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The Old Man and the Sea: A Nietzschean Tragic Vision

In studying *The Old Man and the Sea* one finds a very comforting consistency. From the initial reading two elements distinguish Santiago and his adventure from Hemingway's earlier heroes. Many have noted the positive character of Santiago's struggle, its natural context in direct contrast to the forced, artificial violence of bullfights and safaris. Santiago is also the only hero who, as Melvin Backman says, "...is not left alone, at the end of the story, with death or despair."¹ The life of Santiago is closer to the one most of us live; we can see ourselves in him and thus find encouragement for our own struggles.

When we turn to the commentators we find additional agreement. *The Old Man and the Sea* is seen as Hemingway's tragic vision, attention is paid to its essentially Christian morality. Such interpretations make much sense. Beginning with the meaning of Santiago's name — the fisherman who became an apostle and finally a martyr — commentators have pointed out the many explicit and implicit Christian themes. Backman calls Santiago the "Matador and the Crucified."² Clinton Burhans emphasizes primarily "the sin into which men inevitably fall by going far out beyond their depth, beyond their true place in life."³ Keiichi Harada argues along very similar lines; though he suggests that Santiago's 'going out too far' is better seen as *hybris* rather than sin in the Christian sense, he still considers Santiago responsible and one who "has to pay the price of his glory."⁴ Carlos Baker in reading the story as a parable synthesizes these points well: "It is not necessarily a Christian victory. Yet it is clear that Hemingway has artfully enhanced the native power of his tragic parable by enlisting the further power of Christian symbolism."⁵ One need not present an exhaustive survey in order to see not only that there is fundamental agreement among the interpretations but also that they are consistent with our own view of the world in which we live.

In the face of the transparent intelligibility seen in the established 'meaning' of *The Old Man and the Sea* one has to be skeptical about a

'new' interpretation. The discussion to be presented here, nevertheless, is precisely that, a new reading. The roots of these thoughts come from two perspectives — a radically different notion of tragedy, and, more deeply, a radically different philosophical understanding of reality. The radical nature of these ideas needs to be emphasized. The goal here is not to provide greater clarity within the accepted interpretations nor is it to provide more security for the *Weltanschauung* upon which these studies have been built. The intent is, rather, to sketch an alternative meaning and message of Hemingway's great parable.

Our discussion of *The Old Man and the Sea* begins with the philosophy of Nietzsche. Throughout his career Nietzsche was fascinated with tragedy, primarily Greek tragedy. His concern could be interpreted as normal for anyone trained as a professional philologist; but this thought does not go deep enough. The problematic character of Nietzsche's notion of tragedy is apparent in the very first book he published after becoming a professor at Basel. *The Birth of Tragedy* was supposed to justify Nietzsche's having been appointed a professor before he completed his doctoral dissertation; instead, the book was denounced by his fellow philologists. The reasons for this confrontation have only in the past few years become completely clear. *The Birth of Tragedy* was not intended to advance the field of philology; it was, on the contrary, the beginning of Nietzsche's criticism of all of western philosophy from Plato to the present — Nietzsche's primary categories are ontological.

The Birth of Tragedy is also the most complete development of Nietzsche's notion of tragedy, the proper place for us to begin. Nietzsche, himself, provides us with the best suggestions about approaching the book. In 1889 he wrote *Ecce Homo*, an intellectual autobiography with critical discussions of most of his previous books. One of the first things he tells us about *The Birth of Tragedy* is,

The two decisive innovations of the book are, first its understanding of the Dionysian phenomenon among the Greeks: for the first time, a psychological analysis of this phenomenon is offered, and it is considered as the root of the whole of Greek art. Secondly, there is the understanding of Socratism: Socrates is recognized for the first time as an instrument of Greek disintegration, as a typical decadent. 'Rationality' at any price as a force that undermines life.⁶

In order to understand Nietzsche's notion of tragedy and then to look at Santiago in those terms we have to examine the concept of the Dionysian and come to understand the argument that rationality can be a force that undermines life.

