

The Aspect of Pain as Perseverence
and the Irony of its Attempt
for Individuality in
THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

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At a glance, The Old Man and the Sea, by Ernest Hemingway, appears to be an ordinary story about an ordinary old man trying to catch a big, though ordinary fish. We've heard a story of this nature told hundreds of times, being handed down from generation to generation by the wise, old grandfather trying to captify the young and impressionable grandson. Yet the ending is always the same because the story is always about "the one that got away." Well, for all practical purposes, Hemingway's story can easily fit into this category. It IS about "the one that got away," if I may use the term in its loosest form, but to a person going beyond its superficial value, it is much more.

What the "much more" is can easily be discussed in several volumes under various titles. A feat such as this would entail intense studying and research and be quite a task for the average individual, but a few authors have handled it very well. Some of the predominant themes that are topics of discussion include nature, courage, love, humility, conflict, romanticism, interdependence, independence, solidarity, individualism and Christianity. These themes don't contradict but are interwoven and parallel in many ways.¹

A predominant theme that I see running through this story is that of pain as perseverance and the irony of its attempt for individuality. Though none of my sources specifically mentions this theme in a substantial way, I will attempt to record my findings and observations along with some of the suggestions of my secondary sources. My aim is to prove that each of the three characters; Santiago, Manolin and the great Marlin experience pain, yet

it is the root or core of their individuality to persevere, maintaining that individuality. My conclusion shows that although they persevere in times of pain, all of them fail in their search for individuality, not in the strictest sense of the word "failure" but in an overall context. This statement might seem a little far-fetched, but I feel I have the liberty to make it by basing it on two quotes. The first, by Hemingway himself, states: "I tried to make a real old man, a real boy, a real sea and a real fish and sharks. But if I made them good and true enough they would mean many things. The second was stated by Ralph Waldo Emerson almost a hundred years earlier: ". . . the quality of the imagination is to flow, and not to freeze. . . For all symbols are fluxional; all language is vehicular and transitive, and is good, as ferries and horses are, for conveyance, not. . . for homestead." I see these two quotes as giving me the necessary permission to dive into the book in order to catch my fish, so to speak.

As is the case with all written works of art, the book is divided into three parts - the before, during and after, or the introduction, climax and conclusion. Depending on the work and the style of the author, different degrees of emphasis are given to the different parts. With Hemingway, especially in this book, the during or the portion leading up to and including the climax is allotted the most attention. That's not to say the other two are not important. All three work together to give meaning and understanding, but the heart of the story, its life-giving force, lies in the center as the life-giving force of a human being, the heart, lies in the center of the body.

Santiago is a fisherman who has fished in the Gulf Stream for eighty-four days without catching a fish. The first forty days he had been accompanied by his friend and companion, Manolin. The rest of the time he is alone, placing his lines with precision into the depths of the sea. On the eighty-

fifth day he rows out farther than he ever did before and at noon the hook of the deepest line, the hundred-fathom one, is taken by a huge male marlin. The fish pulls the skiff to the northwest the rest of the day and all that night, and Santiago does all he can to hold on. This is what he was born to do; and in doing it, he is not just doing, but realizing his being. This action takes symbolic reverberation when Santiago humanizes and identifies with the great fish on the end of the line; "His choice [the marlin's] had been to stay in the deep dark water far out beyond all snares and traps and treacheries. My choice [Santiago's] was to go there to 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" (p. 55). The first day.

On the afternoon of the second day Santiago gets his first sight of the fish that he has been hooked to when the marlin breaks the water in a long saw-like leap. The antagonists confront one another for a split second, and then the battle of skill and intelligence against brute and strength continues. For a second night the marlin pulls the skiff steadily, while Santiago holds pressure on the line in spite of several accidents or disabilities he has acquired. Before dawn the marlin makes a desperate run, but it is to no avail. The fish turns east to swim with the current. It begins to circle and Santiago finally works it close enough to the boat to harpoon him on this, the third day. He secures the fifteen hundred plus pounds of fish to his boat and prepares to go home.

