Chapter Two

Of Brotherhood and Humility:
The Old Man and the Sea
The technicalities of whether The Old Man and the Sea is a novel or a novella, a short story or a long narrative are ones which have continued to engage readers and critics alike. On the one hand, answers have been found, yet on the other no consensus as to the status of this text has been arrived at. However, if we set aside technical concerns about the text and approach it for the narrative content, then it may prove easier to identify at least certain themes at work. On one level, the text is merely about an old man out alone at sea testing his luck and overwhelmed at discovering that it is running pretty good. According to this reading even the three days, three nights of anguish may only seem an unfortunately extended trial of a fisherman's strength and luck. There is also little scope of reading any social applause into Santiago's extraordinary feat precisely because his interactive space is limited to every day conversation with Manolin. This reading, though accurate at one level, would, however, on another be extremely reductive and fail to focus on important sections of the text.

The number of negatives used in this text function in a strange, double manner, that is, the denotation and connotation of any word highlighted as a signifier, contain signifieds which are totally removed from each other and follow directly opposed paths of meaning. To plunge
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into the text without any preliminaries and begin with an example of the very first sentence of The Old Man and the Sea would illustrate this view.

_He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish._ The three signifiers in this semantically loaded sentence are *old*, *alone*, and *without*. *Old* denotes a range of meanings — (i) far advanced in the years of one’s life, (ii) of or pertaining to the latter part of the life or term of existence of a person or a thing, (iii) belonging to the past, (iv) no longer in general use, (v) ancient and experienced, (vi) deteriorated through age or long use; worn decayed or dilapidated. *Alone* may be, (i) separate, apart or isolated from another or others, (ii) to the exclusion of all others or all else, (iii) unique, unequalled; unexcelled. While *without* could be, (i) with the absence, omission, or avoidance of; not with; with no or none of; lacking, or (ii) free from; excluding. Before reading different significations into this one relatively simple sentence, the meaning of *skiff* should be made obvious. A skiff is any of the various types of boats small enough for sailing or rowing by one person. Permutations of the available significances could point the semantic compass in different directions. The _he_ could be a man much advanced in years and therefore in senility, well past the prime of life, and as a result relegated to the social and professional periphery, literally left _alone_. On the other hand, this mature and wise fisherman may
have chosen to be alone, preferring to have his portion of the sea to himself. The only part of this sentence which is unambiguous is what it conveys in and [he] had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish. It is an established fact that the old fisherman has not had a single catch in the eighty-four days preceding the day from when the narrative begins. However, the connotation of not having caught any fish for so long, is on the one hand, (an attitude provided by the text in print), being Salao or the worst form of unlucky. On the other hand, and this second reading is also thrown up by the text though in a more latent manner, the fisherman is not unlucky at all. First, because as Manolin says, a similar cycle has been at work in the past, and second, because proof of the old man's "luck" seems to make the entire text.

In the first 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. This is the first socially backed, declarative comment made about Santiago's fate and made available to the readers by the author. Initially, there is a fact laden statement about the present state of Santiago's condition. Immediately, however, he as well as his existence are placed within a social circle, and with the second sentence we are able to discern the reaction of his neighbours as far as he is concerned. In this
sense, if Santiago manages to obliterate the presence of all others but Manolin, the others are also all too aware of his limitations and critical as well. This social comment which is a negative reflection on Santiago’s life, is further reinforced with other details comprising criticism of Santiago’s fate (... the old man was now definitely and finally Salao, which is the worst form of unlucky), an exercise of authority on the part of Manolin’s natural parents (... and the boy had gone at their orders) — this being counter to the fact that Santiago can in no way command the course of his life — and a final validation of this exercise of authority over Manolin with positive results (... which caught three good fish the first week). To these two observations — one, an introduction/actual statement about Santiago, and the other, a reported social comment made by Manolin’s parents, but which could also be seen as a collective social opinion — we could add a third more human observation of Manolin’s and his hope for a better future for Santiago tinged with sadness at the obviously torturous present. (It made the boy sad to see the old man come in each day with his skiff empty and he always went down to help him carry either the coiled lines of the gaff and harpoon and the sail that was furled around the mast). To all of these remarks may be added the final one of the first paragraph — The sail was patched with flour sacks and, furled, it looked like the flag of permanent defeat — which as if (seals) stamps the unfortunate condition of Santiago and becomes a
parallel statement both for the boat's condition as well as Santiago's lucklessness.

The text continues with its use of a language which reiterates and consolidates the symbolic alliance between Santiago's physiological condition and that of a hopeless and impotent state of nature. This symbiotic relationship stretches throughout the length of the text and in myriad ways throws new light on the characters and on the events which dominate and dictate the course of the text. Thus we have evidence of the old man's physical condition which resembles the natural, physical landscape not only in appearance but in substance as well, i.e. he (Santiago) is not only physically wrinkled and scarred but is apparently as impotent and without potential as a desert is considered infertile. *The old man was thin and gaunt with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck. The brown blotches of the benevolent skin cancer the sun brings from its reflection on the tropic sea were on his cheeks. The blotches ran well down the sides of his face and his hands had the deep-creased scars from handling heavy fish on the cords.* Moreover, to strengthen the allusion of the extreme infertility of the desert and, by extension and combination, the total hopelessness of Santiago's possibilities as a fisherman, the text goes on to state, *But none of these scars were fresh. They were as old as erosions in a fishless desert.* Significantly, a desert will never ever yield any fish this being a condition as impossible
as any "ever green tree". Therefore, a fishless desert is constituted by a double negative — fishless (without fish) and desert (dry, dead, infertile) — and it is this double negative which controls, or at least directs, the reader's response to Santiago. In the light of all the accumulated negatives Santiago's achievement acquires a new importance.

However, in the descriptive deluge of impossibilities there is hope for vindication and this also comes as a symbolic comparison between the human physiology and the natural landscape. Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated. This contrasts directly with the flag of permanent defeat. Again, significantly, a contrast is made between Santiago's eyes, (commonly, the windows of the soul — Santiago's eyes defy his physical limitations of age and closeness to death — they are cheerful and undefeated), and the sea (the receptor and benefactor, as it were, of all his efforts and struggles as a man as well as a fisherman). We have then two sets of comparisons — one, between deadness and the undefeated both reflected in Santiago's physical state and, second, a comparison between two contrasted states of nature — the desert and the sea. Early on, therefore, the sea is held up as a space full of untold possibilities and, similarly, for Santiago the beginning of the text is merely the beginning of his journey.
This possibility is held up by Manolin's faith in Santiago's capabilities and gradually Manolin takes over the double roles of disciple and muse. Manolin's age functions as an important signifier throughout the text. Though the events are spread out over a course of only four days, Manolin undergoes a world of change from the first pages of the text to the last.

"Santiago", the boy said to him as they climbed the bank from where the skiff was hauled up. "I could go with you again. We've made some money."

The old man had taught the boy to fish and the boy loved him.

"No", the old man said. "You're with a lucky boat. Stay with them."

"But remember how you went eighty-seven days without fish and then we caught big ones everyday for three weeks."

"I remember", the old man said. "I know you did not leave me because you doubted."

"It was papa made me leave. I am a boy and I must obey him."

"I know", the old man said. "It is quite normal."

"He hasn't much faith."

"No", the old man said. "But we have. Haven't we?"

Many pairs of ideas converge is this passage — that of the tyro - tutor pair, of luck and lucklessness, of faith and doubt and of authority and obedience.
Though there are no clearly demarcated social groups within the narrative, yet it is obvious that Manolin and Santiago belong together on one side of the fence while all the rest are relegated as a faceless conglomerate to the other. According to necessity Manolin must himself assume the role of a fence (here, defense, shield) between Santiago and the rest of the world. Santiago and Manolon's side of the fence is characterized by mutual love and respect, trust and hope unlike the other side pitted with suspicion, bad faith and ignorance. These are values which not only characterize and set apart one group from another but also activate the chain of events and interpretations (readings) which are presented for the reader. For example, an useful comparison would be between Manolin's biological father and the idealized father, Santiago. The comparisons are extended throughout the text and the first one opens on the premise of authority. The dictionary meaning of authority is "the power or right to enforce obedience" or "an influence exerted on opinion because of recognized knowledge or expertise". The response to an exercise of authority may be respect or disrespect and each response (in Manolin's case each is by turn illustrated — respect and love for Santiago, animosity and aversion for his own father) is played out at least on one instance. The best examples out of the many scattered references would be the ones where each of the "fathers" wake up Manolin from sleep. This incident, played out twice, encompasses various references within it. Despite the
wide age gap between Santiago and Manolin, the bond they share is stronger than any other bond or relationship that is mentioned in the text. Manolin's father fails to understand the needs of his son and instead of forging a bond with him only manages to antagonize him to such an extent that his son prefers to replace him with a surrogate father. It is only because of these not-so-subtle differences that Manolin and Santiago can form a twosome and proclaim it to be between fisherman. This bond, it must be noticed, is not one between "men" but between "fishermen", i.e. Santiago and Manolin significantly distance themselves not only from the rest of the social space but also make separate vocational space for themselves. If this reading is to be upheld, then further corroboration is available in the form of the other fishermen who sat on the terrace and "... made fun of the old man". Here, the signifier is other, and functions as a divider where Santiago becomes the exemplar and the fishermen, including Manolin, are automatically relegated to one or the other group of those who understand and respect Santiago for his latent worthiness despite all misleading evidence and of those who are led completely by appearances despite pointers to the contrary. Manolin's ability to read the signs correctly in the face of odds not only sets him apart from the other fishermen (unkind and unprofessional) but also highlights his importance for Santiago.
The inability of the fishermen (Manolin is the only important exception) to read the signs correctly not only makes them unprofessional but in many ways justifies Santiago's choice of Manolin over the others as his confidant and assistant and at the same time underlines the immensity of his struggle at sea. The passage categorizes the fishermen according to age, attitude and degree of success and by positing Santiago as the reference point at the beginning of the text as one down and out on his luck and, eventually, as one who achieves a peak none of his fraternity has, or ever may, so that the awe and wonder that all of them collectively display when his mutilated catch is made public boomerangs on them and vindicates only Manolin's love, faith and respect for the old man. These qualities help Manolin take on the role of a willing and eager pupil to Santiago's moody but affectionately enthusiastic tutor and this is the only relationship which is held up and will endure throughout the course of the text.