Let's begin with the Dionysian. Another passage in *Ecce Homo* tells us that the two 'decisive innovations' of *The Birth of Tragedy* are not at all 'accidentally' found in the same book.

Saying yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems; the will to rejoicing over its own inexhaustibility even in the sacrifice of its highest types—that is what I called Dionysian, that is what I understood as the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet. Not in order to get rid of terror and pity, not in order to purge oneself of a dangerous affect by its vehement discharge—Aristotle misunderstood it that way—but in order to be oneself the eternal joy of becoming, beyond all terror and pity—that joy which includes even the joy in destroying.⁷

The ideas here are crucial. The Dionysian, says Nietzsche, is the 'root of the whole of Greek art' and especially the highest form of their art, tragedy; the Dionysian is most importantly an *affirmation* of life—'even in its strangest and hardest problems.' Thus the Dionysian is directly contrasted to the rationality of Socrates that negates, denies life inside the cave.

There is another point to be made here. Nietzsche clearly juxtaposes his notion of tragedy to that of Aristotle. Aristotle saw the primary effect of tragedy as *catharsis*, 'the vehement discharge of terror and pity'; tragedy is a means of purging oneself, of getting rid of negative aspects of life. One could say that for Aristotle certain aspects of life are to be avoided; tragedy is a vehicle for this rejection. Nietzsche calls this a misunderstanding of tragedy. For him such a denial is a product of weakness,

This ultimate, most joyous, most wantonly extravagant Yes to life represents not only the highest insight but also the *deepest*, that which is most strictly confirmed and borne out by truth and science. Nothing in existence may be subtracted, nothing is dispensable — those aspects of existence which Christians and other nihilists repudiate are actually on an infinitely higher level in the order of rank among values than that which the instinct of decadence could approve and call good. To comprehend this requires courage and, as a condition of that, an excess of strength: for precisely as far as courage may venture forward, precisely according to that measure of strength one approaches the truth. Knowledge, saying Yes to reality, is just as necessary for the strong as cowardice and the flight from reality—as the 'ideal' is for the weak, who are inspired by weakness.⁸

Here we have the opposition again, the *affirmation* of life in tragedy contrasted to the denial of life.

Having seen these basic ideas, let us turn to *The Birth of Tragedy* itself to see how Nietzsche develops them. His argument begins with an analysis of the Art deities of the Greeks—Apollo and Dionysus, a discussion which seems quite typical, precisely what one would expect.

He calls Apollo and Dionysus a duality, and, clearly, Apollo's art of sculpture and Dionysus' art of music seem to be a perfect model of the platonic dualistic thinking that is found throughout western culture. Nietzsche further supports the dualistic interpretation by using two contrary psychological categories—dreams and intoxication—to give us our first picture of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, and by presenting his thoughts in obvious reference to Schopenhauer's 'World as Will,' 'World as Representation.' The initial picture is, thus, of the Apollonian representing an individuated, clear, fully revealed, unchanging world that is knowable and good while the Dionysian represents a world where individuality is destroyed, a 'primal unity' where everything changes and knowledge is impossible. Contradiction and suffering characterize the Dionysian.

Within the initial discussion of the Dionysian, however, Nietzsche also begins to indicate his rejection of Plato's dualistic thinking. An obvious conclusion to the preceding distinction would be to call the Apollonian good, desirable, and the Dionysian, evil, undesirable. While accepting this on one level Nietzsche also suggests a second element of the Dionysian,

Either under the influence of the narcotic draught, of which the songs of all primitive men and peoples speak, or with the potent coming of spring that penetrates all nature with joy, these Dionysian emotions awake, and as they grow in intensity everything subjective vanishes into complete self-forgetfulness.... Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son (Prodigal Son), man.... Now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, and fused with his neighbor, but as one with him, as if the veil of *maya* had been torn aside and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious primordial unity.⁹

