Cobre (where it remains today) following his old adage nothing is ever really appreciated until it is given away” (Hemingway Workbook). In light of his keeping Santiago’s promise, *The Old Man and The Sea* reads as Hemingway’s pilgrimage as a writer, a man, and a Catholic.

Cuban fishermen from the villages near Havana, villages such as Cojimar, are poor and black and Catholic, fishermen like Santiago who make their Hail Marys and Our Fathers *sin duda*, without doubt, and pray to their unofficial patron saint of all Catholics of African descent, St. Martin of Porres of Peru, unfailingly (Barroso 29.9.97). St. Martin of Poores is also the official patron saint for all women who have given birth to a son. In *The Old Man and The Sea*, we are among the poor, we are among the faithful, we are among Cubans, and we are among men.

Like Cuban fisherman who pray to the Virgin of Cobre, the Virgin Mary at high sea who warns sailors of hurricanes, Santiago turns to the Virgin Mary, mother of Christ, when challenged by his four-day odyssey. His odyssey is a “wandering journey” in the

manner of Noah, Moses and Christ (Father Grace 1.10.97). Santiago prays Hail Marys throughout his journey at high sea. Santiago lives on faith, faith in God and the Holy Trinity, faith in his professionalism and experience as a fisherman in the Gulf Stream, and faith that the

thousand times that he had proved it meant nothing. Now he was proving it again. Each time was a new time and he never thought about the past when he was doing it. (OMAS 66)

Certainly, by the early 1950s, Hemingway proves himself as both a master of the short story and as the master of three critically acclaimed novels: *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell To Arms*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Jose Luis Castillo-Puche, a friend of Hemingway's and fellow author who fought with Franco's Falangists in the Spanish Civil War, argues in *Hemingway in Spain* that

few people have realized that there may be a fundamental parallel between *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Old Man and The Sea*. In both cases there is the same inner loneliness as a heroic battle is being fought, the same sort of epic defeat, and the message of both books is an appeal to hope amid disaster. (Castillo-Puche 50)

Hemingway, as noted, writes *The Old Man and The Sea* in Cuba in late 1950 and early 1951. Spain in the early 1950s is a nation still reeling from the ravages of its Civil War. In Cuba in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Hemingway maintains friendships with people from both sides of the Spanish Civil War, both from the Republican government and the Falangist opposition (Barroso 29.9.97). Hemingway, who makes an oath in 1940

never to return to Spain as long as Franco rules as dictator, nonetheless returns to Spain in 1953 following publication of *The Old Man and The Sea*. Hemingway only visits one writer ever on his deathbed, Spanish novelist Pio Baroja de Nessi, whom he pays homage to in Madrid in 1956 when Hemingway tells Baroja that he is far more deserving of the Nobel Prize for Literature than Hemingway (Baker 535).

In Madrid in 1956, the Spanish Civil War remains very much on Hemingway's mind, as seen by the following conversation with Jose Luis Castillo Puche from *Hemingway in Spain*:

“I often went hungry in Madrid, Jose Luis. I discovered what it's like to go for days without a bite to eat. I helped search for dead bodies many a time, and buried peasants and women and children . . . “

“I know you did, Ernesto.”

“The Spanish people were very close to my heart, and they still are; I was at their side in their hours of agony. Nobody can ever take that away from me.” (Castillo-Puche 50)

To me, Hemingway looks out to sea from Cuba to Spain in the fall of 1950 and the winter of 1951, looks to the Atlantic's waves running north and east toward Spain. In Cuba, Hemingway looks back on the struggles and sacrifices of his friends and comrades and fellow writers who did not survive the long march north from Barcelona in 1939 as all Spain fell to fascism. Yet Hemingway finds a way to word his grief over the destruction of the Spanish Republic by telling the story in *The Old Man and The Sea* of an aged fisherman who fights heroically against incredible odds while bearing

unwordable misery--Santiago's story, Spain's story, mankind's story: "But man is not made for defeat," he said. "A man can be destroyed but not defeated" (OMAS 103). To the land of cante jondo, the deep song of suffering that flamenco is famous for, Hemingway gives his deep song of Santiago's journey in homage to the suffering he bears witness to in the Spanish Civil War and the suffering he knows his comrades, fellow writers and friends are enduring in Franco's Spain in 1951.

Likewise, I argue that the cante jondo spirit of *The Old Man and The Sea* also mirrors the suffering of his generation of Americans. Hemingway, by the time he writes *The Old Man and The Sea* in late 1950 and early 1951, is a veteran of World War I, an experienced war correspondent, and a friend to many American combat veterans, particularly General Buck Lanham of the U.S. Army 22nd Infantry Division of the Second World War. The day of reverence for St. Martin of Tours is November 11, which is also Veterans Day in the United States of America. Santiago, like the ancient warrior Anselmo of *For Whom The Bell Tolls*—who is also named after a saint, Saint Anselm—knows he is going in harm's way. And like Hemingway in Italy, Turkey, Greece, Spain, Cuba, and Europe, Santiago does not retreat from his calling in the face of death. Like Hemingway, Santiago embraces his calling and carries on.

Hemingway's life as a writer testifies to the manner in which he, like Santiago, lives his dreams. Hemingway is one of the most experienced war correspondents of his time, and himself a decorated veteran of World War I. He writes *The Old Man and The Sea* during the first year of the Korean War, the first war of his generation when he is not in the company of American fighting men. During the Second World War, Hemingway

hunted German Nazi submarines with *Pilar* and turned intelligence on his sub-hunting over to Spruille Braden, U.S. Ambassador to Cuba, from 1941-1943 (Brian 137-43). He takes up the pen and sets down his Thompson sub-machine gun in 1944, when he journeys to Europe to cover the European Theater of Operations as a war correspondent (Brian 146).

I believe it is fair to say of Hemingway that he hates war but is convinced, in his words, "defeat brings worse things than any that can ever happen in war" (MAW xi). Hemingway is not a pacifist. In his generation, Allied forces battle German Imperialism in Europe from 1914-1918; Spanish Republicans and International Brigades fight fascism in Spain from 1936-1939; Allied forces defeat Axis fascism in the Second World War; and American and U.N. forces liberate South Korea from North Korean and Chinese communism.

He is the same man who writes "World War I was the most colossal, murderous, mismanaged butchery that has ever taken place on earth" (D'Este 185) and "the world is a fine place and worth the fighting for" (FWBT 467). Just before Hemingway writes *The Old Man and The Sea*, Chinese communist forces cross the river Yalu and force American, S. Korean, and U.N. forces down the Korean peninsula in November, 1950.

Hemingway writes *The Old Man and The Sea* in a season of despair for American fighting men and their comrades among United Nations forces in the Korean War. Victory for America and her U. N. allies appears difficult, if not impossible, to achieve in the winter of 1950-51. Yet there is one footnote to the winter of despair in Korea for American fighting men and their comrades that may bear on Hemingway's depiction of

Santiago and his will to persevere in the face of an eighty-four day drought: the U.S. Marine break-out from Chinese communist siege in late November, 1950.

An American Marine Colonel, Lewis B. Puller, commands the 1st Marine Division during the winter of 1950-51 in Korea. On Nov. 27, 1950, seven “Long March” divisions of the Chinese communist army—troops made up of veterans of Mao Tse-Tung’s legendary long march in 1936 in China and commanded by officers handpicked by Mao—are ordered to surround and annihilate the 1st Marine Division at the Chosin Reservoir, deep in North Korea (Davis 306-307). Col. Puller, at his Marines’ field hospital tent with a priest, is told by a messenger that Chinese communists have his men completely surrounded (Davis 306). Col. Puller responds as follows:

“We’ve been looking for the enemy for several days now. We’ve finally found them. We’re surrounded. That simplifies our problem of getting to these people and killing them.” (Davis 306)

Against seemingly impossible odds, Col. Puller orders a night break-out and begins the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. He leads 1st Marines through the mountains, in snow and ice and sub-freezing cold, to rescue at Hongnam, N. Korea. In fierce winter battle, 1st Marine Division defeats the seven Long March divisions in December, 1950 (Davis 306-21). In the same month, in the aftermath of disastrous reviews of *Across The River and Into The Stream*, Hemingway begins writing *The Old Man and The Sea*.

Like Puller, Santiago believes that man is made to achieve the impossible. Like Puller, Santiago knows where his destiny lies—for Santiago, in the deep blues of the Gulf Stream; for Puller, in the mountains of Korea—and he has no choice but carry his dream

in harm's way. There is a Spanish saying: "nothing is impossible in this world." No odds are too great to surmount for men such as Santiago; no risk is without reward.

For Santiago, the reward is in the risk. The knowledge that he conquers his fear of the unknown by continuing to seek his dream catch in the deep blues of the Gulf Stream during hurricane season is his victory, his reward. The fact that he remains willing at the end of his four-day odyssey to return to sea and teach Manolin the art and craft of deep-sea fishing shows that he feels no bitterness over the loss of the great marlin to sharks, only acceptance. Santiago reinforces the American proverb "bitterness consumes the vessel that contains it" with "acceptance fuels the vessel that sustains it." In teaching Manolin to accept his calling as a fisherman, even in harm's way, Santiago leaves Manolin with a lesson vital to life itself: carry your dream.

