SANTIAGO IN *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA*: A HOMERIC HERO

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When *The Old Man and the Sea* was published, Malcolm Cowley immediately noted its "classical" qualities (106-7). Within weeks Bernard Berenson, in the blurb he provided for the book, described it thus: "An idyll of the sea as sea, as un-Byronic and un-Melvillian as Homer himself, and communicated in a prose as calm and compelling as Homer's verse" (*SL* 785 n.1). Hemingway was both gratified by and concurred with Berenson's description (Morgan 78-80). Subsequent critics continued to discuss various classical aspects of *OMATS* in terms of both epic and drama, and in a recent work detailing the parallels between Hemingway's narrative art and Homer's, several examples of these parallels in *OMATS* were noted.[1] The object of the present study is to demonstrate the similarities Santiago shares with the heroic figures of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Before proceeding, one feature of narrative technique requires elaboration. In the work noted above it was pointed out that in his repetitive use of the adjectives and adjectival phrases, "deep, mile deep, blue, dark blue, deep dark, dark," Hemingway creates the equivalent of Homeric epithets for the sea (Morgan 17). Here it is necessary to add that the characteristics Hemingway chooses to emphasize, depth and dark color, are two commonly highlighted by Homer in his own epithets for the sea, its waves and waters. One can begin with the "sea depths" from which Thetis rises and the "dark wave" that sounds beneath the keel of an Achaean ship (*Il.* 1.358, 482, LLM 11, 15), read through both epics to the "deep sea" that Laertes thinks may hold his dead son (*Od.* 24.291, BL 374), and seldom fail to find within a few pages reference to these two prominent characteristics of the sea; thus Hemingway, who read Homer in translation, in creating his epithets presents Santiago's adventure on a sea that is visibly as well as stylistically Homeric.[2]

The Iliadic Santiago

Hemingway presents his hero, Santiago, in terms that recall Homer's heroes at Troy; in fact, Santiago exhibits three characteristics that are not only specific to, but fundamental in, the definition of the Homeric hero.[3] First, Homeric heroes, as Andromache says of Hector, were "born"

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(*Il.* 22.477, LLM 414) to their destiny. This is highlighted in Homer by Achilles' statement of his twin destinies (*Il.* 9.412-16, LLM 158), and when he elects to return to the battle to kill Hector, he lays claim to the short, glorious life he was born for (*Il.* 18.79-126, LLM 339-40). Santiago knows, as his thoughts reveal, that he is doing "that which I was born for," that he was "born to be a fisherman" (*OMATS* 40, 105; cf. 50). Achilles' action also underlines another feature of Homeric heroism: "it is not unreflective or unselfconscious" (Griffin 73); it involves choice.[4] Similarly, Santiago has elected his course of action: "My choice was to go there and find him beyond all people" (*OMATS* 50). Finally, basic to the identity of the Homeric heroes is that they are the "best," as Achilles claims he is (*Il.* 1.244, LLM 8), and as others, including Aias, Diomedes, Agamemnon, and Patroklos are described.[5] Santiago is also the "best":

> "And the best fisherman is you."
> "No, I know others better."
> "*Qué va*," the boy said. "There are many good fishermen and some great ones. But there is only you."
> "Thank you. You make me happy. I hope no fish will come along so great that he will prove us wrong." (*OMATS* 23)

In the end the great fish does not prove them wrong, and Santiago's prowess is recognized by the other fishermen who look at the skeleton, one of whom measures it, and by the proprietor of the Terrace who says: "What a fish it was... There has never been such a fish."[6]

Hemingway takes great care to show that Santiago is the "best." We may consider, for example, the conversation about baseball that culminates in the passage quoted above (*OMATS* 21-23). Critics have long noted that the evocation of Joe DiMaggio and Santiago's identification with him serve to underline the heroic quality of Santiago himself (Gurko 66; Burhans 76-77; Harada 272). The use of the DiMaggio analogy, however, also serves to emphasize that Santiago, like Homer's great heroes, is perceived as being the "best," a characteristic he does not disavow. As there are "other men on the team," and even other "great" players, there are also other "great" fishermen, but there is "only" Santiago.[7]

This same characteristic is illustrated in another passage in which competitive sport is not an analogue but the reality, the "hand game" that Santiago remembers on the second night at sea; here Santiago himself is a competitor, and as the victor he remains the "champion," certain that "he could beat anyone" (*OMATS* 69-70). Similarly, Homeric heroes vie to be the "best" in athletic contests, as is vividly portrayed in the funeral games Achilles organizes (*Il.* 23.257-895, LLM 423-40). Also Homeric is the

reminiscence by an old man of an exploit of his youth, although in the epic such events are recounted in speech. On several occasions Nestor tells of his great deeds as a youth, not only in battle but also, and most relevant here, in athletics (*Il.* 23.629-45, LLM 433-34).