Through the Dionysian we gain access to the 'mysterious primordial unity,' an access that involves destruction of the Apollonian world of individuation. In destroying the Apollonian veil of *maya* we disclose not only contradiction, suffering and pain but we also see the unity at the core of existence. Insight into the Dionysian is both terrifying and joyous. Here we begin to see Nietzsche's view of the world. We cannot separate the world into parts as Plato would have us believe, we cannot talk of good without bad; rather, we must come to see Being as a unity that is radically ambiguous. As we shall see more clearly Nietzsche's interest in tragedy stems first of all from his realization that in their tragedies the Greeks looked at the world precisely in this manner.

Having presented the Apollonian and Dionysian in their abstract form Nietzsche proceeds to discuss the appearance of these artistic

energies in ancient Greece. The discussion begins once again with a dualistic perspective; it is easy to point out the Apollonian in Greek Art; Nietzsche emphasizes Doric art. The Dionysian is for a long time seen not as Greek, but only as barbarian. When the Dionysian does appear in Greece there is a reconciliation with the orderly Apollonian that takes much of the destructiveness from the Dionysian; when it appears in Greece the Dionysian becomes an artistic phenomenon for the first time. Even after the development of the Dionysian Greek the Apollonian remained the dominant force.

Nietzsche takes a crucial step in discussing the Apollonian understanding of the Dionysian,

With what astonishment must the Apollonian Greek have beheld him (the Dionysian Greek)! With an astonishment all the greater the more it was mingled with the shuddering suspicion that all this was actually not so very alien to him after all, in fact, that it was only his Apollonian consciousness which, like a veil, hid this Dionysian world from his vision.¹⁰

From this point on the inversion from dualistic Platonic thinking to Nietzsche's own perspective is explicit and consistent. The Dionysian and Apollonian are not a duality, says Nietzsche; rather, the Dionysian tells us of the true nature of the world, it is not clear, distinct, knowable, but rather a radically ambiguous unity. The Dionysian says that life is necessarily suffering, pain, eternally changing; the Apollonian in the clarity of its images hides this chaotic reality from our view.

We can see this covering over of the Dionysian in the world of the Olympian gods,

The Greek knew and felt the terror and horror of existence. That he might endure this terror at all, he had to interpose between himself and life the radiant dream birth of the Olympians. The overwhelming dismay in the face of the Titanic powers of nature, the *Moirai* enthroned inexorably over all knowledge, the vulture of the great lover of mankind, Prometheus, the terrible fate of the wise Oedipus... all this was again and again overcome by the Greeks with the aid of the Olympian *middle world of art*; or at any rate it was veiled and withdrawn from sight. It was in order to be able to live that the Greeks had to create these gods from a most profound need. Perhaps we may picture the process to ourselves somewhat as follows: out of the original Titanic divine order of terror, the Olympian divine order of joy gradually evolved through the Apollonian impulse toward beauty, just as roses burst forth from thorny bushes. How else could this people, so sensitive, so vehement in its desires, so singularly capable of *suffering*, have endured existence, if it had not been revealed to them in their gods, surrounded with a higher glory?¹¹

Thus we must see the Apollonian as a creation, a necessary creation that enables us to continue living after having learned the true nature

of reality. Here Nietzsche speaks of 'enduring' life, suggesting resignation. As we shall see, in turning now to tragedy itself, Nietzsche argues that the Greeks actually achieved in tragedy an affirmation of life far beyond resignation.

The analysis of tragedy follows the same path we have just seen. Nietzsche begins with the traditional picture of the Apollonian elements of tragedy—the clear image of the tragic hero on the stage. There seems to be nothing Dionysian about the action of the play itself. We find the key, says Nietzsche, when we pay attention not to the action on the stage but rather to the tragic chorus. Greek tradition says that tragedy began with the tragic chorus, in fact originally was nothing but chorus—originally there was no Apollonian hero at all! Nietzsche points out that no one had adequately explained the tragic chorus and proceeds to criticize the accepted interpretations of his day. For Nietzsche, the tragic chorus is first of all a Dionysian chorus—tragedy begins with Dionysian wisdom.