Within an hour a great Mako shark arrives and takes a big chunk out of the marlin before Santiago is able to kill it. The bleeding marlin leaves an appetizing trail of blood behind the skiff and soon the scavenger sharks pick up the scent. Santiago clubs at them desperately until midnight, when he

loses his last weapon. The great fish is picked clean to the bone, and Santiago sails into the harbor late on the third night with the white skeleton of his catch riding high beside him. He beaches the skiff, shoulders the mast and stumbles his way back to the shack. Manolin brings him coffee later in the morning, and they make plans for further fishing. The old man goes back to sleep to dream of lions playing on the beach.

"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" (p. 9). This first line of the story already tells a lot. The man is old, alone and unlucky. These three words, in and of themselves, evoke one word. Pain. It is virtually impossible not to draw the correlation. But what is this pain? What does it mean to the old man and how does he handle it? If any author can put concreteness to the word, Hemingway can. The old man physically handles pain as he carries his mast, with the sail ". . . furled . . . like the flag of permanent defeat" (p. 9). Compassion is immediately pulled from within us and we want to just reach out and tell him everything will be okay. But we can't because things are not okay right now. Hemingway knows it. The old man knows it. We know it. The pain the old man has must be dealt with in a special kind of way. With a dream, a hope. The dream that pain leads to perseverance, and that perseverance will eventually lead to his completeness, his individuality.

Setting one takes place on land. The stage is formulated and the characters introduced. The old man's name is Santiago, or in the English translation, Saint James. We can't say we know anything about the core of Santiago at this point, but if we go by the English translation, and the fact that Hemingway loved to play with names, much is already learned. Saint James was an apostle of Christ. Apostle meaning one who has been sent on a mission by someone else. He started off as a disciple, a learner, then, as is the

basic cycle of Christianity, his discipleship lead to apostleship. He was a fisherman and was one of the three favored by Christ to witness several events, one being His transfiguration. His nickname was "son of thunder." Just by knowing these few points we get the picture of what a special person⁴ Santiago will turn out to be.

The book does tell us about his physical appearance, though. He is a typical old man in the sense that he is thin and gaunt with deep wrinkles on the back of his neck. He has brown blotches of skin cancer from the sun, and deep creased scars on his hands. On the reverse side of the coin, and keeping with a knack of Hemingway's to predict older characters as younger people with youth-like qualities who thrill at the thought of adventure, he is atypical for he has powerful shoulders, a strong neck and eyes that are the same color as the sea - cheerful and undefeated. You could almost say⁵ that there are two men in one, and we'll see this to be the actual case. But for now, the scene is low-keyed.

Our first inkling into the uniqueness of Santiago comes when he says, "I am a strange old man" (p. 15). It is here that we learn of his desire to persevere. He is not just going to sit back. This "strangeness" will take him beyond the realm of "oldness," a realm Hemingway excellently explains. But at the present, he is what he is. He's a fisherman well equipped, but I wonder if all his hooks are in his basket, metaphorically speaking. Several times he says things which later prove to be fictions. Things like him wanting to take the cast net when it has been sold, or eating food which doesn't exist and reading newspapers that are probably weeks old. I think this can be brushed aside, though, not saying that it is irrelevant, but that it is common for a man of his age to do at times. At this stage in the game, Hemingway still has us guessing as to what is in store, and wondering

as to the mental capacity of Santiago.

As we all have heros, Santiago's is the great DiMaggio. We don't know why at this point but we do know that there must be something special about DiMaggio that captivates the old man so. There's also the mention of Africa and how Santiago has ". . . seen the lions on the beaches in the evening" (p. 24). Though this is a little vague too right now, our natural instinct is to equate lions with power. Maybe a hint. Maybe coincidence. But we do know that "He no longer dreamed of storms, nor of women, nor of great occurrences, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife. He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach. They played like young cats in the dusk and he loved them. . ." (p. 27).