One of Nestor's youthful battle reminiscences is particularly significant for Hemingway's description of Santiago's arm wrestling match. Nestor tells of his victory in combat over the hero of the Arkadians who had come to battle Nestor's own Pylians:

> Then stood up for their champion Ereuthalion, a man the peer of the gods...he challenged all our best; but they trembled sore and were afraid...But me my hardy spirit aroused to meet him in my confidence; yet I was youngest of all in years. So fought I with him and Athene vouchsafed me glory. Tallest was he and strongest of men that I have slain; as one of huge bulk he lay spread this way and that. (*Il.* 7.136-56, LLM 120)

Like Santiago's contest, Nestor's is a challenge match with an opponent whose great size is emphasized; similarly, the youthful Nestor is, as Santiago, "sure" (*OMATS* 70) of himself, and victorious. In addition, there are several verbal correspondences between the LLM translation and Hemingway's text: "champion," "confidence," "strongest," and "huge" all appear in *OMATS* 69-70. Such correspondences suggest the possibility that Hemingway's scene may have literary antecedents in Homer's.

Santiago's battle with the great marlin and subsequent combat with the sharks are also presented Homerically. First, his contest with the fish is, as many such in the *Iliad*, a duel between two champions, in this case the "best fisherman," and "a great fish," the equal of which "there has never been" (*OMATS* 23, 63, 123). Once Santiago's epic struggle begins, it becomes, as many critics have noted, not only a contest with an equally formidable rival, but also one in which he progressively comes to identify with and feel pity for his opponent.[8]

A similar development is a prominent feature of the presentation of Achilles in the *Iliad*. After he reenters the battle, Achilles comes to identify with and pity the opponents he conquers (Schein 147-63). Before he dispatches Lycaon, he calls him "friend" and tells him that he himself will die also (*Il.* 21.106-13, LLM 380), and after killing Hector, aware that his death is inextricably linked to his fallen opponent's (*Il.* 18.95-126, LLM 339-40), he says, "Die: for my death I will accept it whensoever Zeus and the other immortal gods accomplish it" (*Il.* 22.365-66, LLM 411). Finally, he pities Priam, agrees to return Hector's body, and comments on their

common misfortune and fate (*Il.* 24.507-70, LLM 455-57). Then he invites the aged king to eat and afterwards they look at each other:

> But when they had put off the desire of meat and drink, then Priam son of Dardanos marvelled at Achilles to see how great he was and how goodly, for he was like a god to look upon. And Achilles marvelled at Priam son of Dardanos, beholding his noble aspect and hearkening to his words. (*Il.* 24.628-32, LLM 459).

In the development of Santiago's feelings for the great fish there are several specific similarities with the presentation of Achilles' empathy for his Trojan enemies: Santiago begins to "pity" the fish, wishes he "could feed" it, thinks of it as his "brother," and later, he too calls his adversary "friend" (*OMATS* 48, 59, 75). Finally, in the culmination of the struggle he looks admiringly at his opponent and links their mutual vulnerability and mortality:

> 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. (*OMATS* 92)

Respect for the opponent is another characteristic of Homeric heroism; so Hector and Aias terminate their duel on account of darkness with expressions of mutual esteem:

> Then great Hector of the glancing helm said to him: "Aias, seeing God gave thee stature and might and wisdom, and with the spear thou art excellent above all the Achaians, let us now cease from combat and battle for the day; but hereafter will we fight until God judge between us, giving to one of us the victory." (*Il.* 7.287-92, LLM 124)

Similarly, Santiago has high regard not only for the great marlin, but also for the *dentuso* (*OMATS* 103, 105-6).

In addition, Santiago's actual slaying of the *dentuso*, as well as of the *galanos*, is in the Homeric manner. A hallmark of Homeric battle description is "the detailed account of the moment of death of the warrior" (Griffin 90). Close attention is paid to anatomical particulars:

> And Idomeneus wounded Eryman on the mouth with the pitiless bronze, and the spear of bronze went clean through

> below, beneath the brain, and shattered his white bones. (*Il.* 16.345-47, LLM 249)

Attention is also paid to the hero's selecting his target on his opponent's body:

> ...the keen spear Achilles poised in his right hand, devising mischief against noble Hector, eyeing his fair flesh to find the fittest place. Now for the rest of him his flesh was covered by the fair bronze armour...but there was an opening where the collar bones coming from the shoulders clasp the neck...there Achilles drave at him...and right through the tender neck went the point (*Il.* 22.319-27, LLM 409-10)