Perhaps we shall have a point of departure for our inquiry if I put forward the proposition that the satyr, the fictitious natural being, bears the same relation to the man of culture that Dionysian music bears to civilization. Concerning the latter, Richard Wagner says that it is nullified (*Aufgehoben*) by music just as lamplight is nullified by the light of day. Similarly, I believe, the Greek man of culture felt himself nullified by the satyric chorus; and this is the most immediate effect of the Dionysian tragedy, that the state and society and, quite generally, the gulfs between man and man give way to an overwhelming feeling of unity leading back to the very heart of nature. The metaphysical comfort — with which, I am suggesting even now, every true tragedy leaves us — [is] that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable....¹²

Here we see the positive aspect of Dionysian wisdom; it begins with the awareness of the unity of all existence—that 'nothing can be subtracted.' The Dionysian knows that all things are destroyed, that everything changes; sees in this the indestructible creative power of life and rejoices in that power.

We can, then, contrast Dionysian wisdom with Platonic wisdom. Plato too saw this world as forever changing and tried to make the world of becoming intelligible, but realized that one cannot truly know such a reality. Since this world is not rational or knowable there must, says Plato, be another world that is rational, orderly, and therefore knowable and good. At the core of Plato's philosophy is the equation, knowledge is virtue and virtue happiness. In contrast to Dionysian wisdom Plato says much of reality can 'be subtracted' or at least corrected—the Philosopher who has climbed out of the cave and

acquired knowledge can then go back into the cave and create order. We can, through this contrast, better understand the idea that Socrates was for Nietzsche an 'instrument of Greek disintegration.' Socrates believed that the ever-changing world of becoming could be escaped, needed to be transcended, to the perfect unchanging world of true Being outside the cave. Nietzsche's Dionysian wisdom says quite the opposite; it says that we cannot escape change: any orderly reality we may see is merely an illusion we create for ourselves in the process of living, it is a 'reality' that will necessarily change. For Nietzsche the Dionysian sees an ever-changing world, chooses to participate in this 'process' and thereby affirms existence in the highest manner possible. Plato in affirming a separate unchanging reality ends up negating the reality in which we live, the only reality for the Dionysian. Implicit in Plato, says Nietzsche, is a negative attitude towards life, Nihilism.

We can make a further step here. Nietzsche speaks of *Aufhebung* as the first creation completed by Dionysian tragedy; we have to use this concept carefully. Nietzsche does follow Hegel's thinking here in the sense that he means a negation, destruction of the illusion of individuality, and a subsequent preservation in a new 'transcendent' reality, the feeling of unity with all of life. This new 'reality' is transcendent in the sense that it is closer to the truth but *not* in the sense that it represents a separate perfect unchanging reality. The truth it approaches is the radical ambiguity of existence.

The final question we have about tragedy then is the production of the Apollonian drama on the stage out of this Dionysian wisdom. For Nietzsche a necessary element in all dramatic art is the ability to see oneself in a transformed mirror image; this aesthetic phenomenon is created by the Dionysian.

The Dionysian excitement is capable of communicating this artistic gift to a multitude, so that they can see themselves surrounded by such a host of spirits while knowing themselves to be one with them. This process of the tragic chorus is the *dramatic* protophenomenon: to see oneself transformed before one's own eyes and to begin to act as if one had actually entered into another body, another character.... Such magic transformation is the presupposition of all dramatic art. In this magic transformation the Dionysian reveler sees himself as a satyr, *and as a satyr, in turn, he sees the god*, which means that in his metamorphosis he beholds another vision outside himself, as the Apollonian complement of his own state. With this new vision the drama is complete.¹³

Thus we see that there are two steps involved in the creation of tragedy. First there is the destruction of the order and distinctions that characterize everyday reality; one is able to see more deeply, more truthfully into existence — the Dionysian revelers see themselves as satyrs. The

satyr chorus then has a second vision which is the actual drama on the stage — only the satyr chorus is able to see, the Apollonian element can only be interpreted from its Dionysian origins.