Scene two is where things come into perspective. The setting is on the Gulf of Mexico and the quest for the conquest begins to materialize. Santiago makes a break from the real world and turns to the "realer" one. It is here that he seems to be at home. On the sea we meet his "principal friends" (p. 32). The flying fish are the first to come into view. They pop in and out of the water as a cigarette would pop in and out of someone's mouth. For Santiago, these fish are very special. They are transcendents, able to go beyond their realm. You could say they have the best of both worlds. The flying fish give him strength, both mental and physical. The mental strength is attained by the fact that he feels good when he sees them. The physical strength is attained by his eating them later on. The birds he feels sorry for and the man-of-war he hates. Yet all work together to create ". . . la mar, which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her" (p. 32). Santiago is on such a personal basis with the sea that he even⁶ talks to the fish and birds just as primitive man might have done long ago.

Santiago sets the baits with great precision. Some might say too much

precision but he believes in being prepared. It shows him to be a perfectionist yet, "Only I have no luck anymore. But who knows? Maybe today. Every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact. Then when luck comes you are ready" (p. 35). But who knows is right. One thing is for sure, though. He's anticipating and that is good for it shows that he has hope.

It is here on the sea that two changes take place. The first shows us that the old man acquires traits of the turtles. "Most people are heartless about turtles because a turtle's heart will beat for hours after he has been cut up and butchered. But the old man thought, I have such a heart too and my feet and hands are like theirs" (p. 40). What is he saying to us? Is he anticipating again, only this time telling us that he foresees the pain he is going to be put through?

Change two appears a little later on. "He did not remember when he had first started to talk aloud when he was by himself" (p. 43). This is a very crucial step in the development of the book. He becomes close to himself in that there's constant dialogue between him and his inner being. From here on, it is going to be Santiago vs. Santiago. He pits himself against himself. He feels a bit self-conscious about this habit since he feels that others might think him crazy, but, then again, who is there to listen? He knows, though, that he is not crazy and this is more important than what others think. I find this to be most important because it is here that we have a split personality taking place. One might find it comical in its superficial sense, but it is here that the old man reaches inside of his being and pulls out that part of him that will help him persevere in time of pain. This monologue device varies the fabric of the narrative and enables Santiago to express his feelings, thoughts, private dreams, and reminiscences in a spon-

taneous and interesting manner. He calls upon all his resources and combines them together in that quest for the conquest. Santiago realizes that he will have to die to self in order to do it, but, he's a strange old man. He thinks of only one thing: "That which I was born for" (p. 44), the answer to which is fishing. Since fishing is a symbolic or ritualistic activity aimed at some redemptive response, Santiago is saying that he was born to be re-
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deemed. He was born to find and hold on to his individuality.

The time has finally come. There's a nibble, a tug, a hope. "Now, he said aloud and struck hard with both hands, gained a yard of line and then struck again and again, swinging with each arm alternately on the cord with all the strength of his arms and the pivoted weight of his body" (p. 48). The pain really begins. No longer is it only mental, but it materializes into actual actualities. All of these actualities appear in the form of physical wounds. "He had pushed his straw hat down on his head . . . and it was cutting down on his face and made a cut below his eye" (p. 57). "He felt the line carefully with his right hand and noticed his hand was bleeding" (p. 61). Later on, he carries on a conversation with his left hand, which has cramped. He talks to it almost as if expecting a response. "How do you feel, hand?" (p. 64). "How does it go, hand? Or is it too early to know?" (p. 65). "Be patient hand. I do this for you" (p. 65). Then, ". . . he leaned back against the line and now it burned his back and his left hand, and his left hand was taking all the strain and cutting badly" (p. 90).

As we can see from these wounds, Hemingway allowed the old man to be injured in four important spots; his head, eye and right and left hands. In everyday living, we rely heavily on these three parts of our body to keep us going. In fact, we would be functionless without the use of these important tools. This all becomes clear and comes into perspective when Santiago says,

"Pull hands, he thought. Hold up, legs. Last for me, head. Last for me" (p. 101). He calls upon them for cooperation. Santiago was definately in pain but he was determined to endure, so all else becomes secondary. The significance of this is to show that, as mentioned earlier, we sometimes have to die to self in order to prove to ourselves or to others that we are good and we do have purpose and meaning in life, regardless of what others think or say. A hero can only prove his merit after he has been "wounded" in some fashion by the experiences of life. In much of Hemingway's fiction, the wound is depicted as some physical hurt or foreshadows an emotional hurt. Accordingly, the wound itslef becomes just as much a certainty as death. The two are inextricably bound together.⁸