Similarly, Santiago picks his spot and his dispatch of the *dentuso* is anatomically detailed:

> ...he rammed the harpoon down onto the shark's head at a spot where the line between his eyes intersected with the line that ran straight back from his nose. There were no such lines... But that was the location of the brain and the old man hit it. (*OMATS* 102)

Later when he battles the *galanos*, he again drives his weapon into the "juncture" of "brain" and "spinal cord," and with the second *galano*, his "blade" severs the "cartilage," as Idomeneus's spear "shattered" Erymas' "white bones" (*OMATS* 108-9).

Santiago's encounter with the sharks recalls another typical scene in the *Iliad*, the battle over the body of the fallen opponent. This occurs after a major hero has been victorious over an important enemy, and the fallen combatant's fellow warriors fight to recover his corpse (Schein 80-82). Prominent among many examples are the battles over the bodies of Sarpedon (*Il.* 16.532-614, LLM 304-8) and Patroklos (*Il.* 17-18.238, LLM 315-43). So when Santiago has defeated the great fish, he must then fight to keep the body (*OMATS* 100-119). Moreover, in the *Iliad* the slain opponent's corpse is always recovered by his side.[9] Thus Santiago, as his Homeric counterparts, cannot retain his prize, save for the stripped skeleton. The great marlin's fellow fish, the sharks, literally recapture his body.

In addition to his battling, Santiago is also prepared for his struggle in the manner of the heroes at Troy. Four times in the *Iliad* Homer

describes, in similar language, the ritualistic arming of the hero before battle: first the greaves with ankle clasps of silver, next the corselet or breastplate, then the sword slung round his shoulders, the shield, the horse-hair crested helmet, and finally the spear.[10]

Similarly, when Santiago starts out for sea, Hemingway describes the carrying of his equipment for the third time in six pages: "The boy took the rolls of line in the basket and the harpoon and the gaff and the old man carried the mast with the furled sail" (*OMATS* 26; cf. 9, 15). The detailed repetition in a prescribed form of the bringing of the fisherman's gear to the boat endows it with a ceremonial aspect not unlike the arming of the Homeric hero; and as in the Homeric scenes (Griffin 36), the marshalling of the fisherman's weapons foreshadows Santiago's heroic battle with the great marlin.[11]

Santiago also expresses himself in ways reminiscent of the heroes of the *Iliad*. First, in the heat of battle, the Homeric hero prays to the gods; e.g., after Sarpedon has been killed and he himself wounded, Glaukos prays for Apollo to heal him so that he may rouse the Trojans to defend his friend's body (*Il.* 16.513-26, LLM 304).[12] So Santiago turns to prayer, "Hail Marys," after he has seen how great the fish is (*OMATS* 65).[13] In addition, noteworthy here are his vows to perform a service in return for his prayers being answered: "I promise to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Cobre if I catch him" (*OMATS* 65; cf. 87). This formula of prayer is also Homeric: Achilles suggests that the Greeks pray and vow sacrifices to Apollo in hope that he will remove the plague at the onset of the *Iliad* (*Il.* 1.99-100, 315-17, LLM 4, 10). The efficacy of such prayer is made explicit in the archery contest where Meriones, who vows a "hecatomb of firstling lambs" to Apollo, defeats Teukros, who "made a vow... to the lord of archery" (*Il.* 23.862-83, LLM 440). Santiago, who is "not religious" (*OMATS* 64), prays as Meriones in the *Iliad*, and "not for his own salvation as a Christian would" (Rosenfeld 49).

Second, Homeric heroes constantly address their opponents with challenges, threats, and vows of victory; e.g., when Achilles comes upon Hector, he says: "Come thou near, the sooner thou mayest arrive at the goal of death" (*Il.* 20.429, LLM 380). Santiago similarly addresses the great fish: "But I will kill you dead before this day ends" (*OMATS* 54; cf. 52, 64). Later, when the *galanos* attack, he says: "Come on *galanos*...No?...Come on *galano*...Come in again" (*OMATS* 108, 109, 114). Also typical of battle speech is the vaunt over the fallen opponent.[14] So Priam's son Deiphobos boasts over Hypsenor that he has sent him as an "escort" down to Hades for the slain Trojan Asios (*Il.* 13.413-16, LLM 237), and Hector taunts the dying Patroklos by imputing to him failed expectations: "Patroklos, surely thou saidst that thou wouldst sack my town...fool!" (*Il.* 16.830-33, LLM 313). Santiago's boasts over the slain *galanos* reflect like sentiments: "Go on,

galano. Slide down a mile deep. Go see your friend, or maybe it's your mother" (*OMATS* 109); "Eat that, *galanos*. And make a dream you've killed a man" (*OMATS* 119).