It is Manolin who first instills hope in Santiago by referring to the cyclical nature of his capacities and their fulfillment. It is with this positive prelude that Santiago begins his journey. However, it must be noted that Manolin's hopefulness is strengthened by the warmth of the breeze that makes the day nice and sunny, *when the wind was in the east a smell came across the harbour from the shark factory; but today there was only the faint edge*
of the odour because the wind had backed into the north and then dropped off and it was pleasant and sunny on the Terrace. This reference will also strengthen the reading that the entire text is woven with focus on certain patterns — this requires the readers to refer to the passages where natural forces are indicators to Santiago’s state of being and his state of mind.

The dialogue which follows is not so much between two men or two fishermen but between a disciple and his teacher.

"Santiago", the boy said.

"Yes", the old man said. He was holding his glass and thinking of many years ago.

"Can I go out and get sardines for you for tomorrow?"

"No. Go and play baseball, I can still row and Rogelio will throw the net."

"I would like to go. If I cannot fish with you. I would like to serve in some way."

The ease with which Santiago slips into memories of the past, the naturalness of his language and behavior in Manolin’s company, show how fitted he is to be the father-teacher that Manolin lacks. And, therefore, only Manolin can demand (as he does in the end) that Santiago impart his knowledge to him. Manolin fulfills his role lovingly and dutifully (I would like to serve in some way) and Santiago both accepts the adulation and the
reverence. The word *serve* signifies — to do duty, to be of assistance, help, to attend to somebody’s needs. The subtle way in which language invokes issues and builds a network is in evidence again in the two sentences which follow, both spoken by Santiago. First, he asks Manolin to *go and play base ball* and then, accepts (understands) Manolin’s need to make an offering by telling him, *You bought me a beer. You are already a man.* These two instances are significant to the text and to this focal relationship in various ways. The Santiago-Manolin pair is bound by a relation which is both easy going and formal at the same time. Easygoing because theirs is an unspoken acknowledgement of each other’s situation and limitations and a striving, on both their parts, to lessen the burdens they shoulder. Manolin is aware that Santiago’s advanced age contributes largely to his, at least temporary, failure as a fisherman despite his proven potential, and, Santiago, on his part, accords Manolin the respect and importance he desires inspite of his youth (for example, the differences in the incidents of Manolin being woken up from sleep by his father and by Santiago). The relation is at the same time formal because Manolin minutely observes all details of his duties toward Santiago as his pupil. It is because of these various complexities at work that Manolin first offers to "serve" Santiago not by feeding and taking care of him (which he eventually does), but by bringing fresh fish for him (here, Manolin will fulfil his duty as a fisherman and Santiago can have the best possible instance of concern
shown for him as an aging fisherman). Santiago then asks Manolin to go and play baseball. Here, Santiago is careful both of Manolin's youth (a child needs to play) and the importance of the game of baseball where Di Maggio as the best baseball player is an equivalent of the best fisherman, and baseball itself as an occupation worthy of replacing fishing. But at Manolin's insistence, Santiago elevates him to the position of a man (with all its connotations of age, maturity and responsibility) and an equal by acknowledging Manolin's offer of beer (by buying beer for Santiago, Manolin has not only become a man — (old enough to buy someone a drink) — but also joins the ranks of all fisherman who as we have read, are sitting at the terrace drinking beer). But Manolin attempts to be different from this lot and Santiago grants his permission when the offer of fresh fish is made, and accepted, respectively.

Again, in keeping with a neat pattern (where one reference leads to another related one), this dialogue of youth and age circles back to the time when Manolin and Santiago first formed and forged their bond during Manolin's childhood — a period of time which both participants remember clearly. For Manolin it has been his initiation into the life of a fisherman, the moment of time when Santiago became both his surrogate father and his teacher — in both instances, a guardian.
boy becoming many things for him at the same time — his disciple, son, wife, helper, muse and a defense against loneliness). Santiago’s most invaluable professional and personal moment also begins with a doubt and concludes with a definite vindication for the man and fisherman. It is because the import of this passage is pivotal that Santiago asks Manolin if he can remember those moments. Can you really remember that or did I just tell it to you?, and Manolin’s confident reply, crystallizes the issue for them and for the readers. I remember everything from when we first went together”, and then, The old man looked at him with his sunburned, confident, loving eyes. The sunburnt and the loving merely reiterate the facts which steer the relationship, whereas confident functions as an important signifier by highlighting the fact that no matter what other doubts beseige Santiago, Manolin’s love and faith in him is absolutely undisputable. It is Santiago’s confidence in Manolin’s love which makes Manolin’s confidence in Santiago’s potential so acceptable.

Santiago voices the depth of his feelings for Manolin with probably the most appropriate words by a father/teacher for his son. "If you were my boy I’d take you out and gamble", he said. "But you are your father’s and your mother’s and you are in a lucky boat." Here, the sentence is built up in various parts with varied signifiers. If you were my boy highlights Santiago’s desire not only to be a father figure but a father where the concept of a
"How old was I when you first took me in a boat?"

"Five and you nearly were killed when I brought the fish in too green and he nearly tore the boat to pieces."

The cyclical movement from the positive to the negative and back to the positive which has been established as an essential part of the design of the text is in evidence again in this dialogue. Manolin's first expedition at sea does not bode well (as in the opening of this text when Santiago's luck is not holding good — in both cases the beginning seems inauspicious) an instance established with the words killed, too green, and nearly tore the boat to pieces, where killed is to deprive of life which is the reverse of allowing something to exist, too green signifies something too youthful, not ripened and mature as opposed to preparedness and experience, while nearly tore to pieces would imply something being pulled apart by force, that is not being allowed to exist in its natural state. This contradiction of an unpromising beginning and a subsequently abiding friendship (we can focus on another paradox present in the text — of how close Manolin has been to death due to Santiago and how he defies death to grow up and become Santiago's "guardian") could be seen as a reflection on how the text begins with Santiago down and out on his luck and concludes with his unexpected vindication. In a parallel to the most important moment of his life (this meeting with Manolin culminates in the
'father' encompasses the ideas of a patriarch who passes on his name and values to his progeny. For Santiago, it would mean passing on his skills and "glory" to Manolin and via him for posterity. *I'd take you out* and *gamble* signifies Santiago's desire to initiate Manolin not into a life of vice and viciousness but into one where one learns to take chances with the limited options available and life should be accurately perceived as a sea where the best possibilities are a gamble and must be gambled for. His expression of desire is countered by the fact that up to the time of utterance this desire does not seem to have any possibilities of being fulfilled. Manolin is not only the child of his parents (this fact is biologically indisputable, but more so due to the psychological pressure they exercise on him) but also accompanies a "lucky" boat. Here, lucky functions as a parameter for professional luck and vindication which do not bless Santiago's boat. But, the novel evinces a remarkable unity of structure where Santiago's wish and the cause behind its unfulfilled status are stated before he begins his journey and which in a volte face are completely reversed once he gets back to land after his journey is completed. The proposition with which the novel begins comes full circle toward its close. Not only is Santiago now in a lucky boat but Manolin also finds a voice to assert his independence from his parents and to declare himself free for Santiago's bidding. And, it is at Manolin's insistence that Santiago will tutor him on the skills and complexities of fishing and
thereby pass on his values to his "son", effectively from one generation to another, Manolin, therefore, can be Santiago's son and Santiago can teach him how to gamble. The crux of the entire narrative can be seen to lie in the word "gamble" where Santiago's trials at sea are a gamble for fulfillment, where each of the repeated cycles of eighty-seven and eighty-five days respectively are gambles which don't pay off, where the protracted contest between Santiago and the marlin is the biggest gamble ever undertaken, and where, importantly, he succeeds with such a vengeance that any future attempt will be justified at the onset itself.

But to return to the prelude, Manolin makes up for any dalliance on Santiago's part and pushes the event closer by repeating his offer of sardines. The elaborate and repetitive exchange about the sardines serves to highlight the formality in the relationship between a master and his student and the obligation on the part of the student to prove his devotion and concern for the master before they can each strike a balance. Therefore, Manolin has to make an offer of fresh fish (against Santiago's stock of salted ones). Moreover, the numerical balance (between the number of fish offered and accepted) is not only a deliberate device but also a highlight on the relationship between the tutor and the tyro — where Manolin initially offers four fish (the maximum number in this exchange) and Santiago initially refuses even one. The offer is repeated and the tutor
reluctantly asks for one (the smallest number in this exchange). After this acknowledgement of his disciple's offer Santiago feels a renewed desire to become involved with his vocation again, *His hope and confidence had never gone. But now they were freshening as when the breeze rises.* It is after this (Manolin's insistence has established his sincerity, and Santiago's, his approval) that Manolin can now offer two fish which are both immediately accepted by his master.