One-to-one confrontation begins its play about three-quarters of the way into the story. "But you have not slept yet, old man, he said aloud. It is half a day and a night and now another day and you have not slept. You must devise a way so that you sleep a little. . . If you don't sleep you might become unclear in the head. I'm clear enough in the head, he thought. Too clear" (p. 85). "You better be fearless and confident yourself, old man, he said" (p. 92). These are just a few of the examples. This refusal to submit to defeat on any grounds illustrates the same principle that Christ did; both are the "undefeated." Defeat signifies surrender of the ideal, and the true Hemingway hero is the individual who never accepts the compromise.⁹ This section of the book gets very intense because we know every little thing that goes on in Santiago's head. Hemingway allows us to dive in and be in the middle of the first set of antagonists, the ordinary old man and the extraordinary old man, or the parent-side telling the child-side what to do. There is a tendency in time of intenseness and aloneness to consult yourself for advice and direction, and Santiago does a good job with it. At times, a man

must depend upon himself alone in order to assert his manhood, and the assertion of his manhood, in the face of insuperable obstacles, is the complete end¹⁰ and justification of his existence for the Hemingway hero.

Where does Santiago get all this energy, though, to endure all his pain? It is true that his parent side keeps him going but there is something else that plays a big part too. Actually, there are three things, and all relate to flashbacks or dreams. At one point in the book he says, "But I must have confidence and I must be worthy of the great DiMaggio who does all things perfectly even with the pain of the bone spur in his heel" (p. 75). This flashback does two things. First of all, DiMaggio was a baseball player and the symbol of baseball, as is the case with all sorts of sports, implies unity,¹¹ camaraderie. One supports the other for a common goal - to win. Secondly, DiMaggio played out the last years of his glorious career severely handicapped by the pain of a bone spur in his heel, yet he always displayed his individual greatness as part of his team, one to whom the team was always more important¹² than himself. So, Santiago looks to DiMaggio and his determination in order to gain strength. He later goes on to say, "What is a bone spur" (p. 75)? This shows us that even though he has no idea what it is, he still sees it as an implement to total physical completeness. It is a handicap that DiMaggio has conquered. A handicap that Santiago sees as far surpassing the obstacle he is faced with, so he feels much better in knowing that if DiMaggio has overcome something as that, he has at least a half-way chance in dealing with his.

The second appears a little further on. "As the sun set he remembered, to give himself more confidence, the time in the tavern at Casablanca when he had played the hand game [arm wrestling] with the negro from Cienfeugos who was the strongest man on the docks" (p. 76). Where the first flashback gives

him the strength to persevere, this flashback gives him the courage to win. The match between he and the negro went on and on, and even though things looked bad for awhile, Santiago was the victorious one. He was faced with unbeatable odds yet he took the bull by the horns. Santiago is in the process of letting go of all his former ideals and creating a new self, which is not an easy task.¹³

The third flashback is a frequent recurrent dream of his and we've heard it before. "After that he began to dream of the long yellow beach and he saw the first of the lions come down onto it in the early dark and then the other lions came and he rested his chin on the wood of the bows where the ship lay anchored with the evening off-shore breeze and he waited to see if there would be more lions and he was happy" (p. 90). Dreaming, whether of lions or whatever, may represent not only a nostalgic return to the strength of one's youth but also a desire for immortality.¹⁴ In some cases, the lion in a dream might be a manifestation of cowardice, and its appearance in the dream represents the force which must be overcome.¹⁵ Whatever the answer is, "I wish . . . I could sleep and dream about the lions, he thought. Why are the lions the main thing that is left" (p. 73)? I see a simple answer to this question. The lions are the main thing because it is through them that he faces and conquers any fears he might have. In conquering that, he will have no problem in obtaining the strength or courage he needs in order to use his other two flashbacks to their potential. With this dream, Santiago finds himself to be in control of the situation even though it doesn't seem that way at times. And all three reoccurrences work together to build up confidence in time of pain, assuring him that if he just holds on he will attain his "personhood."