Finally, when Santiago sees the first shovel-nosed sharks, his reaction is described thus:

> "*Ay*," he said aloud. There is no translation for this word and perhaps it is just a noise such as a man might make, involuntarily, feeling the nail go through his hands and into the wood. (*OMATS* 107)

The next word Santiago says, having seen the second shark, is "*galanos*: (*OMATS* 108). Critical attention to this scene has focused on the authorial comment on "*Ay*." The explanation of the Spanish interjection through an allusion to crucifixion is clearly consistent with much of the imagery of the novel, but it has also generated considerable controversy concerning the omniscient narrator's intrusion.[15] What has been overlooked is the Homeric character of Hemingway's presentation.

Such an authorial intrusion is typically Homeric. The poet "often presents his own opinions in the form of explicit comments on the action...which may take a number of different forms" (Edwards 35). More significant is the context of Santiago's exclamations, "*Ay*..*galanos*." After the *dentuso* Santiago became aware that with the renewed bleeding the scent of the great fish could not be kept from the water and, therefore, more sharks would appear; especially important here is the narrator's repeatedly drawing our attention to Santiago's realization: "the bad time is coming...a very bad time was coming" (*OMATS* 103, 106). The "very bad time" begins with the appearance of the *galanos*. Santiago's exclamations express his reaction to the inevitable destruction of his fish and the defeat of his hopes. In the *Iliad*, the final pathos begins with the death of Patroklos. As it progresses several characters are presented reacting to its manifestations: Achilles and Antilochos to the death of Patroklos; Thetis to the impending death of Achilles; Hector to his own fate as he awaits the approaching Achilles. In the LLM version they all react with the same exclamation: "*Ay* me."[16] Thus Santiago's repeated phrase, "*Ay*...*Galanos*," expressing his profound anguish at the onset of his final agony echoes the phrase repeatedly used in the LLM *Iliad* in comparable contexts as the poem moves toward its tragic conclusion.

Santiago and Odysseus

The Old Man and the Sea begins:

> 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. In the first forty days 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 bad luck, and the boy had gone at their orders in another boat which caught three good fish the first week. (*OMATS* 9)

The *Odyssey* opens with the poet calling on the Muse, "Tell me, Muse, of that man..." (*Od.* 1.1, BL 1), and after detailing his request, he begins the story with the hero's present condition:

> Now all the rest, as many as fled from sheer destruction were at home, and had escaped both war and sea, but Odysseus only, craving for his wife and for his homeward path, the lady nymph Calypso held, that fair goddess, in her hollow caves, longing to have him for her lord. (*Od.* 1.11-15, BL 1)

Except for the obvious difference between the initial epic invocation and Hemingway's omniscient narrative beginning, the openings are remarkably similar. In both we are immediately made aware that the subject is to be a "man." In addition, Homer begins his narrative with the happy situation of "all the rest" before introducing Odysseus's plight. The contrast with the successful returns focuses attention on the bad luck of Odysseus; likewise, Hemingway's detail of the boat that caught "three good fish" brings home Santiago's predicament. That the other heroes are all already home also underscores the time Odysseus's bad luck has lasted; similarly, Hemingway's repeated statements of the days impresses upon us the extraordinary length of Santiago's ordeal.[17] Both authors, moreover, continue to emphasize the luckless state of the two heroes (*OMATS* 10, 13, 16, 32; *Od.* 1.49, 55, 219, BL 2, 7). Finally, their bad luck has led to the same result, isolation: Odysseus is a prisoner on a remote island and Santiago must fish alone in his skiff. Thus Santiago's circumstances at the beginning of *The Old Man and the Sea* are strikingly parallel to those of Odysseus at the outset of the *Odyssey*.

Obvious parallels also exist between Hemingway's physical descriptions of Santiago and Homer's descriptions of Odysseus. When Athena disguises Odysseus at the beginning of the second half of the *Odyssey*, she makes him an old man, a beggar:

> His fair flesh she withered on his supple limbs...over all his limbs she cast the skin of an old man. (*Od.* 13.430-32, BL 208)

Although the original description gives no hint of this, we later learn that the "old man" is truly powerful:

> Then Odysseus girt his rags about his loins, and let his thighs be seen, goodly and great, and his broad shoulders and breast and mighty arms were manifest... Then the wooers were exceedingly amazed. (*Od.* 18.66-71, BL 280).