In *The Old Man and The Sea*, the dream Santiago returns to at sea is a dream of lions in the darkness; the first time Hemingway mentions the dream is on page twenty-four, as Santiago falls to sleep in the dark of night just before his journey. Tsuruta Kinya, Japanese scholar and professor, argues that Hemingway uses Santiago's dreams like counterpoint in music, to counter the linear narrative flow of Santiago's quest for a big fish:

If the sea represents the present where time definitely flows, Africa suggests the past, where the old man's time had been frozen. In his dream, Africa does not change; it is constant. It is always there unchanged when the old man goes to sleep. Africa represents his eternal youth.

(Tsuruta 89)

The American author and former Secretary of the Navy James Webb may give insight to Tsuruta's interpretation of the African dream sequences in *The Old Man and The Sea* when Webb writes "and so, in the end, we return to the first loves of our youth" (Webb 26).

Africa, for Santiago, is one of the first loves of his youth. It is one he reflects and dreams on in moments of crisis and contemplation on his four-day journey on the Gulf Stream. Perhaps Hemingway, who adores Africa and lives and writes in Africa throughout his life, sees a Eden-like element in Africa's raw natural beauty. Perhaps Santiago, then, is everyman; perhaps Santiago symbolizes all mankind seeking redemption for original sin through acts of faith and love. Santiago's return to Africa in his dreams may signify mankind's search for a paradise lost.

Another classic quest novel that ends with its hero dreaming of an Eden-like idyll is Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Sergio H. Bocaz, a Chilean scholar and critic, sees a reflection of *Don Quixote* in Santiago's dreams, in that Santiago dreams in order to steel his courage before his journey and to strengthen his resolve for his return to his community (Bocaz 52-54). Bocaz believes that Hemingway's dream sequences within *The Old Man and The Sea* reveal Hemingway's deep appreciation and understanding of Cervantes' masterpiece. If Don Quixote rests in mystic peace at the end of his journey, so, too, Hemingway

closes the pages of his masterpiece with the same idea as that of Cervantes who has Sancho inviting Don Quijote, who is already dying, to go away to live an idyllic life of a shephard. (Bocaz 54)

Bocaz, like many scholars of Spanish and Latin American origin, spells Don Quixote in the Spanish original: Don Quijote.

Like Cervantes, Hemingway ends *The Old Man and The Sea* with Manolin watching over Santiago as “the old man was dreaming about the lions” (OMAS 127). Hemingway’s old man dreams throughout his journey, dreams of lions from the seas of his youth and recollections of a night and day struggle with the “great negro from Cienfuegos who was the strongest man on the docks” of Havana (OMAS 69). Santiago prays and dreams from the beginning of *The Old Man and The Sea* to the end. Santiago’s dreams, in the most profound and spiritual sense, sustain his vision of attaining his dream and returning alive to his village. Hemingway may also be alluding to a *New Testament* passage with Santiago’s dreams of lions on the beaches of Africa from his youth at sea: “. . . and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams” (*Acts* 2:17). Santiago’s dreams of lions on the beaches of Africa from his sea-faring youth may also act to ease his suffering on his four-day journey in hurricane season. Like Santiago, who suffers for his faith in his quest at sea, St. James suffers for his faith in Christ.

James of Zebedee is a martyr, stoned to death by Jews in Jerusalem, who leaves a letter for all mankind that is brief as Santiago’s journey and possesses depths of interpretation that reach as far as the deepest reaches of the Gulf Stream itself. St. James’ letter urges “patience in the face of hardship, salvation as a road to inner peace, inner peace as a road to peace in our communities and all the world, and suffering as a way to grace” (Father Grace 1.10.97). *The Epistle of James* is generally regarded by Biblical

scholars as the closest work in *The New Testament* to Christ's Sermon on the Mount (Father Grace 1.10.97).

Truly, *The Epistle of James* mirrors *The Old Man and The Sea*, and reflects on Hemingway's life as a writer. We are by Santiago's side in *The Old Man and The Sea*, by his side in his suffering, as Hemingway is by the side of the Spanish people throughout the Spanish Civil War. We are with Santiago in his journey as James of Zebedee is with Christ in his journey. With Santiago, we are with the poor as Christ is among the poor of Palestine; as James of Zebedee is among the poor of Jerusalem; as San Pedro Claver is by the side of African slaves in Colombia in the 1600s; as San Martin de Porres is among the poor of Peru in the 1500s; as St. Martin of Tours is among the poor of France in the 1200s; as Hemingway is among the poor of Spain and Cuba in his journeys as a writer; and as Hemingway is by the side of men suffering in the mountains of northern Italy in his duty as an officer in the Italian Army's Medical Corps.

Likewise, after Santiago returns with nothing but a shard of his victory, a marlin's skeleton fit for the pity of his fellow fishermen and the commentary of tourists, we remain with Santiago in his dreams of lions from his youth at sea. *The Old Man and The Sea* is the story of one man's journey that ends in a dream. The lions, in the beaches of his youth, are a dream he carries beyond his journey. Santiago's true victory is a spiritual victory—he has the courage to continue to go out to sea in the face of failure and the face of death and embrace the mysteries of the currents of the Gulf Stream which run beyond man's control—and Hemingway, having survived more than one war and more than one journey with his creative freedom as a writer intact and uncompromised,

has the soul, vision, and experience to portray Santiago's quest.

Why end *The Old Man and The Sea* with the figure of a man dreaming if not to re-affirm the classical truth that to live a journey is to live a dream, and that all journeys begin with a dream? The journalist Bill Moyers and the world-renowned scholar and mythologist Joseph Campbell suggest to me the ancient, classical hero Santiago symbolizes in their dialogue on "The Hero's Adventure" from the book *The Power of Myth*:

MOYERS: So the hero goes for something, he doesn't just go along for the ride and not the adventure?

CAMPBELL: There are both kinds of heroes, some that choose to undertake the journey and some that don't. In one kind of adventure, the hero sets out responsibly and intentionally to perform the deed. For instance, Odysseus' son Telemachus was told by Athena, "Go find your father" . . .

MOYERS: Is the adventurer who takes that kind of trip a hero in the mythological sense?

CAMPBELL: Yes, because he is always ready for it. In these stories, the adventure that the hero is ready for is the one he gets. The adventure is symbolically a manifestation of his character. Even the landscape and the conditions of the environment match his readiness. (Campbell 129)

Santiago, like Odysseus' son Telemachus in Homer's classic journey poem *The Odyssey*, is ready for his journey. Santiago does not have the beloved gray-eyed ancient

Greek goddess of justice Pallas Athena to inspire him, but he is no less ready for his quest than Telemachus. Santiago's sea, like that Telemachus sails, tests Santiago's powers of fortitude and faith just as Poseidon, sea god of the Greeks, tests Telemachus in his search for his father Odysseus in *The Odyssey*. Santiago's journey at high sea is a manifestation, to again borrow from Campbell, of Santiago's indomitable character. The landscape and environmental conditions of Santiago's adventure—the Gulf Stream in hurricane season—are fair match for his readiness. In the Homeric tradition, the adventure Santiago receives is the one a lifetime of fishing the deep blues of the Gulf Stream off Cuba has prepared him for. His quest is not an accident, and he is ready for his journey.

September is the month of Santiago's adventure and the month in which the most readings from *The Epistle of James* occur in the "B" year of the Catholic Liturgical Calendar. September is also one of the four months of the hurricane season in the Caribbean, the others being August, October, and November. Of the four readings from *The Epistle of James* in the "B" year of the Catholic liturgical calendar, the reading on the Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time relates most clearly to *The Old Man and The Sea*. Essentially, James of Zebedee writes in 3:18-4:3 that man must gain inner peace if he is to live peaceably among men; wars are only the outward manifestation of our inner quarrels, our greed, our pride, and our envy:

And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.
From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have

not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss,
that ye may consume it upon your lusts. (*The Epistle of James* 3:18-4:3)

As *The Old Man and The Sea* testifies to in its words, Santiago endures trials akin to the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ. Santiago sails in the face of death as Christ walks without fear in the face of ridicule and abuse. Santiago bears his mast as Christ bears his Cross. Santiago is among the poor as Christ is among the poor, and generous to the poor as Christ is generous to the poor. Santiago suffers for his journey as Christ suffers for his journey. Santiago bleeds from his hands as Christ bleeds from his hands on the Cross. Sharks attack Santiago as Jews and Romans attack Christ, and Santiago is as forgiving at the end of *The Old Man and The Sea* as Christ is forgiving on the Cross toward his accusers.

Likewise, cante jondo, as noted, is rooted in the sacred. Cante jondo is born of ancient religious chants and melodies (Pohren 48). Two contemporary scholars, Edward Strauch of America and Ogawa Yasuhiro of Japan, see rivers of the sacred running through the deep waters of Santiago's adventure. Perhaps it is no coincidence that even in his dream at the end of his adventure, Santiago is again at sea, dreaming not of vengeance but of the sacred paradise of Africa and the lions on the beaches of Africa in the seas of his youth. Ogawa posits that Santiago's dreams are reflective of a vision of the sacred Hemingway instills in *The Old Man and The Sea*, in that "Santiago is described as dreaming about the lions—the beast that represents holy power" (Ogawa 91).