Once the tyro-tutor pair strike a balance then begins the lesson. To Santiago's "You didn't steal them?", Manolin replies, "I would. But I bought these". Manolin has already imbibed the doubly significant lesson of honesty and respect for his teacher, attributives which trigger off a reference to Santiago's humility. This in its turn negates any feelings of victory or jubilation at winning against the marlin, feelings which may have undercut the immensity of his achievement.

After this ritual of give and take, and the establishment of a relationship, preparations to tackle the complexities of the future begin again. *Tomorrow is going to be a good day with this current,* (Santiago) said. The future is launched with the presence of both a means and an end, where *tomorrow* (that which is yet to come) *is going to be a good day* (a favourable end to an uncertain beginning) *with this current* (where the
current is the means which will help Santiago to achieve something). Here, by extension, is a situation parallel to the desire to gamble, which allows the pair to risk their position (for Manolin vis-a-vis his parents) and life (in Santiago's case). The process energizes Santiago so much that its conclusion is beyond expectations and Manolin is able to break out of the mould of a dominated child and emerge as an assertive and independent youth.

Reiterated patterns within the text underscore the network of signifiers and signifieds in anticipation of the main event. Attitudes to fishing repeatedly redefine fishermen, their relationship to fishing, other fishermen and the sea, even, their roles as father/mentor. The father-mentor figure becomes especially important as it signifies an essential difference between the good and bad fisherman. This becomes relevant when Manolin determines to mislead his biological father (handicapped by his impaired vision and its other connotations) into staying close for Santiago's assistance. Santiago inspires such loyal devotion in his young disciple because of his goodness and worthiness as a fisherman. In Santiago's *I am a strange old man*, the sign *strange* encompasses in itself the essence of Santiago's being and sets him in a category all by himself, completely apart from the others.
After the initial stages of dialogue, carried on in a social space (the bar/the Terrace is the visible, public and interactive space), both Manolin and Santiago retreat into a private and concealed world from where they contemplate the great journey. From here only Manolin will now make forays into the social world, even after Santiago's return from the sea. In fact, Manolin assumes many of Santiago's roles, thanking others for their concern, and dividing the marlin for them. It is also significant that this retreat to a private space (the shack) is not negated by Santiago's journey to the sea, but in fact, extended by it. The sea is no longer defined by its physical characteristics of vast open space, unconcealed and uncovered, but, by the fact that the man in the boat is alone, isolated and completely on his own in a world of his own.

The journey home, from the bar, evokes Santiago's Christ-like image when he has to carry back the mast, (a cross-like burden), connoting a shouldering of burden not to redeem mankind but himself. This vignette finds itself repeated when Santiago (bearing the mast again) and Manolin walk to the harbour again before the big journey. This description is followed by one about how the gear is placed in the boat which is succeeded by a detailed mention of the shack. On close reading a pattern emerges from these references. First, there is the Christ-like Santiago faithfully followed by a disciple, then his two most prized associations —
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fishing gear and shack — are mentioned, and finally, come certain signifiers which create a pious ambience. It is significant, therefore, that the passage ends not by invoking the memory of Santiago’s wife (the only familial attachment mentioned in the text), but by casting this reference alongside those of Christ and the Virgin. On the brown walls of the flattened overlapping leaves of the sturdy-fibred guano there was a picture in colour of the sacred Heart of Jesus and another of the Virgin of Cobre. These were relics of his wife. A relic may mean "a part of a holy person’s body or belongings kept after his or her death as an object of reverence". Evidently, Santiago’s wife is also an object of reverence along with the Virgin and Christ. And, any mention of the boat and gear, strategically placed between such reverential references, is bound to affect interpretation.

When Santiago’s wife, (her photograph), finally comes down to the shelf in the corner under his clean shirt, and later, Manolin assumes the responsibility of looking after his master’s daily needs, a mutual exchange — in which Manolin relieves Santiago’s wife of her responsibilities — has taken place. Manolin is, from now, surrogate wife, son, proselyte, partner and, most importantly, inspiration.

The focus soon shifts to the use of truth-telling and fictionalizing in the text — a premise, on which, Santiago depends heavily. Manolin
recognizes Santiago's need to resort to such methods and the reasons which compel him to do so. Fiction is an invented idea, statement or narrative about events or people, sometimes, a conventionally accepted falsehood. Within the text it is important and interesting to see, (a) the frequency and the arrangement of this use of "make-believe", and, (b) the effect of its use. These "stories" begin with the cast net and proceed to include pots of yellow rice and fish, with periodic inclusions of newspapers. In these instances of illusory comfort and happiness lie the clues to Santiago's desperate desire to cling to the idea of a full and satisfying life. In other words, this kind of fiction - creating takes place when things, desired, are absent or completely out of reach. Therefore, Santiago creates fictions about food (a means of survival) and the cast net (a means to achieve other things). The newspapers (a means of vicarious sharing in another's success) are also periodically invented references, but ones which, when they are available (present) at hand, bring news of actual events, unlike the absent cast net and food. The newspapers matter because of the baseball news they carry, (this is a much idealized game), and the success they report, and which Santiago can share, anticipate the success of his own endeavours.

Baseball references connect to the idea of gambling or risk-taking in the text. Timidity has once forced Santiago to lose an opportunity of a
lifetime (to go up to and speak with a baseball great). This lesson of an unreccoverable lost chance, is then handed down to Manolin. Therefore, it is now baseball inspired confidence which gives Santiago another chance to prove his mettle.

Close to the conclusion of the part of the narrative which leads to the journey at sea, come up references to lottery tickets which in turn lead to the issues of borrowing and begging. In answer to Santiago’s request for a terminal of lottery, Manolin, offers to borrow the money required for it. To which Santiago’s reply is, "I think perhaps I can too. But I try not to borrow. First you borrow. Then you beg. To borrow means "to take or obtain with the promise to return" with its connotations of the use of something not rightfully one’s own. To beg would be “to ask for as a gift, or charity”, with its connotations of living off someone. Santiago’s choice is not to borrow and, therefore, never to beg. That is why he does not live by merely reading the baseball results, he emulates them. (Also recall Manolin’s first offering of bought, not stolen sardine baits).

Another important choice available in the text is of that between dreams of Africa and conversations about baseball. "Baseball, I think", the boy said. Hence, the choice of baseball over Africa is effectively of one of action over dreams. Africa belongs to the distant past, to Santiago’s youth.
Though its dreams are inspirational, they do not match up to the encouragement baseball provides. And, where, the dreams are a part of the world of sleep, baseball is all action. The choice of baseball conversations over dream dialogues is, significantly, a desire to do, rather than simply, hope. Dreams can come only after achievement.

What is exceptional about Santiago's dreams, especially the one he dreams prior to journeying out to sea, is that he can prolong or terminate it at will, without in any way being under its control. In other words, Santiago lives as he dreams — actively, and in control. It is, therefore, noteworthy that Santiago allows himself the luxury of dreaming about the African beaches only after he has accomplished his goal at sea.

The bulk of the narrative of this text concentrates on Santiago at sea, beginning with his pre-dawn launch into the water and concluding with his return at dark three nights later. This section is also marked by a few notable features, namely, (a) the text zeroes in on Santiago throughout this lengthy passage, (b) immediately preceding and succeeding his stay at sea Santiago is solely under Manolin's care, and (c) Santiago's departure from and return to shore is done under the cover of darkness. His return after his staggering achievement is not to applause, but in loneliness. This incident, repeated in other different ways throughout the text, signifies
how the brilliance of his actions is undercut to highlight the quotidian nature of his effort. The section is also marked by the constant use of the present continuous which leaves space for only a few fleeting references to the past and the present. How completely Santiago is cut off in time, (the use of the present continuous), and in space, (he is absolutely alone at sea), may be understood from two sentences, each from the opening (each headed for the part of the ocean where he hoped to find fish) and closing (I went out too far) passages of the text.

The sea, the main site of action in the text, becomes a network of complex connotations. It is both home (where he meets his "brother") and battleground (where he confronts his "opponent"). Home and battleground both connote a shared sphere of existence, in one, love, and in the other, valor and glory. However, Santiago's "victory" is confined completely within the boundaries of the sea, reflected only somewhat in the implied awe of the fisher folk at the carcass, but which is then heavily undercut by the ignorant comments of the tourists at the Terrace. The sea, then, becomes an extremely private space; contrary to its appearance of a vast, open expanse, it is closed in, confined and womb-like.

Early in the narrative Santiago sets himself apart from all else by choosing to plumb those regions which are characterized by the great wall,
the sudden deep, and the floor of the ocean where all sorts of fish congregated.
The combination of these adjectives also signify Santiago's willingness to risk it all, an idea (that of "gambling") repeated consistently in the text. The terns which look too delicate and helpless to survive at sea, nevertheless do, and so does Santiago inspite of his age and lucklessness.