A similar, gradual accretion of knowledge occurs in *The Old Man and the Sea*. The first description Hemingway gives of Santiago is:

> The old man was thin and gaunt with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck. (*OMATS* 9)

Within a few pages, however, Santiago is described again:

> The boy took the old army blanket off the bed and spread it over the back of the chair and over the old man's shoulders. They were strange shoulders, still powerful although very old, and the neck was still strong too and the creases did not show so much when the old man was asleep and his head fallen forward... The boy left him there. (*OMATS* 18-19)

Now it is no longer gauntness but power and strength that are emphasized, a development strongly reminiscent of Homer's descriptions of the "aged" Odysseus.

Moreover, Hemingway's description of the power of Santiago's upper body focuses on the same anatomical details Homer emphasizes in regard to Odysseus: shoulders, neck and back. Homer speaks of Odysseus's "back and broad shoulders" (*Od.* 6.225, BL 93),[18] with emphasis on his "stalwart neck and mighty strength" (*Od.* 8.225, BL 112). Homer further illustrates the great strength of Odysseus in a memorable episode; after Odysseus kills the stag on Circe's island, he carries the "huge beast" slung across his neck back to his men who "gazed at the mighty quarry" (*Od.* 10.169-80, BL 149).[19] In depicting Santiago's powerful physique, Hemingway follows a similar pattern beginning with the description of the sleeping old man quoted above. This is later followed by an account of a remarkable physical feat, Santiago's struggle with the fish. Santiago's labor lasts a good deal longer

than Odysseus's carrying the stag, but throughout it the picture of the old man sustaining the force of the line with his shoulders and back is kept constantly before us.[20]

A second parallel involves the eyes. When Athena tells Odysseus she is going to disguise him as an old man she adds:

> And I will dim thy two eyes, erewhile so fair, in such wise that thou mayest be unseemly in the sight of all the wooers and of thy wife and son, whom thou didst leave in thy halls. (*Od.* 13.401-3, BL 207)

That Athena announces her intention to dim Odysseus's eyes and does so (*Od.* 13.433, BL 208) is not surprising, for on several occasions in the *Odyssey* we are told that the eyes are important in identifying the hero; e.g., at the beginning Athena disguised as Mentes tells Telemachus that his eyes are "beauteous and wondrous like to" his father's (*Od.* 1.208, BL 7).[21] Only after the heroic luster has gone from his eyes can Odysseus move freely about in his disguise as a humble, old beggar. In the same way Hemingway sets Santiago apart from ordinary old men by emphasizing his eyes:

> Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated. (*OMATS* 10)[22]

Not only are both the heroes marked by the extraordinary appearance of their eyes, they also possess excellent vision. The suitors say that Odysseus "has a good eye" (*Od.* 21.397, BL 336) as he handles the bow prior to stringing it, and he soon proves them correct. Similarly, Manolin says Santiago has "good" eyes (*OMATS* 14), a statement both confirmed by the old man himself (*OMATS* 33), and, as in Odysseus's case, subsequently proven in action.

A third point of comparison lies in the description of the hands of the two heroes. Odysseus is famous for his hands, as Telemachus says in the scene in which his father has revealed his true identity:

> Verily, father, I have ever heard of thy great fame, for a warrior hardy of thy hands, and sage in counsel. (*Od.* 16.242, BL 251)

Two points about Odysseus's hands are of significance: first, their strength is emphasized; second, they are prominent in the action. Whether Odysseus is clinging to a rock amidst the waves (*Od.* 5.428, BL 84), kneading a great

lump of wax (*Od.* 12.174, BL 186), or driving a sword through an enemy's neck (*Od.* 22.326, BL 348), Homer repeatedly focuses on his hands.[23]

Similarly, Santiago has strong hands. Unlike Homer, Hemingway does not explicitly state the strength of his hero's hands; rather, this is made clear by describing the weight of the fish, the strain of the line, or the hand game at Casablanca (*OMATS* 69-71, 73, 87, 91). As in the *Odyssey*, too, the hands are highlighted in the action. From the moment Santiago takes the line "softly between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand," until his final battle with the *galanos* "holding" the tiller "in both hands and driving it down again and again," one or both of his hands are constantly in view. We see them holding or pulling the line, enduring the cuts, cramping, butchering the dolphin, driving in the harpoon, grasping the oar, and soaking in or lifting sea water (*OMATS* 41-118). Thus while Hemingway's depiction of his hero's hands eclipses the Homeric model in prominence in the narrative,[24] it nonetheless recalls in the strong hands that are repeatedly viewed in action the two salient characteristics of Odysseus's hands in the *Odyssey*.