That a beast can represent a vision of the sacred is not anathema to a Catholic worldview, especially to Spanish Catholics, who see a divine bond between the secular

and the spiritual, “between a lion and a dream” (Father Grace 1.10.97). True to the Spanish Catholic tradition and the worldview of Latin American Catholics, Santiago does not separate the secular from the spiritual, the natural world from the worlds within his heart (Father Grace 1.10.97). Which brings me to the title of Hemingway’s novel: “old man” is American slang for “father.”

The Father and The Universe is another way to interpret the title of *The Old Man and The Sea*. God is alive to Santiago in the mystery of “why,” a mystery that Santiago discerns is unfathomable at its deepest reaches and can only be fathomed by the Creator of the Universe, God. Hemingway may allude to the Dead Sea, then, in the passage describing the scars and blotches on Santiago's hands and face as “old as erosions in a fishless desert” (OMAS 10). There is, of course, an ancient region in Palestine with more fossils than fish: The Dead Sea. Palestine and the Dead Sea encompass much of *The Bible*. All fossils are nothing more than the erosions of living things. All deserts are as the sea: without great landmarks, without freshwater, without roads, and with skies that stretch from seemingly impossibly-curved horizon lines.

Edward H. Strauch sees in *The Old Man and The Sea* metaphors for existence stark and clear as desert sky: “flow of the currents, the blowing of the winds in the months of the hurricanes, the migration of birds” (Strauch 73). At sea, as in a desert, Strauch argues that Santiago is at one with eternity, with the eternal rhythms of the sea and the wind and all on it. Strauch contends that “in [Santiago’s] experience, there is only one source for such an image: the wastelands where Moses and Christ walked” (Strauch 73).

He argues that Santiago's "own wilderness is the sea," that the sea is to Santiago as ancient deserts are to Moses and Christ (Strauch 73). I concur with Strauch, particularly in light of Hemingway's repetition of the number forty on the first page of *The Old Man and The Sea*, which is the same number of years Moses wanders in the deserts of Palestine and the same number of days Christ wanders in the deserts of Palestine. Forty is a number associated in *The Bible* with the wandering journeys of Noah, Moses, and Christ (Father Grace 1.10.97). It is the same number that Hemingway, as Strauch keenly points out, repeats in association with Santiago before his wandering journey at high sea on the Gulf Stream in *The Old Man and The Sea*, the wandering journey of a Cuban fisherman who has the same name as the fisherman Santiago of *The New Testament*. The Santiago of *The New Testament* is the Apostle Santiago—Santiago del Zebedeo in Spanish, and James of Zebedee in English—as previously noted in this thesis.

Quite possibly, Hemingway refers to the Dead Sea in the passage Strauch notes is imbued with metaphors for "the great cycles of nature" (Strauch 73). Perhaps, for Man is as easily lost at sea as in a desert—in any desert, on any sea—and Santiago's September journey is a wandering journey at high sea on the Gulf Stream, "a journey where forces beyond his control test his faith, his courage, his will, his hope, and finally, reveal to him both the love of his community for his journey and his love for his community" (Father Grace 1.10.97). Father John Grace of America, in discussing Santiago's journey, stresses that wandering desert journeys are emblematic of both Moses' and Christ's search for spiritual victory—man's eternal quest for inner peace (Father Grace 1.10.97). Like

Father John, Strauch sees Biblical images arise from the numerology involved in Santiago's journey.

Joseph Campbell appears to reinforce Father John Grace and Edward Strauch's interpretations of Hemingway's use of the number forty in *The Old Man and The Sea*:

The story of Jesus, for example—there's a universally valid hero deed represented in the story of Jesus. First he goes to the edge of the consciousness of his time when he goes to John the Baptist to be baptized. Then he goes past the threshold into the desert for forty days. In the Jewish tradition the number forty is mythologically significant. The children of Israel spent forty years in the wilderness, Jesus spent forty days in the desert. In the desert, Jesus underwent three temptations.
(Campbell 139)

Hemingway, as I previously noted, stresses the number forty in relationship to Santiago's journey twice on the first page. Hemingway also chooses the number three to signify the number of fish Manolin catches. Perhaps Hemingway is referring to the three temptations of Christ in the numbers of fish Manolin catches just before Santiago's journey; I am intrigued by Hemingway's juxtaposition of the numbers forty and three in the very first page of *The Old Man and The Sea*, particularly in light of the scholarship and opinion of Strauch, Campbell and Father Grace:

In the first forty days without a fish a boy had been with him. But after forty days without a fish the boy's parents had told him that the old man was now definitely and finally *salao*, which is the worst form of unlucky,

and the boy had gone at their orders in another boat which caught three good fish the first week. (OMAS 1)

Hemingway does not state the exact day on which Santiago's journey begins. However, as noted, Santiago reflects on San Pedro (St. Peter) in *The Old Man and The Sea*. Likewise, as previously noted, one of the characters, Perico, bears the nickname for Pedro, which is the Spanish translation for Peter.

In the Spanish *New Testament*, both Santiago and Pedro are fisherman who walk with Christ and author works in the *New Testament*. Peter the Apostle is referred to as "The Prince of the Apostles" in the Catholic tradition. St. Peter's Feast Day, his Day of Commemoration in the Roman Catholic church, is June 29. In *The Old Man and The Sea*, Santiago "was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish" (OMAS 1).

Santiago undertakes his four-day journey in September on the eighty-fifth straight day of coming back from sea without a fish. When we count eighty-five days from St. Peter's Feast Day, we advance to a day that is either the Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time in the Catholic Liturgical Calendar "B" year, or very close to it. The Second Reading on this particular Sunday in September expresses the relationship between inner peace and outer peace (peace in one's heart and peace in one's greater community).

On the Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time in the Catholic Liturgical Calendar "B" year, the Second Reading from *The Epistle of James* speaks clearly of how man's spiritual decay leads directly to war. St. Peter's Feast Day and St. Paul's Feast Day are

celebrated on the same day each year, June 29th, and perhaps *The Old Man and The Sea* leads not only to *The Epistle of James*, but all of the *Gospels* and the entire *Bible*.

In the *Old Testament* of *The Bible*, Noah wanders at high sea for forty days and forty nights in his journey to reach a shoreline for the sake of all living things. Likewise, in the *Old Testament*, Moses wanders for forty years in the desert wilderness of the Sinai before reaching a land of milk and honey to sustain the Jewish people. In the *New Testament* of *The Bible*, Christ wanders in the wilderness of a desert for forty days and refuses the temptation of Satan for the sake of mankind's salvation. In *The Old Man and The Sea*, Santiago wanders for "the first forty days" in the wilderness of the sea for the sake of his village and his calling (OMAS 1). Like Noah, Moses, and Christ, Santiago does not despair in the face of poverty and despair: he continues to journey.

Noah, Moses and Christ make their journeys because of how they live their faith. Their faith journeys reflect their faith choices, as Santiago's choice to follow his calling in the face of death reflects his faith choice. Life is not a compilation of existential accidents but a journey that reflects the choices we make, and the consequences of our actions born of our choices, Hemingway appears to me to be saying from the beginning of *The Old Man and The Sea*. Santiago "knew he was going far out" (OMAS 28). Hemingway's use of the verb "to know" illuminates Santiago's philosophy.

Santiago does not guess and Santiago does not wonder. Santiago envisions his journey, and goes far out to sea. Santiago knows he is journeying far for the sake of a dream; he has faith in his ability to carry his dream, a dream he carries for himself and for his village. Like Noah, Santiago's journey is selfless at its core: he can help himself only

if he can also aid his community. Santiago makes his decision “como un hombre sin duda,” in the Spanish expression, which means “like a man without doubt” (Cruz 204).

Life is the sum of the dreams we carry and the promises we keep, Hemingway appears to me to be saying, and Santiago cannot truly live without continuing to live his dreams. Without a village to return to with the great marlin he yearns to hook and harpoon and sell on shore, Santiago has no one to share his kill with. Without the kill which he and other fishermen provide for his village, Cubans starve. And without Manolin to teach, Santiago has no one with whom to share the wealth of his professional fisherman’s experience. Dr. Murphy’s point on the “full circle” nature of *The Old Man and The Sea*, that there is a “continuum from old age to youth, from past to future, from a sense of life ending to life beginning,” appears vivid in Santiago’s journey (Murphy 19).