It is in this context of survival at sea that the complexities and doubleness of the ocean comes to the fore. It is in her contrasting characteristics (She is kind and beautiful. But she can be so cruel...) that the sea is redefined from a mere geographical feature to a complex personification, both generous and selfish, something that gave or withheld great favours. Another important distinction is between the "la mar" (the feminine sea) and the "el mar" (the masculine one). This distinction comes from a difference in interpretation. The sea appears to Santiago as the "la mar" with her warmth, intimacy and dominating feminine essence. For the others, however, though the sea gives money and motor boats it is an aggressive and adverse competitor, the "el mar".

It is textually evident that the feminine/female sea analogy is matched by the male adventurer/seeker Santiago. When he goes to the deepest parts of the sea on his quest, she, the beneficent giver, yields up the best of her lot. Though the Santiago-Sea relationship shifts temporarily
to the Santiago-marlin one, the site continues to be the same and Santiago's baits literally sieve the ocean in a search of any piece of luck.

It is significant that Santiago's sojourn at sea — which is, (a) a professional quest, to prove himself a fisherman, and (b) an existential quest, a bid for self-realization and self-justification — is totally devoid of any dependence on man-made or artificial devices, another instance of how totally he is insulated from any external influences. Unlike the younger fishermen who used buoys as floats for their lines and had motor boats, or the rich who have radios to talk to them, Santiago relies completely on the natural forces around him. He keeps time by the sun (the sun was two hours higher now), understands directions by the fish and the stars (The fish never changed his course nor his direction all that night as far as the man could tell from watching the stars), and his affinity for the land is significant (the glow of Havana was not so strong; If I lose the glare of Havana....). This segregation signifies Santiago's assiduity and unswerving involvement with the process of fishing, a devotion so powerful that the sun's unabated assault of a lifetime (All my life the early sun has hurt my eyes, he thought. Yet they are still good) is powerless to dim it (In the evening I can look straight into it without getting the blackness).
These lines, *He rowed slowly and steadily toward where the bird was circling. He did not hurry and he kept his lines straight up and down. But he crowded the current a little so that he was still fishing correctly though faster than he would have fished if he was not trying to use the bird*, with their multiple verbs and adverbs highlight the unflinching determination on Santiago's part to dominate all action, in a manner parallel to his control of his dreams, his baits and his life (his stretches of barrenness are controlled by his periodic luck).

Over an extended section of the text comprising several paragraphs, the idea that Santiago is independent of any "aid" offered by machines (machines denoting a mechanical apparatus or contrivance, and connoting, artificiality) is underscored further by the repeated mention of a network of helpful, interdependent natural forces. The bird which Santiago tries to "use" leads him to the flying fish, which in turn indicate the presence of dolphins, which then allow Santiago to reaffirm his belief in his luck; "... and perhaps my big fish is around them. My big fish must be somewhere." And, as if in agreement with these prophetic sentiments, nature reflects the thoughts that he has voiced. *He watched his lines to see them go straight down out of sight into the water and he was happy to see so much plankton because it meant fish. The strange light the sun made in the water, now that the sun was higher, meant good weather and so did the shape of the clouds over the land.*
Another distinction that the narrative throws up along with this artificial-natural duality is the contrast between the la mar ocean/lover figure and the agua mala whore figure. Though this set of contrasts incorporates in it elements of the artificial - natural dichotomy, the man - of - war is characterized by falseness (they were the falsest things in the sea) signifying treachery and deception, and as the text expresses it, they are literally poisonous. The agua mala's appearance deceives and in this artificiality (not genuine; lacking naturalness) it contrasts strikingly with the candor of the ocean (the ocean may withhold favours but is never false). It is, therefore, the man - of - war's falseness that Santiago loves to step on, an action which signifies his exercise of a position of control and dominance.

In a reaffirmation of his affinity with the natural and the genuine, and therefore, a reconfirmation of his own naturalness, we have Santiago acknowledging his similarity with 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. He ate the white eggs to give himself strength.

Santiago consumes the turtle eggs for strength, eggs which are doubly valuable as the turtles ate them (the man - of - war) filaments and all.
The turtles' eating habits signify their ways of controlling and limiting falseness at sea and the old man's love for them may partially derive from his loved to see the big turtles eating them (the agua mala). Here, the opposing significance of the two creatures of the sea may be understood from the linguistic import of the text. While the turtle eggs give strength (protection/life), the filaments of the man-of-war give welts and sores ... the sort that poisoning or poison oak can give (signifying disease/death). In a further partaking of the natural as part of a diet of empowerment, Santiago also drank a cup of shark liver oil each day. In each of these instances is a circular pattern of existence where the sea, in its various dietary incarnations — as the turtle eggs, the shark liver oil, the dolphin and the flying fish — enables Santiago to draw economic, social and existential succour and sustenance.

The significance of the following passage — in which Santiago hooks an albacore to use as a bait — emerges not as much from the act of the hooking but from the image of the old man knocking out the life from the fish. This instance comprises several signifiers such as the old man in whom old age is the most prominent characteristic because, temporally, he is the closest to death (death signifying end of life). Another signifier is the fish, the object and the end of the old man's desires. And the third, and most important, signifier is of the old man expressing kindness at killing
the fish where death, the old man and the fish are all enveloped within this single signifier "kindness".

*He (the albacore) lay in the stern in the sun, compact and bullet-shaped, his big, unintelligent eyes staring as he thumped his life out against the planking of the boat with quick shivering strokes of his neat, fast-moving tail. The old man hit him on the head for kindness and kicked him, his body still shuddering, under the shade of the stern.*

Here, Santiago's relationship with the fish is one of necessity where he cannot let the fish go but can exercise kindness as a substitute to granting life. The albacore's relationship with Santiago is one of inevitability, where once trapped it is fated to die. The albacore itself speeds up the process of its inevitable death by "thump[ing] his life out...." In this context, Santiago merely assists in the albacore's death and, therefore, "hit him on the head for kindness", where kindness signifies the feeling of empathy and sympathy that he feels for the fish. Sympathy signifies his regard and concern for another, but the empathetic gesture evokes his identification with the creatures of the sea. This sympathy/empathy reaction resurfaces when Santiago has finally trapped the marlin — a fish which represents all other fish, creatures with which he bonds spontaneously, and which at the same time is unlike any others
because it is a "brother" and an "opponent" rolled into one. "Fish", he said. "I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends", where the inevitable cycle of traps and death leads to a struggle for survival, which may or may not result in success. The marlin is trapped to die and in spite of a valiant fight against the odds it ultimately succumbs to its fate. Santiago is similarly trapped, but by his advancing age and debilitating skills as a fisherman. Santiago, too, makes a fight against these traps and, perhaps, emerges a little more successful than the marlin. Yet, his success is qualified by the fact that the sharks (perhaps trapped by their instinctive aggression and hunger) completely devour his catch leaving him only a skeleton for nostalgia. But the skeleton functions dually, in that it is, one, a proof that Santiago has broken out of his trap, and two, it serves as a repetitive inspiration for the future.

The passage about the death of the Albacore and the one succeeding it about Santiago's nostalgia for the past and yearning for Manolin are linked by a single line which while invoking the albacre becomes hopeful for the future. "Albacore", he said aloud. "He'll make a beautiful bait. He'll weigh ten pounds". Santiago is literally holding the future in his hands. The albacre is not just any bait, it is a beautiful bait, where the adjective beautiful and the qualifier ten pounds (denoting weight, heaviness) are almost a certain step closer to the end of the eighty-five day cycle of
sterility. This anticipation of the future invariably circles back to the past to thoughts of Manolin (the other mainstay of Santiago’s existence apart from fishing) and, therefore, to issues of silence and speech (where silence could correspond with solitariness, and speech with companionship, even community). This fusion of the present with the past signifies, (a) that all events follow a cyclical path, i.e. the past always follows the present and vice versa (recall, Santiago’s eighty-five, eighty-seven day cycles of success and sterility), and that, (b) fishing, as defined by the narrative, is essentially a test which each man must take, and alone, irrespective of the outcome.

"He did not remember when he had first started to talk aloud when he was by himself. He had sung when he was by himself in the old days and he had sung at night sometimes when he was alone steering on his watch in the smacks or in the turtle boats. He had probably started to talk aloud when alone, when the boy had left. But he did not remember. When he and the boy fished together they usually spoke only when it was necessary. They talked at night or when they were storm-bound by bad weather. It was considered a virtue not to talk unnecessarily at sea and the old man had always considered it so and respected it. But now he said his thoughts aloud many times since there was no one that they could annoy".
The significance of solitariness and silence comes through with the varied and numerous uses of such phrases as by himself, he was alone, when the boy had left, and there was no one, all of which focus on the theme of being single, uncompanioned and alone. It is considered unnecessary, and Santiago too considered it so and respected it, to talk unless it becomes imperative to do so. ('Considered' would signify to think carefully about, especially in order to make a decision; contemplate; reflect on, and 'was considered' would signify a generally held belief. In both cases it would jointly connote a valued tradition). Speech is not only avoided in company but is also relegated either to darkness (the words at night are repeated) or to trouble (i.e. talked when they were storm bound), in both instances the import being that vocal/verbal communication is, or should be, the last resort of a fisherman as, (a) night time signifies the close of a day hence signifying the ceasing of all activities and events. The association of the night is with sleep, a time of the day when in the normal course of events any fisherman returns home. So to talk at night in the boat with another is a set of circumstances which would connote a deviation from the normal course of events, and (b) being storm-bound would also signify a freak state of nature where talking with another provides the support and companionship which comes otherwise from familiarity with the ocean and which the storm robs from these men. The ocean, it seems from narrative evidence, encourages only individual attention rather than those of groups.
Santiago's special status on this trip (he is alone, without either the other fisherfolk or Manolin) not only strengthens this idea of fishing as an individual experience but also highlights the extraordinary nature of this particular expedition. *The old man had seen many great fish. He had seen many that weighed more than a thousand pounds and he had caught two of that size in his life, but never alone. Now alone and out of sight of land, he was fast to the biggest fish he had ever seen and bigger than he had ever heard of... Never alone occurs here once more, though in a different context. But the significance in both cases is similar. Speech is discouraged other than under special circumstances, and the best and the most important fish of one's life also comes by only when the fisherman fishes all alone.*