When Hemingway introduces Santiago's hands, we learn of yet another physical trait he shares with Odysseus:

> ...and his hands had the deep-creased scars from handling heavy fish on the cords. But none of these scars were fresh. They were as old as erosions in a fishless desert. (*OMATS* 10)

Odysseus is also scarred, on his upper leg. In a well known scene, the old nurse, Eurycleia, discovers by recognizing this scar that the stranger she is bathing is Odysseus (*Od.* 19.386-507, BL 304-7). But Odysseus's scar is more than a device of recognition or revelation;[25] Homer emphasizes its importance by devoting a long digression to how the young Odysseus acquired the scar.[26] Sent to his grandfather's estate to receive gifts in honor of his reaching manhood, Odysseus joins in a boar hunt, is the first to charge the flushed prey and, although gored on the leg, kills the beast with his spear (*Od.* 19.393-466, BL 304-6). The scar remains, a record of both the painful wound suffered and the success of the hunter; moreover, the vanquishing of the boar signals Odysseus's coming of age as a warrior. It is the initial heroic exploit of his career, and the scar, the visible trace of this exploit, marks him as the hero he is.

Santiago's scars are many and were acquired over a long period of time; however, they recall Odysseus's scar in several respects. First, as in the *Odyssey*, they are emphasized. Hemingway calls attention to them by a brief simile that with its epithet of the desert, "fishless," is itself Homeric, echoing in its litotes the famous "unharvested" sea (Morgan 17). In

addition, they too record not only the pain endured by the hero, but also his success (Wells 58). Finally, as the manifest testament of the execution of his craft, Santiago's scars, as Odysseus's, mark him as what he is and was "born to be", "a fisherman" (*OMATS* 105).

Santiago's resemblances to Odysseus extend beyond the physical. Odysseus is famous as the hero who prevails by his wits as well as his strength. This is frequently stated in the Homeric poems: e.g., by Helen (*Il.* 3.200-202, LLM 50), Nestor (*Od.* 3.120-27, BL 32), and Odysseus himself who first addresses Alcinous's court thus:

> I am Odysseus, son of Laertes, who am in men's minds for
> all manner of wiles. (*Od.* 9.19-20, BL 126)

Throughout the *Odyssey* we are constantly reminded of this by several of the hero's epithets, such as *polymêtis*, "of many counsels," the most common occurring well over sixty times, and *polymêchanos*, "of many devices."[27] In action, too, Odysseus is consistently presented using his knowledge and intelligence, whether he is building a raft, navigating by the stars, or devising counsel for the destruction of the Cyclops (*Od.* 5.233-75, BL 78-79; 9.316-28, BL 135).

Odysseus is also well known for his ability to withstand adversity. "Many the woes he suffered" announces the poet in his invocation, and several characters including Athena, Circe, Odysseus himself and Telemachus speak both of his pains and unyielding spirit (*Od.* 1.4, BL 1; 5.13, BL 71; 5.222-24, BL 77; 10.458-59, BL 158; 17.142, BL 263). Again several epithets serve to reinforce this aspect of the hero, including *polytlas*, "steadfast," the most prominent occurring close to forty times, and *talasiphronos*, "patient."[28] In action, whether the skin is ripped from his hands as a wave wrenches him from a rock, or he is humiliated by the suitors, Odysseus never succumbs to pain, whether physical or psychological (*Od.* 5.434-35), BL 84; 20.284-302, BL 320).

Santiago is not as versatile as Odysseus; his expertise is in fishing and the sea, but here he 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; indeed, *The Old Man and the Sea* has been called "a study in pain" (Wells 59),[29] but as in the *Odyssey* neither physical pain nor mental anguish deter the hero.

Santiago himself succinctly identifies both these characteristics when he tells the boy, "I know many tricks and I have resolution" (*OMATS* 23); he had already spoken of the "many tricks," and later he thinks about the "snares and traps" and "trickery" by which he prevails (*OMATS* 14, 23, 50, 76, 99). He thinks of his "will" as well as of his "intelligence," of "what

a man can do and what a man endures," and that "pain does not matter to a man." Memorable images vivify his "resolution"; e.g., the "hand game" at Casablanca, and always the heavy line across his back (*OMATS* 45, 47, 67, 69-71, 78, 79). His knowledgeable execution of his craft is illustrated by his arrangement and handling of the baits and lines *OMATS* 30-32, 44, 86-93); he too sails by the stars (*OMATS* 47, 74-78), and, as Odysseus fashions a stake from a piece of olive wood to attack the Cyclops (*Od.* 9.316-28, BL 135), Santiago improvises weaponry, first the knife lashed to the oar, later the tiller, against the sharks (*OMATS* 104, 118). And at the same time the narrator continuously reminds us of his "suffering," "pain," "strain," and "resolution" (*OMATS* 64-65, 74, 82, 93, 101, 102). Thus through dialogue, the old man's soliloquies and thoughts, and narrative, Hemingway emphatically endows Santiago with the same two principal character traits that belong to Homer's Odysseus.