Santiago returns to his village. He offers what few possessions he has to his friends on his return from his journey. He is generous and charitable and humble in the wake of his four-day struggle to survive. Santiago’s actions at journey’s end are not dissimilar from James of Zebedee’s words on patience and suffering in the last chapter of *The Epistle of James*:

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. (*The Epistle of James* 5:11)

Santiago endures. Santiago does not refuse to continue taking Manolin out to sea to teach him the ways of the ocean and all it holds. From the beginning of *The Old Man and The Sea*, Hemingway keys the chords to a rhythm that spells “the individual and the

community, the individual and the community”(Father Grace 1.10.97). His individual survival beyond a tortuous four-day voyage and return to his community reflects the truth of Cormac McCarthy’s phrase from the novel *All The Pretty Horses*: “Between the wish and the thing the world lies waiting” (McCarthy 238). Patience in the face of adversity, key to *The Epistle of James*, requires that men endure what lies between the making of a dream and the achievement of a dream:

Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

(The Epistle of James 5:7)

In light of McCarthy’s proverb—“between the wish and the thing the world lies waiting”—*The Old Man and The Sea* appears to resonate deeply in one of the world’s greatest novels, *All the Pretty Horses*. *All the Pretty Horses* is a journey story, a novel for which McCarthy receives the National Book Award for fiction in 1993. John Grady Cole, the young Texan at the heart of McCarthy’s novel, endures trials on a wandering journey through the deserts and highlands of Northern Mexico similar to Santiago’s, and like Santiago, realizes a spiritual victory at the end of the novel. Like Santiago, Cole endures, and overcomes. Like Cole, Santiago endures because Santiago has faith to survive the trials of a journey that occur between the wish (his dream to catch a great marlin and break his drought) and the thing (his achievement of his dream and return to his village).

Santiago’s patient suffering, his unyielding courage and endurance when sharks

attack him relentlessly, reflects Hemingway's conviction that

there are some things
which cannot be learned quickly and time, which is all we have, must be
paid heavily for their acquiring. They are the very simplest things and
because it takes a man's life to know them the little new that each man
gets from life is very costly and the only heritage he has to leave.

(DITA 198)

Again, Santiago's return from his journey teaches Manolin the importance of enduring and embracing suffering while carrying out one's calling, a lesson that cannot be learned quickly in life but one valuable to any person at any time in life. Likewise, Santiago's lesson to Manolin, the lesson he teaches just by making his journey, is to embrace one's destiny, not turn away from it. Strauch contends that in *The Old Man and The Sea*, Santiago "is pursuing a destiny," a pursuit born of Santiago's conviction that the marlin is his dream catch and that he must endure his journey and return to his village with it, regardless of the sacrifice (Strauch 78). I concur with Strauch; however, I also see Hemingway's pursuit of his destiny as a writer running in the seas of Santiago's journey.

Santiago's search for the marlin may reflect Hemingway's belief in his own destiny. And where does destiny live? Perhaps in the universe that is God's universe—Our Father and the Universe—where destiny glides "in the deep dark water far out beyond all snares and traps and treacheries" (OMAS 50). Santiago muses on the choice of the marlin to glide in the great depths of the Gulf Stream on the first night of his journey. If we interpret Santiago as Hemingway, then the marlin is destiny. Santiago,

like Hemingway, chooses to track down his big fish:

My choice was to go there and find him beyond all people. Beyond all people in the world. Now we are joined together and have been since noon. And no one to help either one of us. (OMAS 50)

In the wake of his decision to carry his dream on the deep blues of the Gulf Stream, Santiago discovers that his material dream is beyond possession: sharks attack his great marlin and butcher it, just as they do to the Cuban fisherman in 1934, and Santiago fights off the sharks with a knife lashed to an oar (OMAS 104). Hemingway's writing of the shark attacks on Santiago is brilliant and poetic:

They came. But they did not come as the Mako had come. 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. 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. The line showed clearly on top of his brown head and back where the brain joined the spinal 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. The shark let go of the fish and slid down, swallowing what he had taken as he died. (OMAS 108)

Santiago returns to his village with his butchered marlin alongside his skiff. His dream of a big catch is nothing but a skeleton. Yet his lesson to Manolin is profound, and one all mankind can learn from: go deep for the sake of a dream, and do not falter in the

face of death. From the moment he sets out to sea, an act which Strauch compares to a baptism, Santiago is in harm's way (Strauch 78). Yet nature is not the Other to Santiago, and the marlin is not Ahab's great white Leviathan. Santiago is at one with the sea as hilltribespeople in Northern Thailand are at one with their mountains. Santiago, like Ahab, is a hunter of great creatures of the sea; unlike Ahab, Santiago is humble before the power of the sea.

Like a Pwo Karen hilltribesman on a long hunt in Northern Thai mountain jungle for wild boar, Santiago knows that the sea, like the jungle, can both carry his dreams or destroy them, and he accepts that double-edged sword as part-and-parcel of his destiny. The sea is wilderness and paradise for Santiago, both keeper of his dreams and sustainer of his spirit. A man who has the company of a village carries the dreams of the living and the dead of his people with him on all his journeys, in the Catholic tradition, and also in the folklore of the Pwo Karen hilltribes of Northern Thailand and Burma. The belief that Man is never alone as long as he keeps the spirits of the living and the dead in his prayers and in his heart, and keeps the moral principles of his community alive in his actions, are beliefs common to both Catholicism and the mythology of the Pwo Karen.

The Pwo Karen spirit legend of the hawk is one such tie:

A hawk flies high and never alone. For always, the hawk has the company of our mountains and rivers, our valleys and skies. So, we, too, we Pwo Karen are never alone. So man is never alone. Always our living and our dead guide and protect us on all the journeys of our lives, on all the rivers of our lives, even to the Great Sea (the Pwo Karen refer to the Pacific as

“The Great Sea”). And always, like the hawk, we have the company of the earth and sun and moon and sky to carry our dreams.

(Rrain-Khru Tseru 24.10. 92)

Santiago shares a profoundly similar understanding of man’s existence, and the relationship of solitude to hope, in *The Old Man and The Sea*:

He looked across the sea and knew how alone he was now. But he could see prisms in the deep dark water and the line stretching ahead and the strange undulation of the calm. 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. (OMAS 60-1)

Santiago sails far and never alone: like the Pwo Karen, he finds a unity with nature that gives him faith to carry his dream. Like the Pwo Karen, he discovers a spiritual heart to take strength from on his journey, the company of birds at sea. He calls the birds and fishes his brothers throughout *The Old Man and The Sea* and refers to the ocean as “la mar,” in the feminine. The Gulf Stream is not Santiago’s to conquer, it is his to partake in, to seek sustenance and spiritual grace from, to find union with all that swim within it and all that fly above it.

Hemingway’s writing in *The Old Man and The Sea* suggests that when we lean on and learn from the myths of our culture and others, we discover deep currents of resolution, love, and conviction in the rivers of our lives. The Black Lahu hilltribespeople of Northern Thailand have a proverb that resonates in Hemingway’s writing of *The Old*

Man and The Sea: “if a great warrior you would be, watch the leopards and learn” (Young 70). Simply, to master a craft or art form, we must listen to the rhythms of nature if our journey is one we hope to survive and learn from.

Santiago, like the Black Lahu hunters of our time, watches nature and learns. He looks to the sky at the beginning of the work to judge how long it will likely be before heavy clouds, warnings of hurricanes, may arrive. He keeps steady watch for birds above him and fish about him at sea, as their presence may indicate the presence of the great marlin he desires to catch. He is emboldened on his journey by nature and a feeling of oneness with all of nature, even for the marlin. Santiago remarks in the midst of the shark attacks

“I am sorry that I went too far out. I ruined us both. But we have killed many sharks, you and I, and ruined many others. How many did you ever kill, old fish? You do not have that spear on your head for nothing.” (OMAS 115)

What emboldens a man to live a dream in the face of shark attacks, seemingly alone at high sea? The Uruguayan critic and scholar Marie J. Peck sees Santiago as entering the sea in surrender to its powers, with acceptance in his heart, in the manner of Christ accepting his death for the sake of mankind (Peck 194). Peck alludes to Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, stressing that she “believes that Santiago is within the first altar of the mythological voyage of the hero” when he enters the sea at the beginning of his four-day journey (Peck 194). Campbell’s vision of the hero accepting his place in the cosmos at the end of his voyage is a vision Peck believes Hemingway transforms into a modern myth in the story of Santiago (Peck 194). For

Peck, Santiago's journey reflects Campbell's belief in the hero's power to transcend death: "a metaphysical dimension is present in the acceptance of life as a miracle in which [the hero] gets strength from life itself and in this way, enriches our lives with his heroism, and ultimately, transcends death" (Peck 203). Santiago's acceptance of his destiny, his identity with nature, and his willingness to confront death for the sake of his dream ennoble him in the manner of mythological heroes of the past. Hemingway gives us a mythological hero in *The Old Man and The Sea* who is very much at home in the 20th century.

The legend of the hawk of the Pwo Karen, like *The Old Man and The Sea*, finds a spiritual home for man in every century. The spiritual heart of man, for the Pwo Karen, lives in the songs of the rivers and mountains of Northern Thailand and Burma, and all within them. Santiago's heart is spirited by "wild ducks etching themselves against the sky over the water, then blurring, then etching again [where] no man is ever alone . . ." (OMAS 60-1). The wild ducks, the sea, and the sky in the passage above from *The Old Man and The Sea* symbolize, as for the Pwo Karen, the belief that no man is ever alone if he is alive to his inner journey, alive to the spirit within him, and no man is ever alone who believes with the Pwo Karen that "the spirits of our living and our dead guide and protect and comfort us on all the rivers of our lives, on all the journeys of our lives, even to the Great Sea" (Rrain-Khru Tseru).