"If the others heard me talking out loud they would think that I am crazy," he said aloud. "But since I am not crazy, I do not care. And the rich have radios to talk to them in their boats and to bring them the baseball". Santiago will appear crazy to the others as he had deviated from the norms of silence at sea, and yet, even in his self communicative moods he is only consolidating the tradition of the special relationship between each individual with the sea by talking not to anyone else but with himself, a preoccupation better than the distraction that the radios unleash.
But even a solitary reference to baseball is sufficient (baseball is a game whose significance lies in its inspirational potentials — (a) it inspires by reference to its own greats; greats = achievers, and (b) it inspires by simultaneous and constant foregrounding of all references to fishing) to bring back the focus to the main issue in the text — fishing, that which I was born for.

Once more with I could just drift, he thought, and sleep and put a bight of line around my toe to wake me. But today is eighty-five days and I should fish the day well, the cyclical nature of success and the seriousness of the task undertaken is underscored before the narrative finally begins with its main action — the confrontation with the marlin. The verbs drift and sleep are both variations of the idea of a passive and inactive state of existence which are countered, first, by the conjunction but and next, by the resolution I should fish the day well.

The following passage, where Santiago encounters the marlin for the first time is remarkable because of the utmost certainty (which signifies confidence) it evidences in his attitude. "Yes", he said. "Yes", (the first two of the many affirmatives to come), "and shipped his oars without bumping the boat", (where without bumping signifies the absence of any incorrect gesture). "He reached out for the line and held it softly between thumb and fore
finger of his right hand. He felt no strain nor weight and he held the line lightly. Then it came again. This time it was a tentative pull, not solid nor heavy, and he knew exactly what it was.” The language of the passage conveys the definiteness of Santiago’s actions with he reached out, held it softly (the adverb qualifies the verb to make it more exact, and is further qualified by the statement of position, between thumb and forefinger of his right hand). The marlin’s movement likewise corresponds to Santiago’s in its exactness, a tentative pull, not solid nor heavy, and with such synchronized communication, it is not surprising that the fisherman knows what it was.

The succeeding lines comprise a dialogue between Santiago and the fish, sometimes spoken, some times not, where the fish is literally coaxed to take the hook in order to redeem Santiago’s self-confidence and belief in himself and his benevolent fate.

The lines are an attempt that Santiago makes to establish a special relationship with the marlin and make it take the place of all the others — fisherfolk, baseball, radios, and sometimes, even Manolin. Which in turn makes the marlin Santiago’s brother as well as an opponent. (The fishermen are also brothers and opponents at the same time because while they are all mates at sea they also engage at proving themselves better than the others at their profession — recall how all the fisherman stared at
Santiago at the Terrace because they considered him lost for good). It is the strength of this bond which drains out Santiago of all sensation when the marlin unhooks itself and swims away temporarily. He was gone and the old man felt nothing. Felt nothing signifies two things simultaneously, (a) a loss of physical sensation, and (b) a complete drainage of emotional feelings. In Santiago’s case one occurs because of the other and the reverse situation is equally viable — Then he felt the gentle touch on the line and he was happy.

From the first touch of the hook — this initial contact establishes a relationship — Santiago tries to dominate the action by verbally anticipating, and alternately coaxing, the marlin’s movements. "Eat them. Please eat them. How fresh they are and you down there six hundred feet in the cold water in the dark. Make another turn in the dark and come back and eat them"; "come on," the old man said aloud. "Make another turn. Just smell them. Aren’t they lovely? Eat them good now and then there is the tuna. Hard and cold and lovely. Don’t be shy, fish. Eat them."; "Eat it a little more," he said. "Eat it well,"; "Eat it so that the point of the hook goes into your heart and kills you, he thought. Come up easy and let me put the harpoon into you. All right. Are you ready? Have you been long enough at table?" Santiago needs to convince himself as much as he needs to convince his prey about what he hopes will be the inevitable result of his gamble at sea.
As the narrative moves on, the scene changes. "I wish I had the boy", the old man said aloud. "I'm being towed by a fish and I'm the towing bitt. I could make the line fast. But then he could break it. I must hold him all I can and give him line when he must have it. Thank God he is travelling and not going down".

"What I will do if the decides to go down, I don't know. What I'll do if he sounds and dies I don't know. But I'll do something. There are plenty of things I can do". The role reversal is all too obvious with the marlin calling the shots and Santiago doing its bidding. Santiago's position vis-a-vis the marlin, (which pose questions of dominance, superiority and ascendancy between the two "brothers"), is, at least at this moment, defined by the physical position that they occupy, where the marlin dictates and Santiago follows. The narrative is also defined by a number of positive propositions which Santiago makes, and all of which are negated by the marlin thus reestablishing its superior position and Santiago's subservient one.

This will kill him, the old man thought. He can't do this forever. But four hours later the fish was still swimming steadily out to sea, towing the skiff, and the old man was still braced solidly with the line across his back. But it is in Santiago's still braced solidly that lies his redemption because his solidly
counters and equalizes with the marlin’s *steadily*, making them true opponents.

"Then he looked behind him and saw that no land was visible. That makes no difference, he thought. I can always come in on the glow from Havana. There are two more hours before the sun sets and may be he will come up before that. If he doesn’t may be he will come up with the moon. If he does not do that may be he will come up with the sunrise. I have no cramps and I feel strong." "The fish never changed his course nor his direction all that night as far as the man could tell from watching the stars." Here again the marlin’s actions belie Santiago’s hopes thus forcing the events on an uncharted and indefinite course. But, Santiago’s hopefulness (expressed by the statements *that makes no difference, I can always*; the adverb *may be*, and the twice repeated *if he doesn’t do that may be he will...*; and the will to endure, *he rested sitting on the unstepped mast and sail and tried not to think but only to endure*, are successful in cushioning each setback that he receives with the marlin’s independent gestures. Therefore, while the marlin continues unperturbed by this persistent course of events, Santiago is also able to pursue his goal of a lifetime unfazed. *The position actually was only somewhat less intolerable; but he thought of it as almost comfortable.* This simultaneity of feelings and a paralleling of gestures (this simultaneity of experiences connotes togetherness, which in its turn may connote "brotherhood", an idea which
finds repeated mentions in the narrative) is explicated by Santiago's "You're feeling it (the strain) now fish", he said. "And so, God knows, am I".

It is this proportional and balanced bonding between the marlin and Santiago which finds its ultimate expression in the attack by the sharks, an attack which literally tears away pieces of the marlin from Santiago's possession where the verb "to possess" indicates "to have as belonging to one; have as property; own", and the noun "possession" stands for ownership. A cursory reading might seem to show Santiago as a loser (he fails to bring home his fish; the loss of a fish the ultimate blow to a fisherman's pride and honour) and the sharks as the real winners at the end because they defeat both Santiago and the marlin. However, another acceptable interpretation would be the one in which the sharks are seen as neither winners nor villains but simply as a narrative device which reestablishes the balance of equality between fish and man. In this battle of supremacy Santiago wins, at least temporarily, in having fastened the marlin to the side of his skiff. In so far that the marlin remains unharmed, he, the man, can enter the harbour (which will no longer be simply the harbour but home, the social space and almost, the arena for the "hero") bearing his "trophy". "Trophy" would denote anything taken in war, hunting, competition, etc., especially when preserved as a memento; spoil, prize, or award; anything serving as a token or evidence of victory, valor,
skill, etc. Therefore, the marlin would no longer serve as a force of nature equal enough to counter the predatoriness of Santiago in particular and man in general, nor would Santiago's adventure at sea become a lesson for life in humility and perseverance. But due to the attack by the sharks the marlin is perforce returned to the sea, its natural habitat, just as Santiago returns to his. Santiago retains only memories of this "battle" — one, which begins as a quest for supremacy, and then undergoes a gradual transformation into one of perseverance, and finally, into one of humility. For the others who people the narrative, the carcass remains as proof. This carcass, signifying an incomplete and skeletal victory, can therefore, by extending the argument, only signify that the end result of the/any project undertaken is immaterial so long as the effort has been sincere and exact. As Santiago himself wants to teach Manolin what he has imbibed over the years through his numerous experiences, life is nothing but a gamble. To quote again from the text, "Take a good rest, small bird", he said. "Then go in and take your chance like any man or bird or fish".

The narrative evidences many incidents, all of which enhance the theme of brotherhood and companionship, themes which fulfil a dual purpose in the text — one, of focusing on the intimate bondings between the creatures of the sea which involves mutual faith and respect (which among the humans is only shared between Santiago and Manolin), and
two, instances where these intimacies throw light on the loss of faith and respect between the human beings. During the night two porpoise came around the boat and he could hear them rolling and blowing. He could tell the difference between the blowing noise the male made and the sighing blow of the female. "They are good", he said. "They play and make jokes and love one another. They are our brothers like the flying fish".