Santiago is not the only one on the quest for the attainment of "person-

hood." The other important character in the story is his young friend, Manolin, who is in the same boat metaphorically speaking. We never know his true age, yet, age wouldn't matter to Manolin since he appears to be very mature. Santiago says of him, "You are already a man" (p. 12). In the rite of initiation into the adult world, Manolin's role is important because he fulfills the part of a youth in-so-far as he is a person trying to come to terms with himself. He struggles through life, trying to make sense and order out of the world and trying to relate them to his life.¹⁶ Though his physical presence in the book is limited to the beginning and end of the story, we see him to be a life-giving force to the old man. He is a follower of Santiago's, loves him very much, and even plays along with (or flatters) him in regard to some of their discussions in the first part of the book. "But they went through this fiction every day" (p. 17). He is the old man's crutch and, in fact, he seems to be his only true friend. While the other fishermen laugh at Santiago, Manolin stands behind him. Manolin, from the Spanish, mano, hand, is a stronghold. Manolin is different. He is persistent. It is not everyday that one sees a younger boy trailing after an older man, yet he has a reason.

Yes, Manolin is on a quest for individuality, but he takes a different approach than Santiago does. Manolin knows that Santiago obtains knowledge that he cannot get anywhere else. This knowledge is the key to understanding and he is determined. He maintains his part in society in-so-far as he is obedient to his papa, or to "him" as is the occasional reference. In fact, it seems that his only tie with his real father is biological, and never is there reference to any other family member. He's adopted Santiago, feels his pain and deals with his own by befriending him, but his fulfillment is found in Santiago's fulfillment. If Santiago succeeds, Manolin succeeds. He would rather fish with the old man, but since he, Santiago, is "salos" - the worst

form of unlucky - he must contend to sticking with a luckier boat, at least for now. And taking into account that Santiago calls out for the boy nine times throughout the book, calling for his strength in times of trouble, it would seem like Santiago would rather be with Manolin also.¹⁷

Santiago and Manolin are men because of their codes of honor. Each is an idealist, and fishing is more than an occupation, it is a way of life. Their philosophy is based not on competition, but on love, loyalty, and respect. Their loyalty has a biblical basis to it. Just as Christ's disciples were to loyal to Him, so Manolin is loyal to Santiago. And as Christ was loyal to His disciples, so Santiago is loyal to Manolin. In its truest sense, Christ was an apostle because He was sent on a mission by God. So too is Santiago Christ-like, with his own mission to fulfill. He has humility, a rare quality. Early in the story the boy gives him food and the old man accepts it and thanks him. "He was too simple to wonder when he had attained humility. But he knew he had attained it and he knew it was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride" (p. 14).

Faith is another topic which is discussed in the first part of the book. Several references are made to it, such as Santiago's reply to Manolin, "I know you did not leave me because you doubted" (p. 10). Then there's the statement, "We have faith" (p. 11). As we understand it, faith is one of Christianity's major virtues. Nothing can exist without it. Not always are there tangible objects to which the senses can appeal so the mind takes over and satisfies the senses with faith, a powerful five-letter word. But what is it that the old man and the boy have faith in? The answer to this question contains one of the major ideas of this book. The old fisherman and the boy value human relationships and the pain they entail above materialism.

It is now time to discuss what it is that Santiago wishes to succeed in.

It is pretty obvious, especially if one has already read the book, or the introduction to this thesis for that matter, but I have labored in not mentioning it again at all up until this point. Santiago wants to catch the big fish and he goes beyond all realms to do it. We will later see, though, that by going out beyond all people in the world, the old man reflects Hemingway's feeling that in his individualism and his pride and his need, man inevitably goes beyond his true place in the world and thereby brings violence and destruction on himself and others.¹⁸ But for now, the fish turns out to be a marlin and it plays a very significant part in the book as well as this thesis because it is the source of both of their individualities and no pain is too much so as not to persevere in that quest. The marlin wants to survive and so does Santiago.

Santiago knows that this "survival of the fittest" will not be easy, though. He tries to avoid the issue by being a little comical when he says, "Eat it [the bait] so that the point of the hook goes into your heart and kills you" (p. 48), but Santiago is well aware that things won't happen that easily. He must fight for what he wants.