Finally, there are several parallels in vocabulary in the presentations of these traits. That words such as "suffer," "suffering(s)," and "endure" recur in both works may, of course, be a result of the fundamental similarities between the heroes; however, Santiago's exclamation, "God help me endure" (*OMATS* 87) recalls Odysseus's, "Endure, my heart" (*Od.* 20.18, BL 311). Especially noteworthy, moreover, are Santiago's statement that he must "devise" a plan to sleep, with the word "devise" immediately repeated in his thought, and his later remark that his own thought gives him "much good counsel" (*OMATS* 77, 110). These passages specifically echo language commonly used about Odysseus in the Butcher and Lang translation of the *Odyssey*; consequently we must consider the possibility that the several verbal correspondences reflect not merely a coincidence in characterization, but Hemingway's acquaintance with this text.

Conclusion

The similarities between Santiago and the Homeric heroes are extensive and detailed, but it must be remembered that all heroic figures in the western literary tradition are in some sense variants of Homer's heroes. Santiago has been compared to a number of these figures, some more typically heroic than others. His affinities with Captain Beard (Baker 309-11), Sam Fathers (Rosenfeld 42-46, 52), Dante's Ulysses (Lewis 211), or Don Quijote (Capellán 111-12) spring in part from shared heroic qualities, in part from Hemingway's familiarity with the literary tradition he inherited and mastered. Such, no doubt, is also the case with the Homeric heroes.

It is clear, moreover, that in writing *The Old Man and the Sea* Hemingway succeeded in his objective:

> 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. ("An American Storyteller," *Time*, 13 December 1954)

Certainly Santiago is a strikingly "real old man" and Hemingway's unique creation, but among the "many things" he 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 of Nestor, a characterization that also applies to Santiago himself: "Thou, old man, art indomitable" (*Il.* 10.167, LLM 172).

Notes

1. For the subsequent critics see Morgan, 78 n.19; see also Wylder, 201, 222; Justus, 104; and, a detractor of *OMATS* who faults its "bogus epic solemnity," Way, 165; for the parallels, including onomatopoeia, adjectives of specific detail and of essence (epithets), active verbs and participles, ring composition, descriptions of expertise, objects as images, and descriptions of affective actions, see Morgan, 14-15, 17, 22n, 24n, 29 n.41, 45, 55.

2. All translations are from the Lang, Leaf and Myers *Iliad*, and the Butcher and Lang *Odyssey*; citations are both to book and line numbers of the poems, and to page numbers of the Modern Library edition of these translations abbreviated LLM and BL respectively. Hemingway read the Lang, Leaf and Myers *Iliad*; see Reynolds, 138; Morgan, 71-75. What translation of the *Odyssey* he left at Key West in 1939 (Reynolds 8, 31, 138; Brasch-Sigman xlix, 179) cannot be stated with certainty; however, it was most probably that of Butcher and Lang. This was the most popular prose version of its day, the companion volume to Lang, Leaf and Myers, and the one recommended in Hemingway's "heavily read" (Reynolds 129) high school text on mythology (Gayley 408). Later, at the Finca Vigía, he owned the Harvard Classics (Brasch-Sigman 167), of which Volume 22 is the Butcher and Lang *Odyssey*. Hemingway's Homeric presentation of the sea has recently been noted by Derek Walcott; see "A Poem in Homage to an Unwanted Man," *New York Times*, 9 October 1990, Section C.

3. For recent treatments of the Homeric hero, see Edwards, 149-58; Griffin, 70-76, 89-102; Schein, 67-88.

4. The heroes are often depicted as deciding whether or not to undertake an action. Hector before the final duel with Achilles illustrates this (*Il.* 22.99-130, LLM 403-4).

5. See: *Il.* 2.768, LLM 41; 5.103, LLM 78; 11.288, LLM 193; 17.689, LLM 384. The word LLM render as "best" here is *aristos*; elsewhere they vary the translation; e.g., "greatest, goodliest, first, and foremost" (*Il.* 1.91, LLM 3; 2.577, 580, LLM 35; 2.761, LLM 40). On heroes and the concept of the "best," see Nagy, 21-41.