Pwo Karen and Black Lahu spirit legends and proverbs of Northern Thailand are not the only spirit legend ties to *The Old Man and The Sea*. From Africa, the sankofa legend of the Akan peoples of West Africa resonates in Santiago's spiritual embrace of

wild ducks in flight at sea.

In the film *Sankofa*, the director Haile Gerima reveals that the Akan believe that great birds that cross the sea, such as condors and sea hawks, carry the spirits of their people with them. Specifically, the Akan believe that the spirits of their people who were chained into slavery in North and South America and the Caribbean returned, and continue to return, to Africa in the flight of sankofa, their sacred bird who watches over the Akan as the hawk watches over the Pwo Karen, and as Santiago's wild ducks watch over him. Santiago looks to the wild ducks at sea for hope just as the Akan peoples look to sankofa for hope, and a reason to journey on for the sake of a dream. The Catholic belief that Christ is always guiding and protecting Catholics on the journeys of their lives appears not indistinct from the spirit legends of the Pwo Karen of Asia and Akan of Africa. Hemingway taps into myths of cultures separated by waves of the Atlantic and the Pacific and yet unified in the deep currents of Santiago's journey in the Caribbean in *The Old Man and The Sea*.

E.M. Halliday maintains that Hemingway portrays Christ's journey within Santiago's in *The Old Man and The Sea*, and argues that Christ is alive in Hemingway's work from as early as 1926. Halliday posits in his essay "Hemingway's Ambiguity: Symbolism and Irony" that "the image of the crucifixion [haunts] Hemingway from *Today is Friday* (1926) to *The Old Man and The Sea* . . . the unique courage of the forsaken and crucified man-God . . . takes his attention" (Halliday 54). Halliday goes on to propose that to Hemingway, "[mankind is] part of a universe offering no assurance

beyond the grave and we are to make what we can of life by a pragmatic ethic spun bravely out of man himself in full and steady cognizance that the end is darkness” (Halliday 54). Halliday’s contemporaries, such as Joseph Waldmeir, concur that Christian mythical symbolism in *The Old Man and The Sea* is vital to understanding Santiago’s journey, and the Santiago’s story is a metaphor for the sacrifice, struggle and survival of the hero found in myths of all cultures.

Waldmeir interprets Santiago’s struggle at high sea as a meditation on faith, as he states in 1956 that “*The Old Man and The Sea*, while reasserting the set of values, the philosophy which permeates all of Hemingway, is built up on the great abstractions—love and truth and honor and loyalty and pride and humility—and again speaks of the proper method of attaining and retaining these virtues, and of the spiritual satisfaction inevitably bestowed upon their holder” (Waldmeir 161). Waldmeir argues that “Christian symbolism shifts from man to fish—a legitimate symbol for Christ since the beginning of Christianity, as it [is] a legitimate religious symbol before Christianity—and back to man throughout the story” (Waldmeir 162). Delbert Wylder, writing in *Hemingway’s Heroes* in 1994, extends Waldmeir’s vision in that Wylder sees Santiago’s journey as rooted in struggle and sacrifice, godlike in intensity and purpose, and yet within the realm of man’s potential for redemption through acts of faith:

Santiago is not Melville’s Ahab, motivated by a monomaniacal dream of vengeance. Santiago is a fisherman, and part of the reason for his quest [is] to bring back food. His is a purposeful quest in terms of his community. Santiago immediately recaptures his mortal senses [once

back on shore]. His sense of human duty and responsibility is too strong to allow him to regress into the bliss of the final cause. (Wylder 207)

Wylder pursues an intriguing line of critical thought in his interpretation of *The Old Man and The Sea*. He contends that not only Christ, but Siddhartha (the Lord Buddha, Boddhisattva) echoes in Hemingway's thoughts throughout Santiago's journey. Wylder proposes that Hemingway masters a modern myth of the hero's quest and at the same time, Buddha's quest, in his wording of *The Old Man and The Sea*: "like the Boddhisattva, Santiago too renounces the final step [rejects not returning to shore, and returns from the sea to embrace mankind] and returns to the world" (Wylder 200).

Santiago lives like a Buddhist priest, in Wylder's view. Like a Buddhist priest, Santiago has few possessions, "little connection with the community of men," (Wylder 203) and willingly embraces danger without fear of death on behalf of a greater good. To embrace danger in the face of death for a greater good—a village and people beyond the village who need the fish Santiago journeys for—is Buddhism at its purest. It is also Christianity at its purest, and Christ's sacrifice for the greater good, the salvation of all mankind, appears to also lie at the heart of *The Old Man and The Sea*.

In his understanding of *The Old Man and The Sea* as a modern fable of a hero's quest, Wylder finds company in the work of Leo Gurko. Gurko writes in 1968 that "*The Old Man and The Sea* is remarkable for its stress on what men can do and on the world as an arena where heroic deeds are possible[:] like Hemingway's other protagonists, Santiago [confronts] a universe filled with tragedy and pain, but these are transcended, and the affirming tone is in sharp contrast to the pessimism permeating such books as *The*

Sun Also Rises and *A Farewell to Arms*" (160).

Gurko suggests that Santiago's Christ-like struggle with the sharks and ultimately, his return from his journey on the Gulf Stream to Cuban shores, is Hemingway's struggle to break free of Kafkaesque protagonists and liberate 20th-century Western literature from the nihilistic straitjackets common to European prose. In *The Old Man and The Sea*, Hemingway permits ancient rivers of mythology to run again to the sea of his vision and guide Santiago on his journey at high sea on the Gulf Stream off the northern coast of Cuba:

After the First World War the traditional hero disappear[s] from Western literature. He [is] replaced in one form or another by Mr. K., the harassed victim of the haunting, nightmarish novels of Franz Kafka. Hemingway's protagonists, from Nick Adams on, [are] hemmed in like Mr. K. by a bewildering and menacing cosmos. (Gurko 171)

A heroic protagonist, in the figure of a Don Quixote, is uncommon to 20th Century literature after Kafka. Hemingway discovers a truth about the 20th Century directly related to his journeys as a writer beyond his apprenticeship in Paris: the myth of the hero, outside of Europe, is very much alive. Hemingway lives much of his life in Spain, Cuba, and Africa, where the spirit legends and myths of cultures find a home in the "ancient struggle and harmony between man and nature" (Gurko 171). Hemingway learns from the folklore and myths of cultures beyond America and Europe just as Antonio Machado, one of Hemingway's contemporaries and regarded by many critics as Spain's greatest poet of the 20th century, finds inspiration in the folklore, legends and

songs of Spanish gypsies. Gurko's reflections on Hemingway's evocation of the mythic hero common to all cultures reverberate in the work of another literary scholar familiar with *The Old Man and The Sea*, the Indian critic Chaman Nahal.

Nahal views Santiago as "utterly reconciled to his destiny . . . not only the most passive of Hemingway's heroes, he is the noblest" (Nahal 183). Nahal argues that like Homer's Odysseus, a Greek mythic hero of whom Hemingway reads of in his youth in Oak Park, Illinois, Santiago possesses "no expression of *nada*," no belief in nothingness (Nahal 182). Kathleen Morgan and Louis Losada, literary scholars from the College of the University of New York, also see the spirit of Odysseus in Santiago:

Santiago is not as versatile as Odysseus; his expertise is in fishing and the sea, but here too is presented as a hero who prevails by using intelligence and knowledge. Santiago also tenaciously refuses to give in to adversity. His physical pain is more prominently displayed than Odysseus's; . . . as in *The Odyssey*, neither physical pain nor mental anguish deter the hero. (Morgan and Losada 47)

Morgan and Losada suggest that Hemingway's own words on *The Old Man and The Sea* offer some insight into the relationship of myth to his tale of Santiago's journey. They note that in the December 31, 1954 edition of *Time* magazine, Hemingway says "I tried to make a real old man, a real boy, a real sea and real fish and real sharks [;] but if I made them good and true enough they would mean many things" (Morgan and Losada 46).

For Morgan and Losada, there is a definite dialogue in *The Old Man and The Sea* between Hemingway and Homer. They argue that "Santiago is a strikingly "real old

man” and Hemingway’s unique creation, but among the “many things [Santiago] suggests to the reader is his Homeric dimension, his resemblance to those heroes who sailed their own deep, dark sea to Troy and back home again [;] indeed, Santiago’s statement that ““man is not made for defeat”” (OMATS 103) recalls Diomedes’ characterization that also applies to Santiago himself: “Thou, old man, art indomitable” (Il. 10. 167, LLM 172) (Morgan and Losada 46).

Nahal concurs with Morgan and Losada, but also views *The Old Man and The Sea* as reflecting the core Buddhist belief in acceptance, stating that there is “[no nada], no bitterness, no denial; there is only acceptance” (Nahal 182). Santiago journeys far for the sake of a dream in *The Old Man and The Sea* because he accepts his journey as a blessing, not a burden, and that thread of acceptance, of embracing grief in order to overcome grief, is key to Buddhist mythology (Nahal 182).