The last step is the most important, to see the content of the Apollonian.

In the light of this insight (about the magic transformation) we must understand Greek tragedy as the Dionysian chorus which ever anew discharges itself in an Apollonian world of images. Thus the choral parts with which tragedy is interlaced are, as it were, the womb that gave birth to the whole of the so-called dialogue, that is, the entire world of the stage, the real drama. In several successive discharges this primal ground of tragedy radiates this vision of the drama which is by all means a dream apparition and to that extent epic in nature; but on the other hand, being the objectification of a Dionysian state, it represents not Apollonian redemption through mere appearance but, on the contrary, the shattering of the individual and his fusion with primal being. Thus the drama is the Apollonian embodiment of Dionysian insights and effects and thereby separated, as by a tremendous chasm, from the epic.¹⁴

The drama itself, then, is, as Nietzsche says, epic in nature, the action we see is clear, intelligible, but the truth that it expresses is that of Dionysian wisdom, the radically ambiguous nature of existence. The crucial idea here is that the drama does not represent Apollonian redemption through appearance. Nietzsche's word here is *Erlosung*, which in the most literal sense means release and is properly translated as redemption or salvation. Implicit in this 'release' is the possibility of separation, of returning to Platonic dualistic thinking; it is precisely such a release that Nietzsche rejects. Here he points out that the tragic is separated from the epic by a tremendous chasm. In the epic one indeed finds a fully transparent existence; in the tragic one is able to see clearly, or as clearly as possible, the ambiguity of existence.

The concept of redemption/salvation leads us back to Santiago. As we have seen, the message of the parable of Santiago is that he 'went out too far'; Santiago committed a sin for which he must pay—at least this is the traditional reading. What is important to see in this interpretation is that it makes everything intelligible and clear: Santiago committed a sin for which he was punished and then forgiven, he was released from further guilt for having gone out too far. The clarity in this parable is rooted in the Platonic dualistic thinking of Christianity. If we freely choose 'to go out too far' we can only be released from our sins by the grace of a God existing in a separate reality. In reading the tragic parable we, the spectators, experience another aspect of this transparent existence. As Aristotle has told us we are spectators

removed totally from the action 'on the stage'; the effect of the drama is the *catharsis* that allows us to get rid of, be released and separated from the evil, suffering and pain of life and return safely to our security. Nietzsche would suggest that this security and transparency are illusory.

We can begin our Nietzschean interpretation of Santiago by pointing out that Santiago, in going so far out, was participating in and therefore affirming life in the highest manner possible. Santiago is tied to the Dionysian throughout the book. In the beginning he says, "I am a strange old man" (p. 14); Santiago knows that life itself is strange, he pays attention to the ambiguous.¹⁵ From the time he gets into his boat and heads 'far out' his own understanding of life begins to appear more and more clearly. He thinks of the birds:

Why did they make birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel? She is kind and very beautiful. But she can be so cruel and it comes so suddenly and such birds that fly, dipping and hunting, with their small sad voices are made too delicately for the sea. (p. 29)

He thinks of the sea as feminine, expressing his love, and acknowledges the 'bad things,' the hatred which he sees as necessarily tied to any true love. The others who have power boats, those who can separate themselves from the sea, consider it masculine, an enemy or contestant: they either win or lose in the struggle with the 'other.' For Santiago the sea is Dionysian, it gives and withholds great favors. The same contradiction is seen in the Portugese man-of-war: "The iridescent bubbles [of the Portugese man-of-war] were beautiful. But they were the falsest thing in the sea. . ." (p. 36). Santiago, then, thinks of himself, the sea, the birds and the creatures of the sea in terms of one of the two fundamental categories of the Dionysian—the insight into the radical ambiguity of existence.