6. *OMATS* 123; even the mistaken tourists "are struck by a sense of the extraordinary" (Gurko 66) as they look at the skeleton. Santiago, however, unlike Homer's heroes, does not seek recognition and reknown.

7. *OMATS* 21-23; as the one who "makes the difference," DiMaggio is like Achilles in the *Iliad*; moreover, his physical flaw, like Achilles', is his heel. The well known story that Achilles was vulnerable only in his heel is not in Homer; it is, however, in Hemingway's high school mythology text (Gayley 304).

8. See *OMATS* 43, 59, 75, 92, 95, 99, 110, 115; Gurko, 65; Burhans, 74; Baker, 312; Young, 24.

9. Edwards, 79; Hector's corpse is recovered not in battle but later by Priam's visit to Achilles.

10. *Il.* 3.330-8, LLM 54; 11.17-45, LLM 185-86; 16.131-44, LLM 293; 19.369-91, LLM 365. On the arming scene, see Kirk, 313-14.

11. On early intimations of Santiago's struggle in *OMATS*, see Williams, 175; he also notes the ritual aspect of Santiago's preparation (176).

12. On Homeric heroes and prayer, see Edwards, 126-27.

13. Santiago's praying has been the subject of controversial criticism; see, e.g., Gurko, 64-65; Rosenfeld, 51; Baker, 300-301.

14. On battlefield speeches, see Edwards, 93-94; for a comprehensive account of heroic fliting, see Parks.

15. See Jobes, 11; Baker, 313-16; Rosenfeld, 51-52; Williams, 180-81; Waldmeir, 162; Backman, 256; Grebstein, 91; Rovit, 74.

16. *Il.* 18.6, 18, 54, LLM 337-38; 22.99, LLM 403; 23.103, LLM 419. Menelaus and Agenor also use the exclamation, the former as he stands by the body of Patroklos (*Il.* 17.91, LLM 317), the latter as he debates dueling Achilles (*Il.* 21.553, LLM 398). The emotional interjections translated by "*Ay* me" are: *o moi*, *o moi ego*, and *o popoi*. The translation is used in the last third of the poem, books 17-24 (contrast, e.g., *Il.* 1.149, LLM 5; 15.286, LLM 274; 16.433, LLM 301). This may be due to Myers having the primary responsibility for the final third, although the translators "deliberated in common" on phrases that recur (LLM: "Prefatory Note"). In any case the result is that "*Ay* me" is associated with the intensifying pathos of books 17-24.

17. Gurko, 67. Others connect the number of days with Christian symbolism; see Waldmeir, 162; Williams, 183.

18. Odysseus's broad shoulders are also emphasized in the famous scene in the *Iliad* in which Priam asks Helen to sit by him on the walls of Troy and identify the Greek heroes (*Il.* 3.194, LLM 50).

19. Cf. the disguised Odysseus who, smashed with a footstool "at the base of the right *shoulder by the back...stood firm as a rock, nor reeled beneath the blow*" (*Od.* 17.462-64, BL 273).

20. *OMATS* 45-86 passim; 88.

21. Cf. *Od.* 4.150, BL 49; 19.417, BL 305.

22. Cf. *OMATS* 13.

23. Cf. *Od.* 5.434, 454, BL 84; 6.128, BL 90; 8.189, BL 114; 19.448, BL 305.

24. On the complexity of the presentation of Santiago's hands in terms of Christian symbolism, endurance, and pain, see Williams, 177; Backman, 256-57; Wells, 58-59.

25. Odysseus confirms his identity to Eumaeus, Philoetius and his father, Laertes, by showing his scar (*Od.* 21.217-21, BL 330; 24.331-35, BL 376); on the recognition scene with Eurycleia, see Austin, 214-27. Harada, 272, connects Odysseus's scar with DiMaggio's bone spur.

26. On the digression at this dramatic moment, see Stanford, vol. 2, 332.

27. See, e.g., *Od.* 5.202, 214, BL 77; 11.405, BL 174; 18.14, BL 278. BL occasionally use "wise" for *polymêtis* (e.g., *Od.* 2.173, BL 20); they translate several other epithets by "wise," as well as by "manifold in counsel," and "wise and crafty" (*Od.* 1.48, 83, BL 2, 3; 3.163, BL 34; 7.168, BL 102). On the epithets see Austin, 26-53.

28. See, e.g., *Od.* 1.88, BL 3; 5.31, BL 72; 7.1, BL 97; 14.148, BL 213. BL also use "of the hardy heart" and, occasionally, "steadfast" for *talasiphronos* (e.g., *Od.* 1.129, BL 31).

29. See also Backman, 256-57; Williams, 177.

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