Similarly with the pair of marlin's, the trapped condition of one does not deter the other from being hopeful of a chance of escape (in the case of the fish its hooked condition can only result in death and, therefore, the marlin's choice to remain by the female's side signifies a vicarious embracement of death).

He remembered the time he had hooked one of a pair of marlin. The male fish always let the female fish feed first... and all the time the male had stayed with her... He was beautiful, the old man remembered, and he had stayed. Santiago trapped by old age and debilitating powers is not the fisherman he has been. Therefore, apart from Manolin's love and devotion, no one has "stayed" with him. (Manolin is himself at the mercy of his parents and only at the end of the narrative can assert his independence and dedicate it to Santiago).
The correspondence between Santiago and the marlin is strengthened further by the extraordinary choices both make which, (a) sets them apart from all the others, and (b) highlights through its associated implications their readiness to 'gamble' despite all odds.

*His choice had been to stay in the deep dark water far out beyond all snares and traps and treacheries. My choice was to go there to find him beyond all people.*

"When once, through my treachery, it had been necessary to him to make a choice, the old man thought".

This sentence signifies how closely linked are the lives of Santiago and the marlin. If it is Santiago’s treachery which forces the marlin to the trap, it is the marlin’s (which represents all fish) elusiveness through eighty-five day cycles which compel Santiago to move beyond the usual fishing grounds.

The idea of solitariness at sea being the only desired state is repeated again in Santiago’s *I wish I had the boy* and the immediate underscoring of this stated desire with *But you have not got the boy, he thought. You have only yourself*. Desire for company also connotes an acknowledgement of weakness, and Santiago’s rejection of weakness is
then conveyed with *so he did it*. In an extension of this rejection Santiago undergoes a ritualistic blood-letting (*The blood ran down his cheek a little way*) when *the fish made a surge that pulled him down on his face* in a counter movement which balances out the equation of domination and authority between the man and fish.

Any mention of the bond that Santiago and the marlin share (there are numerous instances of this scattered across the text) necessarily evokes the idea of death (at least, a wish to kill, or 'give death') articulated in a variety of ways by Santiago. The death of either, the marlin or Santiago, signifies that the other has prevailed completely as, (a) they are unassisted by anything and, (b) there is no assumption of unquestioned superiority on the part of either. Moreover, the identities of each is interlinked with the other, and, therefore, the death of one will give the other a new lease of life. In each of the bondings between a fish and Santiago, (where the bonding also signifies struggle), death makes a pair with it.

That the fishing expedition demands complete faithfulness (concentration; oneness) is signified by the two occasions when the marlin not only makes its presence felt but literally demands that Santiago withdraw himself away from his preoccupations — thoughts of Manolin and the warbler. In both cases Santiago is unaware of the cause of the
marlin's sudden gestures (in the case when his thoughts are with Manolin, "I wonder what he made that lurch for, he thought", and when his thoughts are with the bird, "Something hurt him then, he said aloud") but each instance effectively draws his mind back to the fish. To take the point further, it is only when Santiago notices his own wounds, got as a result of the marlin’s lurches that he thinks of the marlin's wounds. He felt the line carefully with his right hand and noticed his hand was bleeding. "Something hurt him then", he said aloud. The bond of brotherhood and death becomes more significant from this example of mutual woundings.

From these moments of mutual love and respect between the man and the fish the narrative progresses to mention Santiago's cramped hand. "He could feel the steady hard pull of the line and his left hand was cramped. It drew up tight on the heavy cord and he looked at it in disgust". The two signifiers which direct the meaning of the passage are cramped and disgust. The verb cramped, apart from its pathological significance, means to confine narrowly, restrain, restrict or hamper, while the noun disgust could variously mean repugnance caused by something offensive, strong aversion or dissatisfaction. Here, Santiago's cramped left hand restricts the passage to assured vindication of the self and a reassertion of faith and confidence in oneself. This act of betrayal by a part of his own body (which contrasts with betrayals by others) raises Santiago's disgust as the cramping also
signifies an impairment in an otherwise flawless preparation. *I hate a cramp, he thought. It is a treachery of one's own body.* In an extreme gesture of independence the hand is personified into an entity (which may then be disowned), its usefulness denied and self sufficiency reiterated. *Cramp then if you want. Make yourself into a claw. It will do you no good.* But how vital the journey is to Santiago is immediately evidenced by the following sentences where reclaiming his body (this signifies unifying the self and readying himself completely against the marlin) becomes of primary concern, so much so that eating (intake of nutrition to strengthen a 'lost' limb) becomes a ritual rather than a necessity.

_How do you feel, hand? He asked the cramped hand that was almost as stiff as rigor mortis. I'll eat some more for you._ This last sentence signifies the mutual need that Santiago and the hand fulfil for each other where the hand functions as an efficient tool for Santiago to realise his goal in life who in turn eats *slowly and conscientiously* (deliberation) to strengthen his paralysed limbs. This episode of the cramped and, therefore useless, limb serves to highlight very forcefully the premise posed at the beginning of the analysis of this text — that fishing becomes primarily an exercise where the self functions within a very private and confined space, isolated from all other spheres, and a time when self realization takes place and becomes complete. *He looked across the sea and knew how alone he was now.* But this
aloneness is not a negative. Rather, the sea/tutor/benefactor combination focuses at the dual significance of being alone (the Terrace, is a symbol of this state) and being alone at sea. But he could see the 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.

It is at this juncture, when Santiago is at his most vulnerable (he is furthest away from land and his left hand is temporarily lost to him), that the fish decides to display himself with more than a hint of his strength.

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 tail go under and the line commenced to race out. The entire passage is replete with adverbs characterized by the dignity and confidence they express and striking adjectives. The marlin swims out of the water slowly and steadily (signifying measured and
controlled movements) and shows itself unendingly (a word signifying endlessness, a signifier which functions both literally and metaphorically). As for its appearance, it is bright (with the stress on ideas of shine and glow) and with colours ranging from dark purple to light lavender, where dark and light function as the opposing poles in a range of chromes. Most tellingly the sword resembles a baseball bat, a game much revered by Santiago and often compared for its estimable equivalence with fishing.

With a physical resemblance between the marlin and the game of baseball, the analogy is brought much closer than before. The exit is as impressive as the entry with the marlin re-entering the water smoothly (signifying a graceful certainty) like a diver (where the sign diver signifies sportsmanship and professionalism at the same time).

The marlin’s immensity is unique in itself but it also sets apart Santiago from all his crowd by, (a) becoming his fish, with the stress on his, and, (b) by becoming his fish when he has ventured out to the sea alone, with the stress on alone. The old man had seen many great fish. He had seen many that weighed more than a thousand pounds and he had caught two of that size in his life but never alone. Now alone, and out of sight of land, he was fast to the biggest fish that he had ever seen and bigger than he had ever heard of, and his left hand was still as tight as the gripped claws of an eagle. Great (with its adjectival significance of size and dimension on the one hand and
exceptionally outstanding attributes on the other) is a signifier whose
signifieds (even with the qualifiers many that weighed more than a thousand
pounds and he had caught two of that size in his life) Santiago is familiar with.
But, this marlin surpasses familiar signifieds and establishes new ones
where greatness is redefined to include the fish and the negative qualifiers
now alone, and out of sight of land and the tight, gripped claws of a hand. This
motif of aloneness and impairment, away from even the sight of familiar
land and battling against an awesome force (which is not only represented
by the fish but also a pitiable, ‘unfishermanlike’ past) is a repetitive one
which unifies the narrative through its various phases.

If fishing is therapeutic — (a) fishing provides chances to prove
wrong an unfruitful past, (b) fishing provides the means and the end for
a vindication of the self to oneself, and (c) it is a vindication of the self for
all others coexisting within the same social sphere), — then prayers are
not. If Santiago’s attitude to prayer is irreverential and temporary, then the
point to question is why at all are the prayers brought into the narrative.
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 de
Cobre if I catch him. That is a promise. Religion is "a specific fundamental set
of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or
sects. To be a part of a religious order or belief not only signifies faith in
a particular philosophy or way of life but signifies simultaneously, and
more tellingly, a "belonging" with others of the same faith. "To belong"
signifies "to be in relation with, to be a part of or a member of," each of
which in turn signifies "community". Santiago's I am not religious, but I will
say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys that I should catch this fish signifies his
complex interrelationship with his community. On the one hand, he is not
religious, a state of mind signifying a conscious withdrawal from the same
subscriber group (to refer back to the dominant sign in the text of Santiago
sitting apart from all the others in the Terrace), while on the other he still
recites the Our Fathers and Hail Marys, a gesture signifying a verbalising of
his subconscious "belonging" to a specific community life. This fusion of
a conscious and subconscious state of mind becomes more obvious with
the use of signifiers like mechanically and sometimes he would be so tired that
he could not remember the prayer, or even, they (the prayers) would come
automatically, all of which signify a half-heartedness or even indifference
toward the means (the prayers), but the completion of the task (with his
prayers said, and feeling much better) signifies the importance which he
accords the end (that I should catch this fish). Also, the various signifiers
when put together signify a mutual relationship between the prayers and
the fish. Santiago prays to catch the fish. If the prayers signify a bond with
the community and personal/individual justification, then both together
signify a synthesis of the individual with the community. The
prayers/community help Santiago realize his full potentials, symbolised by the fish, while the fish helps Santiago, the individual, reassume a position of importance and worth within the community.