The great fish becomes a friend and an enemy. It has a mind of its own with an instinct to survive, to win. Even though the marlin remains underwater for most of the story, it seems to know what is going on above. While Santiago is busy talking to a bird and has his defenses down, ". . . the fish gave a sudden lurch that pulled the old man down onto the bow and would have pulled him overboard if he had not braced himself and given some line" (p. 61). Not such a stupid fish after all.

Just as the other fish and fowl of the sea are his brothers, so too is the marlin. Santiago says at one point, "I wish I could feed the fish, he thought. He is my brother" (p. 65). He feels sorry for it. Santiago even

equates human qualities to it: "But he seems calm, he thought, and following his plan" (p. 66). The two appear to be on an equal basis.

Finally, the second set of antagonists face each other.

"The line rose slowly and steadily and then the surface of the ocean bulged ahead of the boat and the fish came out. He came out unendingly and water poured from his sides. He was bright in the sun and his head and back were dark purple and in the sun the stripes on his sides showed wide and a light lavender. His sword was as long as a baseball bat and tapered like a rapier and he rose his full length from the water and then re-entered it smoothly, like a diver and the old man saw the great scythe-blade of his tale go under and the line commenced to race out" (p. 69).

Three things are important here. We know the water poured from his side. A possible reference to Christ? We know his head and back were dark purple. Purple is the color of pain. Thirdly, we know his sword was as long as a baseball bat. This reference goes back to the baseball analogy and tells us that the fish possesses the strength to hit his own home run and blow Santiago out of the ball-game. Santiago realizes this when he says, "I must never let him learn his strength nor what he could do if he made his run" (p. 70). He later clarifies this: "But thank God, they are not as intelligent as we who kill them; although they are more noble and more able" (p. 70). More noble is right. When it comes down to it, the two of them are fighting in its rawest sense. The marlin knows not how to connive nor to be unjust. He's just using his resources and taking his pain in stride. Santiago, on the other hand, knows how to connive, but he doesn't have the resources to do it. Both are fighting on equal ground. But the marlin's quest to maintain its individuality still exists. It is not going to throw the towel in.

Santiago's humility shines forth once again. "He was comfortable but suffering, although he did not admit the suffering at all" (p. 71). He goes

on to say, "And pain doesn't matter to a man" (p. 93). We begin to wonder here what Santiago truly is. Yes, we know he is a man, but it is very unusual for him to take such a licking and keep on ticking. He just doesn't seem to give up and the struggle still continues. We're reminded once more that Santiago is not the young superman he portrays to be. "His old legs and shoulders pivoted with the swinging of the pulling" (p. 95). Hemingway re-inserts this here to assure us that he is not a twenty-four year-old, which we might have had the tendency to believe up until this point.

The end is almost near and Santiago basically claims victory when he says, "Fish, fish you are going to to have to die anyway. Do you have to kill me too" (p. 101)? He answers this when he says, "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. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who" (p. 102). The two really become one. Santiago is so tired that he doesn't care who the winner is, but something important takes place here. The equation of the two is fulfilled and proved when he says, "Keep your head clear and know how to suffer like a man. Or a fish, he thought" (p. 102). Sufferings combine as well as individual entities and the two become one big pain, no pun intended.

The saddest part in the whole book takes place next. Here, the battle is over and a victor is declared. There is the thrusting of the harpoon into the marlin's heart, "Then the fish came alive, with his death in him, and rose high out of the water showing all his great length and width and all his power and beauty. He seemed to hang in the air above the old man in the skiff. Then he fell into the water with a crash that sent spray over the old man and and over all of the skiff" (p. 104).

The marlin is dead. His pain has caused him to pull all his resources

together and persevere in his attempt for the maintaining of his individuality, but he failed. He failed gracefully, though. He could have easily just rolled over dead, but it was not of his nature to do so. He was beautiful. He was powerful, so his death dance had to be a fantastic display of both before consenting to defeat. You could say he went out in style.