Like Siddhartha in the Buddhist mythic tradition, Santiago is “without rancor, without vengeance in his actions, and both aware and accepting of the fact that the Gulf Stream [the universe] possesses powers beyond man’s reach, beyond man’s control” (Nahal 182-3). Like Christ in the Christian mythic tradition, “Santiago went to his Cross [to the Atlantic] willingly,” in Nahal’s view (Nahal 182). Nahal believes that Hemingway’s portrait of Santiago is the very definition of courage because “the courage that the old man displays is not a defiance of fate or destiny; rather, it is an assertion of the obligation that each man has to himself—it is more an act of duty” (Nahal 182). Santiago acts courageously by not denying his obligations to himself as a fisherman, to his village as a member of his community and fisherman, and to Manolin as a master

fisherman and teacher. Courage, to Nahal, blossoms in Santiago's acceptance of destiny, his achievement of a dream.

Earl Rovit, literary scholar, supports Nahal's concept of courage in *The Old Man and The Sea*. Rovit surveys the Christian mythic dimension within Santiago's quest. Rovit sees Santiago's return to his community with nothing but the mutilated head of the great marlin and the skeleton as essentially redemptive, and spiritually potent. As Christians project onto the crucified Christ their own feelings of suffering and loss and grief, so, too, can mankind identify with Santiago:

He has brought back from his isolation a fragmented gift offering to his fellows, an imperfect symbol to suggest where he has been and what he found there. There are those within the community with the experience and the imagination and the necessary love to project on that skeletal symbol a feeling of the experience which it represents. For them the world has been redeemed; a shaft of knowing has pierced like a thunderbolt into their awareness of what it is to be a man, and the image of mankind has been immeasurably enhanced. (Rovit 73)

Rovit finds faith in Santiago's actions, redemption in his journey, and courage in his selflessness, all elements of Christ's journey, Buddha's journey, and the epic journey of the hero in Western literature (Rovit 73).

Santiago's journey is eternal. It is the ancient myth of the hero's quest. Reflective of myths of many cultures, Santiago's story endures because life itself is a journey wrought with challenges of all kinds, and when we take a stand, to paraphrase Martin

Luther King, Jr., we often find sharks on land ready to attack us for beliefs thought worth fighting for. Likewise, it is when we are ready to die for our beliefs that we are alive in the fullest sense. And the triumphs we gain in the struggle for the fulfillment of our beliefs are real as the struggle itself; even in defeat, the struggle is a victory we retain. Santiago's victory is the triumph of the spirit, of dignity in the face of death, and finally, of faith. The journey of Santiago that Hemingway leaves us in *The Old Man and The Sea* is one which anyone can return to, meditate on, and take courage from.

Conscience makes saints of us all when we stand back from a journey, in the full and complete knowledge that its embarkation and passage will place us in harm's way, and nonetheless, risk our lives to carry our dreams. Santiago sails in hurricane season, against hunger and in the face of death, to carry his dream. His conscience is alive in his courage, and his courage is alive in his conscience. Cormac McCarthy again lends insight in *All the Pretty Horses* to the meaning of Santiago's suffering and survival in *The Old Man and The Sea*:

. . . those who have endured some misfortune will always be set apart but that it is just that misfortune which is their gift and which is their strength and that they must make their way back into the common enterprise of man for without they do so it cannot go forward and they themselves will wither in bitterness. (McCarthy 235)

As Nahal points out, Santiago does not wallow in bitterness. Santiago “[makes his] way back into the common enterprise of man” with his “misfortune,” the skeleton of the great marlin he's caught on the Gulf Stream, and without bitterness, without rancor

for his journey. Santiago's suffering, struggle and survival are his strengths.

As Bocaz argues, Santiago may reflect partly on Hemingway's understanding of another hero from a European quest story, that of *Don Quixote* by Cervantes. Santiago, to me, is Don Quixote stripped of illusions, regrets, and self-pity. For Santiago, conscience is not a crucible of cowardice, as for Shakespeare's Hamlet, but a furnace of courage. Like Don Quixote, Santiago faces and meets challenges throughout his journey. Unlike Quixote, Santiago's Dulcinea, his beloved, is dead. What sustains Santiago throughout his journey is faith, dream, and love: the faith he leans on when praying Hail Marys and Our Fathers and swearing he'll make a pilgrimage to Our Virgin of Cobre should he return to shore alive, the dreams of lions on the beaches of Africa from his seafaring youth, and his love as a master fisherman for the apprentice Manolin, to whom he leaves the greatest lesson one man can leave another: carry a dream with love for mankind, with faith for a brighter tomorrow, and with a will to endure all adversity.

A contemporary Asian novel reflective of Hemingway's lyricism on faith and adversity, and one that Thai critics and scholars believe owes a great deal to *The Old Man and The Sea*, is Sila Khoamchai's *the path of the tiger*. A modern Thai classic, *the path of the tiger* concerns a hunter on a mountain who muses of the tiger he stalks—and is in turn stalked by—in words that remind me of Santiago's respect for the great marlin: “the tiger in front of him was not a fierce animal craving for flesh and blood, but the incarnation of greatness and the originator of his quest for knowledge” (Khoamchai 90). Like Khoamchai, Hemingway sees nobility incarnate in nature, as evidenced by the following passage from Santiago's thoughts on the marlin he hooks:

You are killing me, fish, the old man thought. But you have a right to. Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. (OMAS 92)

Yet Santiago does not wish at the end of his journey to set out the very next day with harpoons marked for sharks. Self-pity and vengeance are both traits Santiago shows no understanding of in *The Old Man and The Sea*. Santiago welcomes adversity, he does not turn from adversity and wallow in self-pity and inaction. Santiago is willingly at the mercy of nature and accepts his suffering as necessary to his journey.

Santiago's actions in the face of death from the very beginning of his wandering journey on the Gulf Stream voice the "patience in the face of trials" theme key to both *The Epistle of James* and *The Old Man and The Sea* (Father Grace). In *The Old Man and The Sea*, the tides of faith carry Santiago's deepest dreams, just as the Apostle James relates in *The Epistle of James*: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering[;] for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (*The Epistle of James* 1:6).

Santiago does not waver and he does not lose faith. Faith in "what a man can do and what a man endures" emboldens Santiago throughout his journey in hurricane season (OMAS 66). Faith, in the most real sense of the word, carries Santiago's dreams. Santiago, quite possibly, personifies Hemingway's vision of man in the bullring of life, in the corrida, facing death as a consequence of his actions on behalf of others, and refusing to compromise for the sake of a dream.

The sea is the arena. The marlin is the bull. Santiago holds his harpoon like a bullfighter in the face of death, only the dangers Santiago faces are far more grave and numerous than those faced by a bullfighter. He is in the arena of life and he is never alone; in *The Epistle of James*, the prostitute Rahab, who shelters "Israelite spies" in *The Book of Joshua*, leads us back to God's message to Joshua: "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (*Joshua* 1:5). Cruz contends that the heart of *The Old Man and The Sea* lies in Santiago's solidarity with mankind.

Cruz posits that the main message of *The Old Man and The Sea* is that "a man in hostile circumstances who faces grave dangers and nonetheless arms himself with humane, moral convictions is a man who is always within the greater community of men and never alone, never alone" (Cruz 212). Cruz ends her essay on *The Old Man and The Sea* with the declaration that Hemingway affirms "the indestructible dignity of man" in his portrayal of Santiago in *The Old Man and The Sea*, a man who returns to the company and care of his fellow villagers, a man who is "never alone" (Cruz 212).

Santiago is never alone on his journey because always, on land and sea, the memory of his friends and his youth sustain his spirit just as prayer sustains his will throughout his four-day odyssey. Memory strengthens Santiago's soul on his journey; memory does not torment him. The dreams of lions on the beaches of Africa that Santiago returns to throughout his journey at high sea revitalize him. I agree with Cruz and add that it is the company of mankind which guides Santiago to shore at the end of his odyssey—the lights of fishing villages on the coast of Cuba which, like the stars he guides on at sea, aid him immensely on his journey:

I wish I could see the glow from the lights, he thought. I wish too many things. But that is the thing I wish for now. He tried to settle more comfortably to steer and from his pain he knew he was not dead.

He saw the reflected glare of the lights of the city at what must have been around ten o'clock at night. They were only perceptible at first as the light is in the sky before the moon rises. Then they were steady to see across the ocean which was rough now with the increasing breeze. He steered inside the glow and he thought that now, soon, he must hit the edge of the stream. (OMAS 117)

Santiago does not fail to love in *The Old Man and the Sea*. He is committed to his calling and his return to his village shows he is not estranged from the community of mankind, but inextricably tied to humanity. His love for Manolin, that of a master to apprentice, commits him to doing all he can to ensure he returns from his journey at high sea to their village. Hemingway brings Santiago back to his home shores, battered but not beaten, and still committed to his calling. Santiago has faith that he will return to sea to carry his dreams, and Manolin, doubting at the beginning of the book, has faith that Santiago can return to sea after perhaps three days or more of storms.