Again, the significance of baseball for fishing comes through with Santiago’s reference to the Big Leagues and the Yankees. *This is the second day now that I do not know the result of the juegos, he thought.* The similarity drawn between the two fields is too obvious. This is also the second day of fishing without Santiago’s having any inkling as to what the results will be. This is why the statement is immediately followed by a more positive and personal one, *But I must have confidence and I must be worthy of the great Di Maggio who does all things perfectly even with the pain of the bone spur in his heel.* Santiago has suffered recently from a cramped limb (the bone spur of Di Maggio) and he is at a game as well. Santiago’s admiration and respect for Di Maggio and his own case signify his desire to transcend his unlucky and unappreciated phase in life and become Di Maggio-like.

*Di Maggio and the reference to a favorite game baseball spurs (this word a complex amalgam of a verb and a noun) Santiago to a confidence building routine. The other game (where ‘game’ signifies sportiveness and competition) is the hand game played at the docks (space physically*
located on land but close to the sea) between a negro (*the strongest man on the docks*) which raises parallels with the marlin, Santiago's current competitor and Santiago. Various other parallels between the hand game and the fishing expedition may be drawn. *They* (in the hand game) *had gone one day and one night*, (fishing is thrice as much challenging) a prolonging of an otherwise time bound event, and *blood came out from under the fingernails of both his and the negro's hands*, a similar ritual of blood - letting which subsequently both Santiago and the marlin undergo. The closest parallel would however be between Santiago's final singular effort which draws the hand game to a sudden end and leaves the negro beaten. In the former event the concluding words are, *but he had finished it anyway and before anyone had to go to work*, indicating that there is no disruption in the everyday routine of the dock workers. The only perceptible difference is evidenced in their attitude toward Santiago. *For a long time after that everyone had called him the champion*.... A unique parallel may be seen in Santiago's return alone from the sea to a sleeping town. His brilliance does not interrupt the pace of life in his town except momentarily when the carcass leaves everyone spellbound with awe. But this temporary shift is soon rudely dismissed by the ignorant comments of the tourists at the Terrace, an incident signifying how irrelevant Santiago's efforts are for the others. The fact that this dismissal comes from the Terrace brings Santiago's "shame" at not having "performed" to the satisfaction of a social
standard to a full circle. There is, however, a larger though subtle change to be noticed in Santiago's perception of himself as a man and a fisherman, which makes him once more the champion of the days of his youth.

The section of the text which follows these various reminiscences concentrates primarily on dialogues, both verbal and gestural, interpolations of chosen references from the past, between Santiago and the marlin, cocooning the atmosphere from any interference whatsoever except a few. Of these significant interruptions are dreams, Santiago's wish to have Manolin's company, promises to pray, and the regular rhythmic references to brotherhood and equality, competitiveness and the need to dominate. These pivotal signs which make up the text converge in this section in which the protracted buildup from the time the fish becomes wildly dominant to just before it is killed, is more significant than the actual killing of the marlin. The significance is reflected in the space taken to narrate the two different acts. The killing is quick and neat, and so are the words used to describe it. The passage of time that Santiago takes to physically coax the marlin to tire itself out and fall into his trap, focuses how significantly time is used as a narrative technique. On the one hand, this conclusive play between the marlin and Santiago is prolonged, almost a slow crescendo to a final finish. On the other hand, however this space encapsulates in itself all the crucial moments from Santiago's childhood to
old age and these are unfolded for the reader in fast forward action replay. The act of fishing becomes, therefore, a moment of confrontation with one's entire past which is packed in tightly to make one fruitful moment in the present. And, this present almost immediately becomes the past. Fishing then becomes a complete thing in itself, where the fisherman, at least Santiago, lives a complete life over and over again even if this cycle takes eighty-five days to come full circle.

The attack by the sharks, themselves defined by a peculiar hierarchy, which comes at the end of this part of *The Old Man and the Sea* demands closer attention than it is often granted. Santiago's "victory" becomes complete only after the sharks have devastated his fish. Though the fisherfolk back at the harbour are unable to feast on the spectacle of the biggest ever marlin, they see the proof in its carcass. For Santiago, however, losing the flesh of the fish is what brings about a complete attitudinal change. He has hooked 'his' fish, therefore its memory will never be lost to him. He is himself proof of the greatness of what has happened to him. But with each lunge that the sharks make he becomes more reconciled to relinquishing the material (the fish as an object symbolised by its flesh) for the idea, the image. The fish becomes for him an object of achievement, its proximity a means of silencing criticism and its 'presence' a source of pride and satisfaction for the present and the
future. It is in the context of his gradual resignation to the reality of the sharks and his constant loss that the variety of the sharks becomes significant. The first attacker, the dignified and determined Mako (*the biggest Dentuso that I have ever seen*) and one, as Santiago insists, that is not a scavenger but a beautiful and noble creature becomes as worthy an opponent as the marlin has been. At the end of this first Santiago - Shark fight, the man balances his emotions beautifully between his loss (in practical terms, forty pounds of flesh gone) and his pride at killing the shark skillfully (*And I killed him well*). It is only with the subsequent attacks by the numerous scavengers (with its totally degraded signifieds of cleansers of filth or of those which feed on the dead) that Santiago detaches himself in degrees from the marlin. *He was past everything now and he sailed the skiff to make his home port as well and as intelligently as he could.* The marlin becomes the past almost as soon as it has become the present, only the perception of having tried hard and being successful lingers on to the extent that Santiago can philosophically dismiss the entire episode, with *Nothing, he said aloud. I went out too far* affords him the passage to translate his present almost painlessly into the future making his observation extremely significant to the text and as much to the entire experience of fishing. *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.* The attack by the sharks leaves Santiago
completely drained out, both physically and psychologically, and even without having allowed him sufficient time to savour his achievement, and yet it is because he loses his fish that Santiago can be prepared to repeat the cycle again, and view this episode not as a "loss" but as a "lesson".

The return to the social fold, a world that he has inhabited all his life and journeyed away from for a short space of time and a world of experience, is not one deserving of a hero. (A hero, in the conventional sense is a man said to have great strength or ability or an illustrious warrior, or a person, especially a man admired for noble achievements and qualities e.g. courage). Santiago possesses in various degrees all the above mentioned qualities and can also surely be a hero in the sense of "the principal male character in a literary work". The mention of the fact that when he returns to his town the lights of the Terrace were out and he knew everyone was in bed, in effect subdues whatever heroism may surround him and his deed, and with this written corroboration concretizes what Santiago has himself asserted earlier about his inevitable but deglamorised confrontation with the marlin as an embodiment of the essential struggle between man and fish. His return is not celebrated by any human and in a like gesture the breeze had risen steadily and was blowing strongly now as if gradually deepening the chill (i.e. a cooling down as of ardour; of the heroism) in the atmosphere. His achievement seems merely routine, in fact
it is not made out to be much of an achievement at all and, therefore, he returns and resettles into his old life as he had gone out in the morning, alone. *There was no one to help him so he pulled the boat up as far as he could.* But this return is permanent, the return of a man who has won over himself and over life even though with no prize to show for it, a man who proved his worth not so much to the world but essentially to himself, and therefore, he completes his pilgrimage of life by making her (the boat) *fast to a rock,* where *fast* signifies being "firmly fixed in its place; not easily moved or shaken; settled, stable."

Santiago’s journey to the sea and return to land has all the makings of a premeditated adventure, one that he carries out with attention even to the last detail but in a detached, disinterested, equanimous manner as *he unstepped the mast and furled the sail and tied it,* the movements of one unaffected by the splendour of what he has experienced previously. Then, subsequently and without any awareness, he slips into a Christ-like role as *he shouldered the mast and started to climb.* This is Santiago’s Christian and Christ-like humility in the face of vindication. The following sentence is more meaningful and telling for the entire narrative. *It was then he knew the depth of his tiredness.* Santiago has been through a physically and emotionally draining experience shortly before this statement and yet does not acknowledge, perhaps is unaware of, its intensity and importance to
his life. It is now, and in retrospect, that he allows a reflection on the formidable occurrence of his life. And, what he sees is not victory complete and undamaged, but one ravaged and diminished and skeletal in its offering; he stopped for a moment and looked back and saw in the reflection from the street light the great tail of the fish standing up well behind the skiff’s stern. He saw the white naked line of his backbone and the dark mass of the head with the projecting bill and all the nakedness between. It is as if Santiago’s achievement too has been literally stripped of its flesh (substance, worth) and is visible only for what it essentially is. With its many significances naked (which is literally "without clothes" and by extension plain, undisguised, exposed, unprotected, defenseless), provides an important and interesting reading both into Santiago’s character and the experience he has undergone. Santiago is at his most vulnerable here. He has met his match and engaged in a life and death struggle with a fish. He meets his match, in the marlin and in the protracted life and death struggle neither emerge conclusively as winners but only as exhausted, and in the case of the fish defeated, equals. And, therefore, his is not a prize but only a carcass which is to be fleshed out with memories to serve as a reminder of the past. This look is all that Santiago evinces by way of nostalgia and he again resumes his Christ-like attitude, patiently bearing his mast (a cross-like substitute) and trying to climb up (this would signify two things at the same time — (a) a vertical movement, at least one on an upward
slant, and (b) a state where such a progress is countered by the heavy load that is being borne upward). At this instance, however, once the burden proves too heavy, Santiago is unable to continue on his progressive journey, and instead lets go (this is not conceding defeat but acknowledging the limits to which a human body can be pushed) to watch that which he is unable to do any more. It would do to quote the passage and explain the significance of certain words.