Santiago, on the other hand, is very much alive. His pain has also caused him to pull all his resources together and persevere in his attempt for the maintaining of his individuality, and for now he succeeds. His failure comes later, when the sharks arrive and eventually pick the great marlin clean to the bone. True, he has defeated and won the battle, but all he has to show for it is bones, and that just isn't enough for Santiago. But though his prize was prostituted, their oneness (their link or bond) is still present. "He did not like to look at the fish anymore since he had been mutilated. When the fish had been hit it was though he himself were hit" (p. 113).

"But man is not made for defeat, he said. A man can be destroyed but not defeated" (p. 114). Well, Santiago was destroyed and he was defeated. His individuality was rooted in bringing the fish back whole, and he failed too. He now regrets killing the marlin in the first place. "He was past everything now and he sailed the skiff to make his home port as well as intelligently as he could. In the night sharks hit the carcass as someone might pick up crumbs from the table. The old man paid no attention to anything except steering" (p. 132). The great marlin is unlike the other fish which the old man catches; he is a spiritual more than a physical necessity. Now, neither one of those needs were met. In killing the great marlin and in losing him to the sharks, the old man bears the sins into which men inevitably fall by going far out beyond their depth, beyond their true place in life. But he never admits to himself what happened, though. "And what beat you, he

thought. Nothing, he said aloud. I went out too far" (p. 133). This avoiding is a form of escapism and it only proves all the more that Santiago has failed.

Back on land we get more references to Christ. "He shoulders the mast and starts to climb" (p. 133). He stops, looks back, then starts up again. At the top he falls and lies down for some time. He tries to get up but it is too difficult. He sits down five times before reaching the shack. There, "He slept face down on the newspapers with his arms straight out and the palms of his hands up" (p. 134). This is final proof right here that Santiago has failed in his search for individuality. If we remember our Catholic teaching, Christ crucified on the cross was nailed back-down. This is the symbol of "the win" over the odds. Santiago was not on his back. He was lying prostrate, the symbol of "the loss," the symbol of failure.

Manolin experiences his pain again after Santiago returns. It hurts him to see the old man so. "The boy saw that the old man was breathing and then he saw the old man's hands and he started to cry" (p. 134). He tries to be strong but he, too, knows his quest for individuality, which lied in Santiago bringing the whole fish home, has failed. The two of them start from scratch again only this time, Manolin is determined to spend his days with the old man, learning everything and helping as much as he can. "The hell with luck, the boy said. I'll bring the luck with me" (p. 137).

The idea of death permeates or lies behind all of the character's actions. This view involves Hemingway's concept that "when you are dead, you are dead." There is nothing more. If man cannot accept a life or reward after death, the emphasis must then be on obtaining or doing or performing something in this particular life. If death ends all activity, if death ends all knowledge and consciousness, man must seek his reward here and now. Santiago tried to reach

that reward, thus being re-born into himself and maintaining his individuality. This time, he failed. Maybe next time, if there is one, there will be real victory, but in the meantime, "The old man was dreaming about the lions" (p. 140).

ENDNOTES

¹ Clinton S. Burhans, Jr., "The Old Man and the Sea: Hemingway's Tragic Vision of Man," in Ernest Hemingway, by Carlos Baker (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. 150.

² Earl Rovit, Ernest Hemingway, (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1963), p. 87.

³ Rovit, p. 87.

⁴ Fr. Leonard Foley, Saint of the Day, (U.S.A.: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1975), pp. 21-22.

⁵ Joseph Defalco, The Hero in Hemingway's Short Stories, (New York: University of Pittsburg Press, Book Craftsmen Associates, Inc., 1963), p. 54.

⁶ Melvin Backman, "Hemingway: The Matador and the Crucified," in Ernest Hemingway, by Baker, p. 142.

⁷ Defalco, p. 108.

⁸ Defalco, p. 195.

⁹ Defalco, p. 201.

¹⁰ Joseph Waldmeir, "Confiteor Hominem: Ernest Hemingway's Religion of Man," in Ernest Hemingway, by Baker, p. 146.

¹¹ Defalco, p. 58.

¹² Burhans, p. 153.

¹³ Defalco, p. 39.

14
Backman, p. 143.

15
Defalco, p. 204.

16
Defalco, p. 59.

17
Baker, p. 163.

18
Burhans, p. 154.

19
Burhans, p. 151.

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