Santiago also pays much attention to the second basic category of the Dionysian—the unity of all existence. The ideas of solidarity and interdependence are seen throughout the book. An early example of this unity is seen in Santiago's thoughts of 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. He ate them all through May to be strong in September and October for the truly big fish. (p. 37)

Soon after hooking the marlin Santiago begins to focus on their equality; both are 'strange,' both know how to make their fight:

Then he began to pity the great fish he had hooked. He is wonderful and strange and who knows how old he is, he thought. Never have I had such a strong fish nor one who acted so strangely. Perhaps he is too wise to jump. He could ruin me by jumping or by a wild rush. But perhaps he has been hooked many times before and he knows that this is how he should make his fight. He cannot know that it is only one man against him, nor that it is an old man. But what a great fish he is and what he will bring in the market if the flesh is good. He took the bait like a male and he pulls like a male and his fight has no panic in it. I wonder if he has any plans or if he is just as desperate as I am? (pp. 48-49)

When the tired warbler lands on his boat Santiago apologises for not being able to take the bird home by saying he is with a 'friend.' Thoughts of unity predominate until the last of the marlin is devoured by the sharks.

Nietzsche argues that every true tragedy, by creating the Dionysian feeling of the unity of existence, leaves the spectator with the 'metaphysical comfort' that life in spite of *all* changes is indestructibly powerful and pleasurable. Santiago's thoughts about killing the fish disclose this feeling clearly. Early in his battle with the marlin he says, "'Fish, I love and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends"' (p. 54). After having seen his fish Santiago becomes even more aware of what he demands of himself.

'...Christ, I did not know he was so big. I'll kill him though,' he said. 'In all his greatness and his glory.' Although it is unjust, he thought. But I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures. 'I told the boy I was a strange old man,' he said. 'Now is when I must prove it.' (p. 66)

Santiago shows us 'what a man can do and what a man endures' when he kills the marlin, that which he most deeply loves and respects. In this process we see the strength and abilities of *both* Santiago and the marlin, and in them begin to understand the profound pleasure one experiences in 'proving oneself.'

Having presented the Dionysian elements of Santiago, let us return to the Apollonian question of sin. The traditional explanation in its simplest form is that Santiago went out too far, his pride led him into sin, and he was punished for this through the sharks' devouring his fish. Nietzsche's notion of tragedy suggests quite the contrary; it says that only in going so far out was Santiago fully able to prove himself 'a strange old man.' If Santiago had stayed close in, he could never clearly have shown what we can do and what we can endure. The most obvious point of the demand to go out so far for Santiago is that the farther out he went the more his deepest thoughts about himself and his life occupied his thinking. Though he says he must try 'not to think but only to endure' (p. 46), Santiago nevertheless has a paradoxical leisure that

allows for thinking. Inseparable from his most profound thinking occurring 'out so far' is the fact that Santiago proves himself: he does what he must do 'out there'; he kills the fish because he is a fisherman.

We see the necessity of going out so far in the value Santiago places upon himself and the things he encounters. In the village, involved completely with all the people, he is made fun of or pitied, he is humble, his sail "look[s] like the flag of permanent defeat" (p. 9). As he goes out into the sea Santiago realizes more and more who he is and what he is doing; he respects himself and the world he lives in most fully when he kills the marlin. After securing the fish to the side of his boat Santiago identifies with the marlin more than he separates himself from him:

With his mouth shut and his tail straight up and down we sail like brothers. Thus his head started to become a little unclear and he thought, is he bringing me in or am I bringing him in? If I were towing him behind there would be no question. Nor if the fish were in the skiff, with all dignity gone there would be no question either. But they were sailing together lashed side by side and the old man thought, let him bring me in if it pleases him. I am only better than him through trickery and he meant me no harm. (p. 99)

The dignity of both remain after their battle: they bring each other back.