_He started to climb again and at the top he fell and lay for some time with the mast across his shoulder. He tried to get up. But it was too difficult and he sat there with the mast on his shoulder and looked at the road. (A shoulder is that part of the body regarded as capable of bearing a burden or blame, and, therefore, "to shoulder" would be to bear a burden. A road apart from being a path or a way may also signify a method or means of accomplishing something). Santiago, therefore, unable to move along a road can only watch it (a vicarious progress) but always with complete consciousness of the fact that he has lived his life to the hilt._

The Christ analogy is very apparent in that Santiago, physically broken and psychologically exhausted, still has to shoulder his responsibility (he has to carry his own mast and he will not, or cannot, avail of anybody's assistance — it is important to note here that after a
long number of days Santiago has ventured out to the sea, without any assistance, completely alone). But the Christ analogy cannot be seen without an awareness of the all too human quality of Santiago’s nature and age.

The Christ-Santiago likeness is too apparent to be overlooked. It is not only his Christian humility and modesty in the face of an extraordinary achievement that sets Santiago apart from other men but also his calm acceptance of his weakness and old age (he started to climb again and at the top he fell and lay for some time with the mast across his shoulder) and perseverance (he had to sit down five times before he reached his shack).

The text of The Old Man and The Sea unfolds on certain premises like the tyro-tutor relationship, the father-son combination, questions of youth and maturity and those of doubt and faith. Clearly, all along Santiago as the old man signifying age and experience has stood for the mature, wise voice who is the true tutor of Manolin, more responsible and loving than Manolin’s biological father. At the conclusion of this third part, however, certain roles are reversed, including the one of the responsible/mature/aged and dependent/immature/youthful one. Though Manolin is not old and Santiago not youthful, yet after the old man’s physically and emotionally exhausting tryst with destiny, it is Manolin
who takes over the role of the more mature and responsible father-like figure. He looks after (of course, only as an extension of his duties which he has fulfilled earlier as well) Santiago’s needs (physical and emotional — literally and figuratively taking care of his hunger) and instills him with enough desire to look forward to the future and plan things in as much detail as he always does to ensure a repetition of his extraordinary luck. Santiago leaves for the sea one early morning but not before fulfilling his role as a compassionate and caring surrogate father, as in waking up Manolin gently without damaging his self respect and dignity. Manolin, however, cannot accompany him as his assistant on the boat because he still is under the dictates of his father and not free to choose his own course of action. Therefore, despite the father-son intimacy between Santiago and Manolin, this relationship can’t be acknowledged socially and publicly. However, once Santiago has come to terms with his own newly proven identity, Manolin seems to have come of age too. He chooses now to be with Santiago, with or without luck, from then on, in a way to ensure that his (Manolin’s) luck would ensure a repeat of another three day, three night adventure. Even though Santiago’s professional lucklessness is repeatedly referred to, it is obvious, even from the very beginning of the narrative, that the eighty-five and eighty-seven day stretches are a cyclical phenomena, phases of fishlessness and astounding luck which Santiago has experienced before.
The text repeatedly brings up the issue of silence and speech. It is interesting that the only socially interactive phases that Santiago has — entailing communication and actual interaction with neighbours or those inhabiting the same social spaces as he does, here, the fishermen (both socially and professionally, Santiago and they belong to the same circle) — are those before he leaves for the seemingly interminable stretch at sea and immediately succeeding his return. Though he found the silence of the sea unbearable, so much as to wish to replace it with even radio-talk, when he finally does break the silence it is only with small exchanges with Manolin. For Santiago, it seems, silence is being alone, companionship is being with Manolin. It is no wonder then, his communication with the "world" — anything outside of the circle which contains the sea, his fish, boat and Manolin and himself — is carried on not directly but through Manolin. He is not a recipient of the world's reactions to his extraordinary feat, its awe, appreciation and even the (fatuous) pompous misidentification of the marlin as a shark. But what is most significant for Santiago about the entire episode is not the physical trauma he undergoes or either way the loss or gain of his prize, but the fact that he, has been able to hold himself against his opponent to the end.

"They beat me, Manolin", he said. "They truly beat me."

"He didn't beat you. Not the fish."

"No. Truly. It was afterwards."
The first words that Santiago utters after his moments of lucidity once he is back home (home as the secure enclosure where one is protected and sheltered from any external assaults) is to the effect that he has been beaten. We could read the signifiers to indicate that it is only once he is back within the folds of the familiar (i.e. he now feels secure enough to probe into his consciousness for the emotional aftereffects of this bout of fishing on his being) that he feels ready to acknowledge that he feels beaten, and to Manolin (the only outlet for his confessions) he utters words to the effect. Speech is a more concrete act than thought and by commenting upon at least the psychological effect of the struggle between the fish and himself, Santiago has made the entire episode more palpable and immediate. It would seem that he is more traumatized by the fact that he has nothing to show for his struggle, (No. Truly. It was afterwards, about the beating he has taken; this being the result more of the shark attack rather than any lack of strength or determination on his part) than for having to suffer limitlessly over the landing of the fish. Manolin, unlike Santiago’s emotional musing, states at once as a fact the truth of the matter. (He didn’t beat you. Not the fish and then moves to the immediate and more practical uses that Santiago’s trophy may be put to).

It is only towards this concluding section of the text that both Santiago and Manolin give up their pretensions (of comfort, and happiness,
of feeling useful) and can each express their true feelings and desires. And, therefore, it is significant that Manolin (signifying youth, inexperience and the future) should, (1) take Santiago’s future into his own hands and, in doing so, (2) combine all his virtues with Santiago’s age and experience which is without the benefit of time, in a way ensuring a future which would be a reflection of Santiago’s past. In an extension of this confident maturity he suddenly displays, Manolin literally chops up the fish skeleton with his words by apportioning the head to Pedrico and quickly claiming the spear for himself. (“And the spear?” “You keep it if you want it”. “I want it”, the boy said. “Now we must make our plans about the other things”). Manolin is seizing the time he has left with Santiago.

Santiago’s “did they search for me”? may be seen as his desire, however latent and minimal, to belong to the social sphere as that member whose disappearance will be noticed and subsequently for whom steps will be taken to ensure a safe return to the fold.

He noticed how pleasant it was to have someone to talk to instead of speaking only to himself and to the sea. In this line, obviously a simple statement of a mundane fact is Santiago’s acknowledgement of his latent desire to belong, even though it is one limited to a small sphere, here only the fishing community.
Santiago, then, goes on to tell Manolin, *In the night I spat something strange and felt something in my chest was broken*. Literally, a psychological as well as a physiological concussion, which becomes a confession to his disciple and confidant.

Santiago’s is a gradual return to the routine of his life, a re-establishing of old and familiar ties. Only the inversion of roles is too obvious. Where as in the past it was Manolin who looked up to Santiago for advice and encouragement (Santiago seemed bound to direct Manolin’s life, emotionally and otherwise), now Santiago seems to have nonchalantly handed over his sense of purpose and aim in life to Manolin’s discretion. And he is not an unwilling tyro to Manolin’s equally determined tutor. (The roles of the tyro and tutor are here limited to one’s willingness to lead/show direction. This is a symbiotic relationship (the give and take is now more pronounced) where Manolin’s heightened desire for purposefulness seems to be inspired by Santiago’s recently endorsed luck and Santiago can easily and without regrets give in to Manolin’s determined perseverance. Once this equation has been forged, Santiago can dip into his past experiences, rectify his earlier mistakes and along with Manolin work toward a more assured future.
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.

I'll get another knife and have the spring ground.

If at Manolin’s direction Santiago’s psychological state has been soothed down with hopes for the future, then it is again at his bidding that he will take care of his physical wounds in order to recover completely for a tryst with the future. Manolin literally becomes Santiago’s family, almost taking over the role of his dead wife by taking meticulous care of all his needs ("...I bring you your clean shirt. And something to eat"). Santiago’s request for all the newspapers that he missed reading takes the reader back to the past where he made references to the newspapers to assure Manolin with regard to his (Santiago’s) comfort. Those papers were important only as a means of attaining vicarious pleasure of sharing in another’s glory. Now however, they will acquire a different meaning as the baseball results can be equally matched by Santiago’s achievement at sea.

Santiago has been looked after and is definitely on his way to physical and psychological recovery. However, Manolin, once out of Santiago’s sight immediately sets aside his perseverance and maturity and
gives way to his tears. Santiago has taken his experience more stoically than Manolin. As Manolin himself says in a slightly different context about Santiago, You must get well fast for there is much that I can learn and you can teach me everything. How much did you suffer?

The text concludes by coming back full circle to the familiar theme of the dichotomy between "insiders" and "outsiders" and at the same time doubling as an ironic comment on the entire episode which has unfolded so far. On the one hand are Santiago and Manolin, enveloped completely in the new lease of meaningfulness which has entered their lives, while on the other, are the tourists, ignorant, flippant and dismissive, but significantly, a comment on the quotidian nature of even as awesome an experience as fighting the greatest marlin ever.