Santiago has fished the Gulf Stream before and it was another marlin on another journey who'd proved to Santiago one definition of charity, of love, after an exhausting struggle. The male of a pair of marlin had stayed with his female mate after she took Santiago's bait, and finally soared aside Santiago's skiff to look down on his beloved before he dove back into the deep blues of the Gulf Stream: "He was beautiful, the old

man remembered, and he had stayed” (OMAS 49-50).

Love that is commitment makes the marlin beautiful, more beautiful than even the fall of water off his lavender pectoral fins as he leaps high in the Caribbean sun. Love is commitment: he stayed. I can think of no greater teacher than one who teaches us a lesson in love as commitment—which, at its roots, is a lesson in faith. Commitment is key to faith. *The Epistle of James* possesses a passage on faith and works central to the Catholic Mass in September in the “B” year cycle of the Catholic Liturgical Calendar:

Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

(The Epistle of James 2:25-6)

Santiago has faith to carry his dreams. His journey reveals his faith. He discovers that, in the words of an American Marine infantry proverb, “the truth is in the try: make the try.” Santiago makes his try in hurricane season in the Caribbean, in the face of eighty-four days without a catch. Santiago risks his life for the sake of his dream. His reward is our gift, the knowledge that in daring our dreams, we may return to the shores of our own villages with spiritual victories priceless beyond measure, spiritual rewards that we can share with all mankind.

Coda: Hemingway's Dream

Hemingway says in his Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech in 1954 that a writer "should always try for something that has never been done or that others have tried and failed" (Baker 529). Santiago attempts "something that has never been done," to harpoon and lash to the side of his skiff a great marlin and return ashore with bounty for himself and his village. Santiago muses as he nears his village on why he lost the marlin and says "I went out too far" (OMAS 120). Hemingway alludes to the nature in which Santiago speaks for Hemingway's own aesthetics as a writer near the end of his Nobel speech: "It is because we have had such great writers in the past that a writer is driven far out past where he can go, out to where no one can help him" (Baker 529).

"Out to where no one can help him": Hemingway instills *The Old Man and The Sea* with the wealth of every aesthetic influence he's gathered on both sides of the Atlantic, and with a protagonist who, for the first time in Hemingway's fiction, takes us on an inner journey. Santiago is alone on the Gulf Stream as Hemingway is alone as a writer, and yet never alone. Santiago is true to his dream. He knows himself, knows his destiny, accepts his destiny, and heeds his calling. His song of struggle and sorrow, in the cante jondo tradition, is also Hemingway's song.

Likewise, Hemingway is true to his dream and his art reflects his integrity. Like Santiago, Hemingway accepts that going out to sea in hurricane season comes with the territory of a writer's life. Hemingway journeys for the sake of his work as a writer all his life. His growth as a writer beyond Paris is largely due to his acceptance of the dangers inherent in seeking truth and expressing the truths he sees in Spain while

reporting for the North American News Agency in the Spanish Civil War, and in Europe as a war correspondent during the Second World War. Like Santiago, Hemingway accepts his calling.

Santiago refuses to accept defeat; he believes he is born to fish and nothing else. To give up, regardless of how long his drought has gone on, would be to teach his apprentice, Manolin, the worst of lessons. Santiago is called to the sea as Hemingway is called to the art and craft of writing; Santiago knows that to abandon one's calling, even in the face of death, is a lesson no true fisherman or writer leaves for apprentices.

Rather than teach Manolin that cowardice in the face of adversity is acceptable, Hemingway has Santiago go to sea. Santiago goes to sea in September, in hurricane season. Likewise Hemingway, rather than remain in the literary salons of Paris, goes to sea as a writer, into the seas of experience, where his prose gains deeper currents in Spain, Cuba, Africa, and the American West. To embrace a struggle in the face of death for the sake of a greater good is a profound testament to man's capacity for enduring and overcoming suffering through spiritual will and a passion for survival. It is a message of universal import and one that all cultures in all times understand, appreciate, and love.

Ironically, Shakespeare is Hemingway's favorite writer. I argue this is ironic because Shakespeare is cited for his range and depth as a writer, yet nowhere in Shakespeare's writing does one find a character with the understanding of his soul and destiny, the capacity to endure his suffering, and the courage to carry on for the sake of a greater good equal to Hemingway's Santiago. Shakespeare's Hamlet spends an entire play toying with the concept of destiny; Santiago spends an entire novel embracing his

destiny, and sustaining it with his heroic selflessness, his courage in the face of death, and his love for the sea and his people. No one in Shakespeare's work teaches us lessons on overcoming adversity, facing death, and finding joy in struggle like Santiago in *The Old Man and The Sea*. Henry the Fifth is, too, a man of action in the manner of Santiago, but possesses none of Santiago's gift for self-reflection and emotional detachment. Hamlet, perhaps Shakespeare's most-heralded protagonist, is a man completely torn by doubt.

Shakespeare does not give us a protagonist who is sure of himself, knows his destiny, accepts it, and teaches other men to carry out their destinies in the face of death. Shakespeare, for all his greatness as a playwright and poet, does not give us a protagonist who is a man of action, a man of reflection, and a teacher to other men in the Oriental tradition of master to apprentice in the arts. Nowhere in Shakespeare's work is there a character equal to Santiago in his understanding of self, destiny, and selflessness.

The Old Man and The Sea, then, sinks to the bottom of the ocean of literary criticism the idea that Hemingway is a limited writer. The idea that Hemingway is a limited writer, often heard in America by this writer, is absurd. No other American writer in his time, nor since, expands on the range of subjects and settings as Hemingway. No other American writer in his time stands against fascism at risk to his own life as Hemingway does in Spain. Hemingway is a writer engaged in the world in his time whose prose speaks to our time, and to all time.

His prose speaks beyond his time to all time because Hemingway, like Cervantes and Homer before him, possesses a core, driving passion for illuminating the trials and triumphs inherent in any man's desire to achieve his destiny. Hemingway's greatest

protagonist, Santiago, reveals Hemingway's achievement of his own destiny. It is only because Hemingway meets "the many Santiagos of Cuba," to quote the contemporary Cuban scholar Mary Cruz, that he is able to create a man with an undying will, a passion to achieve his destiny, and a selfless, generous spirit: Santiago.

Santiago's odyssey proves that when a man dares to fulfill his heart's desires, his destiny becomes his life's journey and all his life is a journey in fulfilling his destiny. Santiago's four-day quest, profound in its levels of interpretation, begins with a simple and noble question implicit and unstated in Hemingway's prose: will Santiago keep his promise to himself, to continue journeying the deep blues of the Gulf Stream in pursuit of his dream? Hemingway's answer is that yes, he will, and he will discover worlds he's never fathomed in the keeping of a promise and the carrying of a dream. Hemingway keeps his promise to himself from the beginning of his career at that which he is born to do: write. Hemingway's pursuit of his dream—to go beyond the work of all other writers—leads him to friends he otherwise never would've made, truths he otherwise never would've realized, travels he otherwise never would've learned from, loves he otherwise never would've known, seas he otherwise never would've crossed, and stories he otherwise never would've have told.

Likewise, Hemingway believes that *The Old Man and The Sea* is the ultimate expression of his aesthetic, as he relates in a letter to his publisher, Charles Scribner, after telling Santiago's story:

This is the prose that I have been working for all my life [*The Old Man*

and The Sea] that should read easily and simply and seem short and yet have all the dimensions of the visible world and the world of a man's spirit. It is as good prose as I can write as of now. (Phillips 37)

Santiago works all his life, perseveres through a desperate stretch of no catches, and finds himself on an adventure he dreams of, a quest that all of his life as a fisherman has prepared him for. Like Santiago, Hemingway perseveres, continues to follow his calling in the wake of the critical disdain heaped on him after publication of *Across the River and Into the Trees* in 1950, and discovers an artistic quest that all of his life has prepared him for. Hemingway's world is Santiago's world.

It is the world of all people who dare to carry their dreams for the sake of a greater good. Santiago's greater good is the lesson to Manolin: go to sea in the face of hunger, hurricanes and sharks. Hemingway gives us a man who continues to pursue his calling, the art and craft of fishing on the Gulf Stream, despite having endured nearly three months of no catches. Santiago never says die. He keeps faith in himself and his professionalism and does not fall victim to fear or doubt.

On the surface, the lesson Santiago leaves for Manolin may appear to be too simple for the complex, industrialized modern world of the late 20th century to heed. Yet like Santiago, all people have a dream to carry. Like Santiago, all people ask themselves at some point in their lives, do I have the courage to face my destiny, accept it, and carry on? Santiago shares his courage, his love, and his faith with Manolin by leading by example—Santiago does not abandon his calling in the face of hunger and death, he embraces it—and thus teaches Manolin, and us, a profound and timeless lesson: life is

richer for the dreams we dare and the dreams we share. Hemingway, like a great cante jondo singer, tells a story rich in suffering and struggle in *The Old Man and The Sea*.