This direct proportion between being out so far and demonstrating and understanding one's value can also be seen in the sequence of shark attacks that destroy the marlin. The first shark that attacks is a Mako shark. It is seen as noble and powerful like Santiago and the marlin.

He was a very big Mako shark built to swim as fast as the fastest fish in the sea and everything about him was beautiful except his jaws. His back was as blue as a swordfish's and his belly was silver and his hide was smooth and handsome. He was built as a swordfish except for his huge jaws which were shut now as he swam fast, just under the surface with his high dorsal fin knifing through the water without wavering.... This was a fish built to feed on all the fishes in the sea, that were so fast and strong and well armed that they had no other enemy. (pp. 100-101)

The Mako is beautiful, fast, powerful, intelligent and very deeply respected by Santiago; he has no fear and he comes *alone*. He is the largest *dentuso* Santiago has ever seen. After he kills this first shark Santiago's deepest thought is expressed; " 'But man is not made for defeat.... A man can be destroyed but not defeated' " (p. 103).

The respect that Santiago feels for the Mako is tied to the fact that it happens 'farthest out.' The character of the second attack 'closer in'

dramatizes the value of distance for Santiago. The second attack is made by two brown, shovel-nosed, stupid *galanos*. The *galanos* are not brave; one attacks from underneath while the other watches from the surface. The third attack was by a single *galano*: "He came like a pig to a trough if a pig had a mouth so wide you could put your head in it" (p. 111). The final attacks come in the night; these 'closest in' attacks have the least value: "In the night sharks hit the carcass as someone might pick up crumbs from the table" (p. 119). This sequence underscores the necessity of going out so far, the value of the heroic individual taking the greatest risks in order to achieve the greatest fulfillment.

We can see, then, that a Nietzschean reading of Santiago's adventure does not consider Santiago guilty, it does not say he has done something wrong, it is not predicated on a dualistic vision in terms of which one can decide absolute right and wrong. What we truly learn, says Nietzsche, is that life simply is not so clear and intelligible; we learn that in order to do what must be done, to prove ourselves we must go out so far, alone with the realization that we may return without our fish; perhaps it is even likely that we will return "destroyed but not defeated." Santiago proves himself in killing the marlin; that he does not bring him in matters next to nothing in comparison. Santiago will go out fishing again, realizing the need to 'prove himself' again, the need to participate in life and affirm it in the highest manner possible by going far out.

The final step to be made here is to realize that in presenting an alternative to the traditional interpretation of Santiago's sin we also have a non-Aristotelian spectator. It is quite possible to see Santiago as a transformed mirror image of ourselves. In reading of his battle with the marlin and the subsequent events we see things at a distance from our own lives and can see truly that one can be "destroyed but not defeated." When looking at the "destruction" in our own lives it is difficult to see anything but the negative. Santiago has the same difficulty, he is able to carry on and prevent defeat by thinking of DiMaggio and his bone spur; Santiago sees in DiMaggio his own transformed mirror image. Santiago says that DiMaggio "makes the difference," and he does, but not for the simplistic reason that he plays for the benefit of his teammates. What makes the difference is that DiMaggio keeps playing in spite of his bone spur, and that Santiago goes far out to fish conscious of the risks involved, and will go out again. In this light the drama is the "Apollonian embodiment of Dionysian insights," and we are not impartial observers; rather, we only understand when we see ourselves in Santiago and realize that his existence and ours is the same, demands the same.

NOTES

1. Carlos Baker, ed., *Hemingway and His Critics*, New York, 1961, p. 255.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 275.
5. Carlos Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 3rd ed., Princeton, 1963, p. 319.
6. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. by Walter Kaufmann, New York, 1968, p. 727.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 729.
8. *Ibid.* p. 728.
9. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 36-37.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.
15. Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea*, (New York, 1952), p. 14. All subsequent references will use this edition, only page references will be given, in the text.