Like Santiago, Hemingway returns from a journey—the inner journey of writing *The Old Man and The Sea*—with a gift for mankind. It has been nearly fifty years since Hemingway goes to sea on his inner journey, yet the truth of Joseph Campbell’s words on the mythic hero’s adventure continues to echo in Hemingway’s tale of Santiago’s journey: “the world is different today from what it was fifty years ago [;] but the inward life of man is exactly the same” (Campbell 139). The spiritual journey of man will never change. Hemingway’s gift is Santiago’s story, a novel that communicates spiritual truths necessary for humanity if humanity is to survive: love, sacrifice, courage, honor, hope, and faith. Like the cante jondo ballads of Spanish flamenco, *The Old Man and The Sea* speaks clearly and passionately of hope evolving from despair and of faith in the face of death.

Like the somber yet joyous tones of Miles Davis’ classic *Flamenco Sketches*, a work born of Davis’ passion for cante jondo, Hemingway crafts *The Old Man and The Sea* with a spare, haunting, and mysterious lyric evocative of cante jondo. The only difference is that Miles Davis sets out precisely with that goal in mind when he records *Flamenco Sketches* (and for that matter, when he records *Sketches of Spain*): Miles Davis knows he frames his lyric in both those works on the canvas of cante jondo. Hemingway, on the other hand, does not intentionally frame *The Old Man and The Sea* on a cante jondo canvas, yet to me, his writing in *The Old Man and The Sea* has all the poetic intensity and ballad-like rivers of joy and pain vivid in Miles Davis’ cante jondo-inspired

works.

Both these innovative American artists call to mind Joseph Campbell's words concerning Telemachus and the classical hero: Davis, like Telemachus—and Santiago—knows his quest and goes far out into the seas of his art to achieve his dream when he plans and executes the vision of *Sketches of Spain* and *Flamenco Sketches* in 1958 and 1959. *Flamenco Sketches* is not an accident, *Sketches of Spain* is not an accident, and neither is *The Old Man and The Sea*. Davis is as ready for his Homeric-like aesthetic journey in the currents of cante jondo in the late 1950s as Hemingway is prepared to write *The Old Man and The Sea* in the early 1950s. Hemingway knows he is going to tell the story of the Cuban fisherman's struggle at high sea from 1939 on, and like Miles Davis in his cante jondo-inspired works, Hemingway does not force the lyric in *The Old Man and The Sea*.

Hemingway, like Davis, goes far out into the currents of his vision to further his aesthetic. To paraphrase Joseph Campbell, both Hemingway and Davis get the adventure they are ready for, just as Santiago receives the quest he is ready for. In *Flamenco Sketches*, we hear Miles Davis' now-legendary interpretation of "deep song," the cante jondo form in flamenco born of Spanish gypsies' ancient spirituals; in *The Old Man and The Sea*, we are in Hemingway's "deep song," braving the unknown currents of life for the sake of our beloved, for the sake of our comrades, for the sake of a village, and for the sake of a dream.

Afterword: For the Living

I knew a Cuban immigrant who said he'd met Hemingway. His name was Juan Morales and he was the son of a farmer from near Cojimar, Cuba. Juan was a Marielito, a refugee from the Mariel exodus of 1982, and he lived in the room next to mine in a brick apartment building in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington, D.C., at 14th and T, NW, in the summer of 1986. Juan was also a heroin addict and my apartment had been a "shooting gallery," a space where heroin addicts pumped death into their veins, previously. There were rats in our apartments and prostitutes shooting up heroin on the steps and staircases of our building and I was the poetry representative for the Javarama Collective, an artists collective headed by the actor B. Stanley, that held lease to the building.

Juan said over coffee in mid-June, 1986, that in the late autumn of 1950, his father had taken him to the beach at Cojimar on a Saturday morning, just after dawn. Juan said he was six years young at the time and that his father walked with him past a coffee vendor near the beach that morning and at the end of the beach at Cojimar stood "un hombre como un oso, Dios Mio, muy fuerte y misterioso, con expresion grave y, pues si, quisas, alma y corazon, alma y corazon. Este hombre estuvo mirando el mar." Meaning, he saw "a man big like a bear, My God, looking very strong and mysterious, with a grave expression and perhaps, yes, indeed, soul and heart, soul and heart. He was looking out to sea."

He said that the man stood with his arms folded over his chest and that he was solid as a retired heavyweight fighter. Juan said that he tugged at his father's trousers

and asked him who the man at the end of the beach was and that his father shrugged and said “un norteamericano:” a North American. Juan said that he and his father walked on and nearing the man, noticed that his hair was silver and Juan’s father stopped and Juan stopped with his father and looked up to his father in the dawn light and his father whispered, “mi hijo, es Hemingway, Dios Mio.” Meaning, my son, it’s Hemingway, my God.

Juan said that Hemingway smiled at them and said good morning in Spanish, “buenos dias,” and “salud,” an expression that can be used in greeting and in passing in Cuba and all Spanish-speaking countries. Juan said that Hemingway was eager to speak with them and told them he’d been looking out to sea since the early morning and had watched the boats hail the currents before dawn, headed for the Gulf Stream. Juan said that in the midst of the conversation between his father and Hemingway, his father said to Hemingway “bueno, cuando tu has escrito en Paris y Africa, y en la guerra civil de Espana, yo fui a Africa en un gran barco, pues, es la pura verdad, Senor Hemingway, y la memoria que me gusta la mas que todas en mi vida es cuando en la hora poco antes que las noches, en la hora azul, los leones han jugaban en las playas de Africa, que magnifico, jugaban en la hora azul antes que las noches en las playas de Africa, magnifico y bonito.”

Meaning, Juan’s father had sailed from Cuba to Africa all through the 1920s and 1930s, when, as he put it, Hemingway was writing in Paris and Africa and Spain. And that Juan’s father’s greatest recollection, his most magnificent and beautiful memory, was of lions playing in the blue hour of the evening just before nightfall on the beaches of

Africa. Juan said that Hemingway asked his father question after question about his seafaring days on cargo ships that sailed from Havana to African ports, and that Hemingway “tenia ojos con intensidad como un fuego en la noche” as he conversed with, and largely listened to, Senor Morales tell of his sea journeys. Meaning, Hemingway had eyes with the intensity of a fire at night.

And Juan said Hemingway finally said “Bueno, gracias para tu cuento de la mar, Senor Morales, muchisimas gracias, vamos a tomar café, yo pago por todo, vamos juntos.” With Hemingway’s offer to buy them all coffee, they walked to the coffee vendor at the end of the beach in Cojimar on a mid-autumn morning. I asked Juan “you drank the coffee with Hemingway from paper cups, no?”

I knew from *The Old Man and The Sea* and from a conversation with Dr. Fernando Barroso in my undergraduate years at James Madison University that it is the way of Cubans of the country, gente del campo, to drink coffee from condensed milk cans. And Juan said “amigo, ninguna vez, ninguna vez estaba bebiendo café en copas del papel. Cada dia en copas del estilo, amigo, soy hombre del campo. Bueno, Senor Hemingway tiene buen alma y corazon, amigo. Corazon grande, y espiritu misterioso.” What he said was he never drank coffee from paper cups and he was a man of the country and that he drank coffee from “cups of steel,” condensed milk cans, each day. And he said that “Mr. Hemingway had a good soul and heart, a great heart and a mysterious spirit.” We finished our coffee and I went back in my room. In August I signed enlistment papers for the United States Marine Corps and left Washington, D.C.

Juan was a heroin addict living on food stamps and government food surpluses

and the coffee we shared was a luxury to him. He died of an overdose from heroin when I was deployed from Hawaii with my unit, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marines, 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade, to Okinawa and Korea in the spring of 1988. He could not read. I know Juan was illiterate because I had collections of Lorca and Neruda's poetry in my room and brought them out and showed them to him and he shook his head and said, "Amigo, lo siento, no tengo ojos para libros ni periodicos ni revistas, que gran lastima, no." Meaning, friend, I do not have eyes for books nor newspapers nor magazines, what a great shame. But he'd taken coffee with Hemingway on the beach at Cojimar on an autumn morning in 1950, in the seas of his youth in Cuba. He told me his father had died of a heart attack in 1957 and his mother of breast cancer in 1961 and his life had been one long journey fueled by heroin and alcohol ever since, and his bloodshot eyes and needle-pocked arms testified to his words.

And still he'd looked out to sea and carried his dream beyond Cuba. He thought life might be better in America for him, and he said that he was grateful to be alive in America, and that for all his struggles here, "tengo libertad aqui, y en libertad hay oportunidad, es la pura verdad, amigo, la pura verdad." Meaning, "I have liberty here and in liberty there is opportunity, it is the purest truth, friend, the purest truth."

With Hemingway, we look out to sea on Santiago's journey. Santiago's heart knows no horizon. He does not hesitate to brave the perils of the high sea, he faces the tides of fortune and misfortune with patience and wit and courage, and he keeps his promise to Manolin and their village on the northern shore of Cuba. Santiago sails with the spirits of his living and his dead always with him like the hawks of the Pwo Karen

hilltribespeople in Northern Thailand and the condors of the Akan people of West Africa,
guiding and protecting him on all the journeys of his life. Like James of Zebedee,
Santiago journeys for the living.

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